

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

Key messages

Candidates often attempted work in the examination that they had little experience working with. Many candidates were over reliant on second-hand imagery, particularly images downloaded from the internet.

This syllabus will not be available after 2019. You are advised to log onto the Schools Support Hub for details of the new AS/A level Art & Design and the new AS/A level Digital Media & Design.

General comments

This year's questions presented a wide scope for submissions and some very strong work was seen. The majority of submissions were in the area of painting and drawing, with quite a lot of photographic submissions also seen. Amongst these groups there were quite a few who used the camera in an unusual and experimental way. Often candidates developed these images further by drawing on or distressing the surface of the image.

The skills seen with Photoshop, graphics pads and other illustrational software packages continue to grow and deepen. Many candidates took images which had been hand generated, scanned and manipulated using these tools and then drew into them a second or third time by hand.

In some Centres photography candidates produced many pages of digital experiments and manipulation but had not sufficiently moved initial ideas forward in a coherent way. Final pieces were often merely larger versions of initial ideas. In the supporting studies many photographs failed to show an understanding of aesthetic principles such as composition, rule of thirds and depth of field. Often annotation was poor revealing a lack of understanding of critical awareness. In some Centres candidates demonstrated good personal interpretations of the question but lacked an understanding of how to explore the theme using their chosen media of photography.

Some submissions were full of experiment and ideas but there were quite a few that suffered from insufficient editing. Many candidates who were particularly strong in one specific medium also included weaker studies in either paint or pencil. This was also the case for the final image where many candidates whose submissions had very strong preparatory work in ink, photography, markers etc., then chose to execute the final piece in paint, which was typically their weakest piece of work. In many submissions canvas boards were included. In the majority of cases the work carried out on these boards was much weaker than the work seen on other surfaces, which the candidate generally had more experience of.

On the whole, candidates responded well to the questions set, the most popular being the interpretative questions in **Section A**. Few candidates chose questions from **Section C**.

A few examples of 3D work were seen as well as some fabric manipulation. Several submissions were seen where questions from **Section A** were used as stimuli for design briefs.

Many candidates had used the preparatory period well to gather information, explore ideas and had approached their work with enthusiasm. Generally work was submitted clearly but on occasion all work was sent, including preparatory work, mounted on heavy board which made it very cumbersome and difficult to move around. In some cases the question number was not included on the label.

At the higher levels candidates made thorough use of working from direct observation and the preparatory sheets included sensitive and perceptive drawing. These submissions included evidence of skilful use and manipulation of media and candidates made reference to other artists in developing their own ideas. Preparatory sheets of research linked one drawing or experiment to another and clearly showed the progress

of an idea or technique. Annotation was analytical rather than descriptive at this level. Many had used the local environment as their inspiration. Work achieving lower marks showed a lack of understanding in the application of media and relied heavily on secondary source images, often downloaded from the Internet, for their inspiration. Candidates working at this level often chose an artist to mention in their preparatory studies without the artist having any relevance to their chosen theme. Annotations were descriptive and did not inform their own progression of work.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1: Macro and micro

This was a fairly popular question, attracting submissions across the mark range. However, some candidates had clearly not understood the question or what was being asked by it. Many submissions contrasted something small with something big, but this did not really show their understanding of scale. The best submissions demonstrated imaginative and manipulative skills at a high level. Photography was used in the research in many cases with some candidates using drones to take photographs at distance. Other approaches used close up images of drops of water or similar, which were well observed from first hand. The research had been developed with an individual sense of direction and personal exploration.

In the mid ranges, candidates were more reliant on photography and there was less evidence of first-hand observation. The subject matter chosen was more obvious, or in some cases, original ideas were developed, but the use of media and decision making meant that these ideas were not fully realised.

In the lower level work, choices of subject matter did not always fully answer the question with close ups of items or very small items shown. Research was much more limited and incoherent at this level, and ideas were not developed in any depth. Manipulative skills were also weak.

Question 2: Performance

This was a popular question, with submissions across the range, and attracting both photographic and traditional responses. The strongest responses demonstrated a high degree of imagination and personal qualities. Some had used this topic as a starting point for an individual idea. These submissions showed very strong research through observation and investigation, which was then developed into an imaginative outcome. Candidates had looked at and used references to the work of other artists.

