

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9479/01
Coursework Assignment

Key messages

- The most successful presentations contained carefully organised work that followed the natural sequence of the creative process. Candidates would have benefited from being more selective during the editing process, to effectively show their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed.
- The Assessment Objectives are not separate units as each informs a holistic part of the creative process. Some candidates had labelled the pages of their supporting portfolio with a specific objective, to indicate their response. The signalling of work in this way can be useful for candidates to reflect on where they have met the assessment criteria, but it does not accurately capture how the creative process is rewarded. Sometimes these submissions lacked continuity between the objectives.
- Candidates should be encouraged to make observational studies directly from source where possible. This should include detailed observational studies using a range of media in addition to photography, to explore the theme in depth. Some candidates had over relied on downloaded images, which undermined their personal vision and limited an individual response.
- While candidates are encouraged to use their own photography while investigating their topic in the initial stages of their exploration, this should not be used in isolation. Where photography is included, candidates should label this work to clearly distinguish between their own photographs and those images that were taken from secondary sources, such as internet downloads or from books.

General comments

The submissions were generally well presented, with the supporting portfolio demonstrating a thoughtful and sustained body of work. Candidates had explored their topics through a range of materials such as painting and drawing, illustration, graphic design, print-making, textiles and fashion, surface pattern and photography. However, most had realised their work within the area of Fine Art, including their own supporting photography.

Responses to the themes were imaginative and candidates effectively explored their topics to interpret a range of creative ideas. Many candidates selected themes that were based around themselves. They explored aspects of their personality and their feelings through portraits and other related figurative work. The effect of the pandemic had clearly influenced many ideas, with imagery depicting masked faces, or reflections of a sense of isolation. Landscape or urban scenes offered the opportunity to explore the local environment from first-hand study, with many candidates attempting to show the effects of human pollution, global warming and other world issues.

Successful submissions demonstrated a clear purpose. Themes had been explored from first-hand study through drawing, painting, photography and media experiments. The investigation of various aspects of art and design had informed the candidates' work. Good connections with relevant artists made a positive impact on decision making and personal development in the strongest portfolios. Candidates' ability to develop ideas from a range of recording was clear, and this often led to resolved final outcomes. This work fulfilled the requirements of the assessment objectives and reflected understanding of the creative process.

Some submissions did not demonstrate a clear intention. Therefore, the work lacked purposeful direction and did not address the investigation of a specific idea. Those candidates who did not explore original ideas may have benefited from investigating the works of relevant artists to help inspire alternative creative approaches in their preparatory work.

It was essential that candidates produced good quality photographs of large-scale, three-dimensional or fragile work so that they could communicate the intricacies of their work for assessment.

Higher Level

The work at the higher level presented clear and focused ideas, with thoughtful connections with the works of art practitioners. Many candidates at this level had developed their ideas and techniques within a critical context, with the work reflecting a prior knowledge of a range of artists. Candidates continued to build on contextual research as their portfolios progressed, making strong and intelligent relationships between the work of others and their own ideas.

Submissions were sustained and ambitious and were always informed by first-hand observation. Candidates recorded extensively throughout their projects in a variety of media. The work had a sense of purpose and candidates clarified their intentions through perceptive evaluations at each stage of development. These candidates were able to critically analyse and recognise their strengths, which informed focused experimentation and the refinement of ideas. This foundation provided candidates with the confidence to make their own imaginative decisions and to produce personal and skilful work.

Materials were used in a range of inventive ways and included collage to add layering, transparency and texture, drawings with applied embroidery enhanced line, and printing which explored mark making and positive/negative shapes. The media rendering at this level was accomplished and mature. The work demonstrated a range of approaches from pencil and paint into collage, installation, relief work, model making, surface pattern and printing. Candidates' own thoughtful photography complimented their supporting studies with consideration given to the lighting of a space, a range of viewpoints and composition. These candidates were able to select and edit their work effectively to present a clear journey. The supporting pages were organised and reflected the natural flow of ideas to illustrate how the initial investigations led to a resolved final outcome.