In the mid-range, submissions were mainly more straight forward and obvious, such as images of people playing instruments, or a poster design for a concert. Some candidates had observed facial expressions with some good observational skills, while others had used hands as subject matter. These candidates generally showed inconsistencies in the development of ideas.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates mainly used a single source from which to develop ideas, which in themselves were limited. These candidates also demonstrated weak manipulative skills and poor decision making.

Question 3: Exhausted

This was the most popular question, and submissions were seen across the mark range. Many candidates used portraiture in some form as a way of conveying the feeling of exhaustion. The best submissions demonstrated very strong observational skills in the rendering of figures, with well observed proportion and form, as well a high level of imagination. Many candidates at the higher level considered different viewpoints and exaggerated foreshortening when deciding of their models' position. Candidates posed single models in some cases, and in others looked at exhausted commuters on a train, or ideas of stress due to pressure etc.

Mid-range submissions often contained imagery of dead flowers, death, worn-out things in general, as well as people/faces. Some interesting and imaginative ideas were seen, but lack of control in the use of media as well as poor observational skills were evident. In other cases, it was the development of ideas which showed a lack of coherence.

At the lower end, candidates did not look far for material, typically making a self-portrait in pencil or paint. The images seen were mostly of a person slumped over a desk. The level of observational skills seen was

very low and the media that were selected for the final image were limited both in choice and in the manner of execution. Normally, the figure would be placed in the middle of the picture plane with no other objects or surroundings (with the occasional exception of a pile of books). The preparatory work usually consisted of one or two figure drawings or preliminary studies for the final image and there was very little to suggest a sense of journey or other developmental aspects. There were no artist references and no source material beyond the immediate figure drawings.

Question 4: Street patterns

This was a fairly popular question and candidates made use of photography, collage and mixed media as well as traditional media.

The best work used extensive first-hand research as a starting point for development. Some candidates made drawings and took photographs of their local towns and cities, using these as a vehicle for interesting and imaginative design and idea development. Photographs were worked into with stitch and collage in some cases. Other candidates used their research as a basis for more abstract approaches. Examples of print making were also seen.

Some candidates showed an understanding of composition in their search for street patterns, zooming in on colours, shapes and pattern seen in buildings, road markings, street signs and maps. Their supporting studies had many examples of close-up studies of streets where patterns were presented as interesting abstract pieces. There was excellent exploration of a range of media seen at this level as candidates attempted to develop and manipulate these initial studies into successful outcomes.

Mid-range submissions also demonstrated the use of photography and drawings of streets as starting points. Some candidates also used street maps, superimposing these on portraits. Imaginative ideas were seen here, but the development was less coherent and the skills in the use of media less strong.

At the lower end, some candidates used this topic as a design brief, but with limited success. Random shapes and patterns were used with no reference as to where they came from. Other submissions used street scenes but showed no understanding of perspective or structure.

Question 5: Camouflage

This was a very popular question, and submissions were seen across the mark range. The best work often referenced cultural themes. Themes included insecurity and blending in with the crowd, religious diversity and make-up and an exploration of skin hiding the scars from surgery, or skin as a uniform, hiding the unique qualities of each individual within. Good observational research into figures and faces formed a solid basis for these submissions, which were developed with a high degree of thought and coherence.

In the mid-range, candidates often looked at more obvious ways of interpreting this theme, such as animal skins and plants, half human and half reptile, jungles, trees etc. Most of these submissions showed some first-hand research, but also relied heavily on secondary sources. Development of ideas tended to be less thought through at this level and manipulative skills were weaker.

At the lower end, candidates often used commercial camouflage patterns and images of guns etc. as reference points for their projects. Images of camouflage in nature were also used, but there was little development of individual ideas at this level.

Question 6: Water reflections

Stronger submissions for this question demonstrated a high level of personal engagement, with in-depth studies of water and reflections shown in both drawings / paintings and photography.

Some candidates were able to show expression through the use of movement and colour in the water rhythms. Strong observational skills as well as coherent development were seen at this level. The media experiments were ambitious, purposeful and very well controlled. Candidates working at this level recognised their strengths and built on these. Research into various different artists was used to inform the progression of ideas and outstanding levels of critical understanding were evident.

Mid-range submissions tended to be more straightforward in their interpretation of this topic. Images of water were often copies of photographs. These submissions tended to be formulaic in nature due to the way they were produced, and lacked imagination and individuality.

Those achieving marks in the lower range tended to include repetitive images and supporting studies showed limited levels of development. Photography was a common tool for recording the reflections on water but the images were often predictable and work lacked research into artists to inspire ways to manipulate and explore ideas.

Section B

Question 7: A Pile of cutlery

This was quite a popular choice, and some good work was seen in response to this question. The best examples showed good observational skills and some imagination in the arrangement of the cutlery to produce interesting positive and negative shapes and overlaps. These strong candidates mixed colour and created metallic surfaces with a high level of ability. Some photographic examples were seen where shadows and different arrangements produced very strong abstract images. The use of digital manipulation to produce different effects was also seen at this level.

Mid-range submissions tended to show less exploration into the possibilities of this topic. Research was more limited and less personal. Some photographic submissions and printmaking was also seen at this level.

Weaker submissions often focused on just one or two items of cutlery. These studies lacked observation and skill and candidates had often not explored different compositions or experimented with different media.

Question 8: Knitted garment

Most of the responses to this question were in 2D media, mainly paint and pencil.

Submissions in the higher mark range used the wool imaginatively to add depth to the still life arrangement. Initial observational studies were thoroughly developed through exciting media experimentation and a range of compositions was explored before selecting the final outcome.

Work in the middle mark range responded to the question clearly and with good observational studies showing competent ability particularly when rendering balls of wool with texture. More exploration of media and manipulation of images would have enabled the candidates to develop these studies into imaginative and informed final outcomes in the exam.

Although those achieving lower marks had attempted to draw from observation, their technical ability was less strong and studies lacked understanding of texture, tone and form.

Question 9: Person wearing sunglasses

There were many strong submissions in response to this question with the more able candidates working creatively from a variety of different viewpoints as they made detailed observational studies of figures in different poses.

Candidates explored a range of media to take full advantage of the use of colour to create and intensify a mood. Photography was used to help candidates explore the viewpoint and background options as well as lighting. These initial explorations were then developed through observational drawing, using the photographs as an aid rather than copying them. Many had researched relevant artists to inform their use of media to create the desired mood. At this level the reflections seen in the sunglasses were painted with excellent attention to detail and enhanced the overall final composition.

At the middle and lower mark range there were a number of photographic submissions. A common location for placing the figure was based on urban living. The models were photographed from various angles, close up and from a distance. The images were often put through a photographic filter to explore distortion or colour ways, using Photoshop or other digital manipulation programmes. Some effective experiments manipulating urban cityscapes, streets and bridges against and over the figure were explored and the preparatory work often included some successful images. However candidates working at this level were less able to make informed decisions regarding process, image selection and composition when producing the final piece which was often less successful.

Lower achieving submissions tended to focus on the sunglasses without giving enough attention to the figure. Aesthetics were weak and there was too much repetition in preparatory work. Some candidates did not work from primary sources and therefore had difficulty in understanding the proportions of the figure.

Question 10: View down a street or alleyway

This question was generally answered well with candidates making good use of photography to inform their initial research. However the majority of submissions were in the mid to lower mark range. Responses

included some 3D outcomes. Many candidates focused on street views in their local area, producing several studies and control of media was competent with some evidence of an understanding of perspective. Some candidates produced work using either a heightened palette or a limited palette to good effect introducing mood and atmosphere. Work was personal with good use of annotation providing clear explanations as to why they had chosen views and what these views meant to them. Resulting final pieces were competent as the preparatory work had clearly informed the outcome.

In the weaker work, candidates lacked the skills in observational studies and work was based on secondary images of cars or made-up street scenes, poorly executed. Preparatory work also lacked sufficient evidence of development.

Question 11: Extract

The candidates who answered this question interpreted the extract well and with imagination. Work was either in the higher mark range or the lower mark range.

The higher achieving submissions included imaginative responses which were illustrative and included good gathering of observational studies from a range of sources using photography and drawing. Most work at this level was sensitive and intelligent.

At the lower mark range submissions responded to the question in a limited way and candidates were often unable to gather relevant images to explore and develop their ideas fully. Work was often reliant on secondary-sourced images downloaded from the Internet and media exploration was limited.

Section C

Question 12: Restaurant facade

This was the most popular question of this section and work fell in the middle to lower mark range.

Submissions in the middle mark range were thorough with solid starting points and development. These candidates observed fish and sea creatures from a variety of sources including visits to aquariums and local fish markets, with skill, and developed these into their designs. Candidates also explored typefaces and layout showing an understanding of form and composition. Research informed the development and the final idea in the exam. Submissions at this level also included hand-drawn work and experiments in a range of media to inform their designs. Computer aided design was used often to develop ideas but not always to produce the final outcome.

Work achieving lower marks lacked a genuine understanding of form and often did not include more than one idea. Work at this level lacked development and awareness of aesthetics in the composition and design. Candidates also tended to stick to one idea and were not able to critically assess the development of their ideas sufficiently. Often the restaurant façade design did not match the menu design. 3D submissions in response to this question demonstrated some good modelling skills using clay but there was no evidence of experimental work exploring the visual elements such as form, surface qualities and textures. The process of making the exam piece was documented photographically and presented as supporting studies but more gathering of initial source material to inform shape pattern and detail was needed.

Question 13: Sculpture based on boats, sails and anchors

There were very few responses seen to this question.

Questions 14: Costume design based on flowers and plants

There were some textile responses to this question with candidates submitting costumes that they had made. Other submissions responded to this question using 2D media including digital media, to draw the designs.

Higher achieving submissions thoroughly explored many ideas with skill. Research was relevant and informed the development. Annotation described the candidates' thought processes and the final piece was detailed and coherent.

At the middle to lower level candidates produced observational studies of flowers to fairly good effect but often these did not inform the outcome. Candidates were unable to demonstrate a competent skill in drawing the designs which were often busy and chaotic.

Question 15: Understanding architecture

A small number of submissions were seen for this question. The question was generally answered well. Candidates understood the design brief and considered layout ideas carefully.

The strongest candidates explored a variety of minimalist design ideas developed from their own photographs. Again, their preparatory work was very thorough with research focused and highly relevant to their ideas. Font and layout was explored with intelligent understanding. Explorations of colour palettes resulted in successful final designs. Candidates were able to demonstrate self-analysis and selected images intelligently

Lower achieving submissions tended to crowd the final piece with too many different examples of architecture resulting in a chaotic design and a lack of compositional understanding.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

The most popular area of study was Painting and Related Media which also included examples of printmaking, digital manipulation, photography, collage and mixed media. Another area of study with several entries was Photography which included digital manipulation and video animation. There were very few entries for 3D, Fashion, Textile or Graphic Design.

The quality of submissions covered the whole mark range, although the majority of entries fell within the mid to lower ability range.

The most successful candidates showed exploration and experimentation of their topics. Some worked directly from first-hand sources which strengthened their submissions. The majority of candidates had used photography to collect visual information together with secondary sources from the internet. Some candidates had experimented with a range of materials and took risks, thus discovering new ideas for further development. When candidates looked at the work of artists, designers or cultures they were more successful in their search for new ideas. In some cases there was evidence of museums and galleries being visited which had influenced the development of candidates' ideas.

The middle level work usually contained some direct observation, which was usually in the form of photographs. When references to artists' works were made, they were not always appropriate or were not used effectively to inform the direction and development of the work.

The candidates at the lower level generally worked from a limited number of sources, usually from only one viewpoint and rarely explored the works of others. Their control of media was limited and demonstrated poor technical skill, with little development of ideas. They tended to repeat ideas rather than exploring alternative solutions, or recorded individual forms demonstrating little understanding of how to construct a composition.

Most submissions were well presented on thin card or substantial paper, securely fastened and clearly labelled. Consideration had been given to layout and annotation, and work was organised in a logical sequence to show progression and development of ideas through to final outcomes.

Where large work is not able to be despatched, photographic evidence was crucial to the moderation process. Whilst many candidates undertook this task fully, in other cases, one or two poorly lit photographs were the only evidence submitted. Candidates should consider scale, close-up shots of detail and working shots taken along the way. 3D pieces should be shown from several angles.

Some Centres had included CDs or memory sticks which did not include any additional evidence to support the submissions and this was not necessary.

Some Centres gave accurate assessments but many were very inaccurate. In most cases the marking was too generous at all achievement levels. On many occasions teachers had used a very narrow range of marks, often placing several candidates of varying ability on the same mark. A number of remarks were also required to correct invalid orders of merit.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

This area of study was by far the most popular. A wide range of media was seen including collage, oil pastel, water-colour, acrylic, oil paint, pencil, mixed media, textile techniques and charcoal.

Subject matter included traditional genres: still life, landscape, figure work, architecture and botanical paintings. A great deal of portraiture work had been used as a starting point, and some interesting examples of photography and their arrangements/set-ups were included. There were several local studies, some using traditional patterns and artefacts.

Candidates had mainly selected their own themes or had followed an individual path, if set by the Centre.

A wide and varied range of artists and practitioners were cited as sources for study and inspiration. In many cases these were perfectly suitable and a personal response was gained from these studies. The practice of copying an artist's work as a pastiche was widespread, and many candidates had also produced a piece of their own work which had been informed by the artists' use of technique, mark making, colour and style.

The strongest candidates demonstrated a 'feel' for paint and fluency in their brushwork. This was achieved through thoughtful and sustained series of studies that enabled candidates to develop the necessary skills to express their ideas. Whatever the subject matter, the work was continually informed by first-hand studies and demonstrated a progression towards discovered outcomes of some ambition and originality. Insight into the work of other artists was an essential part of this process in the stronger work.

The candidates at the middle level often relied on working from photographs or existing 2D imagery. However, a great deal of skill and accuracy was apparent in their ability to faithfully represent imagery. A lack of personal connection and involvement at this level was often evident. These candidates tended to have some examples of good work alongside much weaker studies. Some delicate and skilled watercolour work was seen. However, there was sometimes little experimental work to back it up. References to the works of other artists was either not clearly understood, or not relevant to the theme, topic or style, or had been omitted entirely. Many final outcomes did not reflect the quality of work in the supporting studies.

Other candidates in this range had explored ideas in some depth in written form but had not translated these thoughts into visual form through sustained experimentation with media. Consequently, their work did not progress much beyond schematic sketches and evidence of competent manipulative skills was limited. Some of these candidates' initial ideas and experiments were drawn on much too small a scale to enable them to develop their work in any detail.

In the lower range, the use of digital media was particularly limited. While some candidates used their own basic photography, the work tended to be heavily dependent on secondary sources and only demonstrated simple manipulations. In most cases, work of this sort had been heavily over-marked by the centre.

Similarly, painting in the lower range tended to be reliant on secondary sources with candidates presenting a series of unconnected copies. This work contained little evidence of exploration and development of personal ideas and skills.

Photography

This was the second most popular area of study covered by a wide range of approaches and ability levels.

The candidates at the middle level had selected a starting point which gave scope for personal engagement and an involved connection with the topic. Often models of the candidates' friends were used to narrate an idea.

Some large scale prints from high quality printers and scanners were submitted as the final outcome, which although impressive in quality, and very likely expensive to produce, did not always represent the best of the candidates' work, showing a lack of critical awareness. Candidates would have benefited from guidance on the importance of using first-hand sources and on clearly showing stages in the development of the ideas through to the final submission, with acknowledgment of all internet or other sources. Generally, at this level there was evidence of good quality photographs, but it was often unclear whether composition was fully understood. The lack of contact sheets or annotation did not provide evidence of whether it was skill, chance or teachers' advice, that led to the successful images. Experimentation at this level was weaker, as were links to artists.

Weaker candidates often produced a small collection of final images with little evidence of consideration to alternative locations, composition or technical awareness. No contact or thumbnail sheets were seen and few experimented with unusual views, lighting or composition. The use of Photoshop was limited and usually only involved simple effects or changes of colour.

Graphic Design

Only a few submissions were seen for this area of study. Most candidates used a form of digital manipulation to achieve their designs although the final product was sometimes rendered in paint.

The higher-level candidates demonstrated use of the computer as another tool in their repertoire, working digitally over their own photographs, rescanning them, drawing over the top of their image etc., to create multi layered, and exciting projects. The middle-level candidates were able to combine their own imagery with a clever juxtaposition of artists' work or found imagery. Whereas the weaker candidates continued to alter images with set filters or change colour schemes in a rather uninformed way.

Frequently, candidates did not understand the necessity to explore lettering as a part of the design process. Merely downloading it from a website or computer program without personal input, or colouring letters in a variety of ways, is not exploring the idea of typography.

Fashion and Textile Design

The best fashion submissions were highly personal and lively, exploring a wide range of media before the thoughtful development of final designs. While some flaws could sometimes be found in the eventual manufacture of the outcomes, the whole process of exploration and development demonstrated an informed originality and ambition that was outstanding.

Candidates appeared to enjoy drawing fashion figures and garments, and in many cases did it very well. Fashion drawing had in some cases been well taught. In others, merely tracing round a cardboard mannequin gave a low quality, repetitious result. Sometimes there was little evidence of working from direct observation from the starting point or of developing ideas. Whilst candidates could produce good fashion figures, it was clear there was a lack of understanding of garment design and construction.

The few textile submissions produced stencil repeat patterns. Whilst the initial first-hand studies were powerfully drawn, the final prints were poorly composed with inconsistent repeat patterns and overprinting. There was little evidence that work by other designers had been researched.

3D Design and sculpture

The strongest architectural submissions demonstrated a sustained exploration of materials, forms, construction methods, effects of lighting, colour and texture before the final designs emerged. Crucially, this exploration was practical rather than theoretical, giving the candidates a feel for their implications within the spaces they hoped to create. These works demonstrated decision making and a feel for space, surface and light within the final designs.

Architectural submissions in the middle range demonstrated competent digital skills. While the design work was thorough and cohesive, they relied on anonymously textured forms and demonstrated limitations in their invention and ambition.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03
Coursework B

General comments

The majority of submissions demonstrated a focused and sustained approach towards the development of conclusive final outcomes. However there were some candidates who submitted a series of competent finished pieces, rather than a single project supported by evidence of first-hand research, development, experimentation and cultural references.

The strongest candidates worked confidently from observations taken from first-hand sources. They made relevant references to the works of other practitioners to good effect, and developed their ideas in a coherent way with obvious personal involvement.

The middle-level work usually contained some direct observation, which was usually in the form of photographs. When references to artists' works were made, they were not always appropriate or were not used effectively to inform the direction and development of the work.

The candidates at the lower level generally worked from a limited number of sources, usually from only one viewpoint and rarely explored the works of others. Their control of media was limited and demonstrated poor technical skill, with little development of ideas. They tended to repeat ideas rather than exploring alternative solutions, or recorded individual forms demonstrating little understanding of how to construct a composition.

A significant number of candidates did not include the required sketchbook in their submissions. However, in general the sketchbooks seen were genuine working documents that informed the work and evolved during the development of the candidates' projects. There were a minority of sketchbooks that contained little more than a collection of random drawings of poor quality.

The Centres' assessments were varied with adjustments made in both directions. Most were generous when applying the mark scheme to assess their candidates' achievement. Consequently, large adjustments were required across all of the assessment objectives.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

This was the most popular area of study and a wide range of media was seen; gouache, watercolours, inks, pencil, oil paint, pastels, collage, markers and pen. Stitching on top of artwork was popular. A few examples of etching and lino cuts were seen.

Submissions in the higher mark range were personal, demonstrating a maturity of thought and practical skill. Candidates had used primary source material as their starting points. Ideas were explored and developed through experimentation with materials and processes. Clear links were made with the work of other artists or cultures. Popular themes included identity, local environment, architecture and natural forms. Work at this level demonstrated a clear journey from initial studies through to finished outcomes. The supporting work included sketchbooks which were relevant to the outcome and candidates showed skill in their choice and use of media.

Some submissions in the middle range explored still life using increasingly fluent and expressive brushwork. While some images achieved a degree of resolution, the development of compositional ideas and the refinement of the use of colour was inconsistent and did not demonstrate progression. There was no evidence of the candidates researching the work of other artists which may have assisted the development of their own ideas and techniques.

Also at this level were some installation based works. Although ambitious in intention, few candidates focussed their work enough to examine their ideas in sufficient depth. The work remained at a generalised level with little evidence of a process of refinement and development of ideas into resolved final outcomes. Some of these candidates wrote about their ideas in depth but their practical experimentation was very limited. Consequently, final outcomes were little more than sketches demonstrating limited skills. Most work of this sort was unfinished.

The lower-level work was more repetitive and tended to lack full exploration of an idea, but instead merely presented the same image in differing media or colourways, which was not sufficient development at this level. These candidates also lacked the exploration of the works of other practitioners. Supporting work was generally sparse and final outcomes underdeveloped and poorly executed.

Photography

This was the second most popular area of study. There were some excellent and very personal submissions where themes had been explored in depth. Subjects tended to be similar to those investigated within Painting and Related Media with much portraiture and figurative work seen, along with architecture.

The stronger submissions contained contact sheets, evidencing the gathering and investigation from their sources, and the selection and development of ideas were clearly apparent. Photoshop and other software programmes had been manipulated with understanding and the images created were not over-manipulated or enhanced.

Submissions in the middle range tended to be more straightforward, with some creative ideas and competent manipulative ability, but with less exploration of other approaches. A number of candidates took a large number of photographs of their subjects but were unable to refine the images beyond simple recording. Evidence of aesthetic choices informed by knowledge and critical understanding was limited. Researching the work of other photographers would have helped the development of these candidates' ideas and techniques.

Weaker submissions often contained more simple imagery which was then manipulated in Photoshop. Photoshop effects were overused, with candidates focusing on producing patterns and colour changes with little purpose or intention.

Textile and Fashion Design

There were very few examples of textiles, but the few that were often presented were individual and inventive. Printing on fabric with computer generated images was an interesting start to some experimental work. Sketchbooks were comprehensive and full of additional experiments. Weaker candidates produced simple tie and dyed, block printed or appliquéd pieces which demonstrated poor craft skills and design development.

There was some good imaginative work which developed into fashion and costume design. Fashion drawing had in some cases been well taught, some from life drawing classes.

There were examples of fashion designs which had been developed into made garments. Where good quality photographs had been submitted to show the front, back and side views of the garments, the effect of the translated designs into a 3D form were clear.

In some outstanding fashion designs the inventive ambition shown was impressive. There was sustained depth in the investigation which made the works successful. Sophisticated and mature decisions resulted in well made final clothing. In stronger submissions ideas were thoroughly and thoughtfully developed using a range of media before the final outcomes were manufactured.

Weaker submissions demonstrated lively and inventive fashion illustrations but there was little evidence of the sources of these designs or of any understanding of design development.

Graphic Design

Few entries were seen this session. However, in the few presented within this area of study, there was some successful digital work with a good understanding of logos and branding. Generally submissions were competent but lacking in original ideas. There was insufficient research at the beginning of projects, with little evidence of first-hand recording. Some ability was evident in both hand drawn and digital manipulation.

3D Design and sculpture

Very few submissions were received, but generally they demonstrated very good craft skills in realising quite individual and imaginative ideas. Most submissions, although generously assessed by Centres still attained marks in the high to mid ranges.

In many submissions, good photographs of the finished pieces as well as work in progress accompanied evidence of research and exploration. Clay and card constructions plus a few examples of origami were experimented with and presented in supporting work. The most proficient use of media was seen in several architectural designs.

Most candidates had referenced the work of other artists, both contemporary and historical; Ai Wei Wei, Paolozzi, Nikki de St. Phaile.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General comments

A broad range of subjects were seen. These included Fine Art, Painting and Sculpture, Portraiture, Fashion and Textile Design, Ceramics, Furniture Design, and Graphic Design. A number of architectural studies were seen, and these focused on a particular building and demonstrated some very good recording through the use of photography.

Many submissions referred to the practical work of the candidate. These were more successful when this work was put into context through making some in-depth comparative analysis with works by other relevant artists. Candidates had developed some challenging themes for the study which became very personal and meaningful, resulting in extremely engaging and imaginative studies.

The formats for presentation were varied with some digitally produced studies seen which achieved a good understanding of the basic elements required for the study. Some very inventive and visually engaging hand-made sketchbooks and folders/files were also submitted.

Many candidates had made use of proposal forms and this encouraged well considered planning which included appropriate sources for first-hand explorations to be made. Candidates had usually visited an artist's studio or an exhibition at a gallery. The work selected for investigation was relevant to the study with first-hand experience helping in the development of a good understanding of the topic investigated. It was often the case that many of the weaker submissions did not appear to have completed a proposal form.

High-level

The level of engagement was generally excellent, and even outstanding in several cases. This was often demonstrated through the visual presentation as well as the relevant connections made between the work of carefully selected artists and the candidates own responses. In all these cases a real journey of exploration had been made with the candidate making genuine discoveries, each informing significant personal observations and practical responses.

Examples seen at this level engaged in some intelligent and perceptive discussion of the work, using appropriate terms and terminology to compare and contrast the imagery. Many submissions were able to synthesise the research with some personal observations to develop a coherent and articulate discussion on the chosen theme. Several photographic submissions were seen to demonstrate a high level of understanding and awareness of layout and graphic design. Candidates often used a motif, colour, typography to present a homogenous style across the study. Some candidates had looked beyond art and design to support their ideas through wide reading which included other disciplines. Areas such as psychology, philosophy and science were explored to support observations and judgements made.

At this higher level, submissions always demonstrated a sustained development throughout the study, from the early well considered planning through to building a conclusion which would indicate a clear and individual sense of understanding and awareness of the chosen topic.

Mid-level

Most of the submissions were within this level of achievement. Many of these entries provided an overview of the work or artistic movement with a description and some biographical and/or anecdotal information. The written content sometimes included a comparison but this was generally limited to basic analysis of the imagery displayed. To develop this further candidates needed to investigate the concept involved through a broader and contextual understanding of the subject.

Some candidates demonstrated understanding and analysis by making transcriptions of the works or by applying similar techniques and approaches to their own work. This was evident in some photographic submissions. These candidates generally focused on the technical aspects of photography and developed this by applying it to their own work, showing their understanding through the application and experimentation of processes. An evaluation of the outcomes could have improved these studies.

Some investigations of traditional craft practises were seen which demonstrated a visual understanding through a focused practical experience of the process involved.

At this level candidates were able to make convincing links between their practical explorations and the research carried out into other artists. The selection of artists which candidates made indicated some understanding of the concept and context of the works being investigated. The work was usually visually engaging and demonstrated an awareness of the relationship between the images presented and the text used to annotate them.

Lower Levels

At this level of assessment, candidates often gathered biographical information on the artists and in some cases the text was obviously lifted from Wikipedia or a search engine. Fewer images were seen in these submissions and the images which did feature were often poorly integrated and had poor quality (out of focus or pixelated). Less care was taken with general presentation.

Some submissions were seen which contained no visual material and a few referred to images which had not been included in the study. In some cases images had been selected which had little or nothing to do with the text being used. A more considered selection of visual examples to support the points being made in the text/annotations would have benefitted many of these studies.

A few very weak entries showed a lack of understanding of the main purpose of the study: to explore a topic within any area of Art and Design. A lack of any first-hand experience inhibited any personal engagement which would have significantly improved all of those weaker studies. Most studies at this level contained only second-hand source material from the internet which limited the achievement levels in all assessment objectives. Some submissions made no reference to the work of other artists. These candidates were often using examples of their own coursework as evidence of first-hand experience. Improvements could have been made by making some connections with related works by other artists.

Candidates sometimes included a little evidence of a visit to an artist's studio. A common feature was an interview which would reveal little about the ideas and process behind the works seen. Some informed planning would have helped candidates to construct some searching questions for the artist which would have provided vital insights in to the ideas and methods involved in the production of those selected works.