Middle Level

Many of the candidates at the middle range demonstrated various levels of technical skill and a competent process of working. However, the depth of investigation was less detailed than that shown in the stronger work. These candidates had skilfully identified many appropriate materials to explore their themes and demonstrated an ability to record from a range of sources with competence. However, the media skill was often inconsistent and some candidates underperformed when developing ideas through manipulated imagery, or when realising an explored outcome.

In some submissions the research was purposeful, but the depth of investigation in the portfolio work of others varied. Most candidates recorded from a range of relevant first-hand and secondary sources in the form of drawings, paintings, mixed media experiments and their own photography. In other work, candidates completely relied on the use of photography. If they had combined their photography skills with other methods of recording from their subject matter such as paint, pencil or mixed media studies, then this would have provided greater range for idea development.

Many candidates demonstrated good control of their media, while others explored with a real sense of investigation by experimenting and combining mixed materials. However, they lacked confidence in the execution of these experimental ideas when producing the final form. Candidates should be encouraged to refine their experimentation in order to fulfil their ideas into a realised outcome.

Some candidates had thoughtfully selected relevant artist references which made an impact on the direction of their work. This research challenged their approaches when manipulating materials and resulted in the creation of individual ideas. While in other work, the investigation of art and design practitioners was evident but not always used successfully to inform the materials handling, development or to encourage a personal response. Candidates would have benefited from making relevant choices which could have informed image development and composition planning. The final outcome sometime did not reflect the strengths seen within the portfolio, and did not demonstrate the candidates' strongest ideas.

Lower Level

The work at the lower level was often incoherent and the development of ideas was difficult to understand. There were fewer references to first-hand sources and candidates were less able to record meaningful information or communicate ideas through observational studies. More candidates relied on secondary-sourced material as an initial starting point and others attempted to use their own photography as a means of

gathering information. However, many of these candidates lacked the technical knowledge and the understanding of composition to create successful images. Consequently, these photographs presented little reference opportunity to assist the development of ideas. In other submissions, the origins of sources were unclear and imagery appeared to have been created from the candidates' imagination rather than from a reliable source of recording. Some presentations contained unrelated images which did not inform the progression of ideas. A range of materials had been explored in the supporting portfolio but the ability to refine the technical skills was limited.

Candidates made references to the works of others, but they struggled to make the relevant connections necessary to inform their own ideas. Those who demonstrated clearer links with a relevant artist created more effective journeys. This was especially apparent in their attempts to explore alternative compositions and to replicate the artists' methods of material rendering.

Candidates were often unable to develop alternative ideas due to the lack of in-depth investigation during the initial stages of recording. These candidates were also unable to recognise their strengths or reflect on their work to reach informed critical judgements in order to refine ideas. With a distinct weakness in the research and development, it was sometimes difficult to identify how the final outcome had evolved.

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Paper 9479/02
Externally Set Assignment

Key messages

- Recording of visual material should be relevant to the chosen question, but observations should be made from a variety of sources using a range of media in addition to the candidates' own photography. Candidates should be encouraged to research from their own locality or experience. An over reliance on images from secondary sources should be avoided as it limits individuality.
- Notation can be useful for candidates but it should provide evidence of some degree of critical analysis of their work in progress. Candidates should avoid just highlighting the obvious such as '*This is a study of my house*', or '*I like the colours of this picture.*'
- Evidence of planning for the examination work such as sketches exploring alternative compositions or colour ways would help candidates realise their intentions with confidence.
- Care should be taken with the organisation and presentation of all material, and the submissions should be edited where there is too much. The submission should clearly show how the initial research material was explored through experiments with media and process, images combined and manipulated and ideas developed through to a personal and coherent timed test response.

General comments

There was good evidence of candidates demonstrating their ability to develop ideas from initial observational studies leading to resolved final outcomes produced in the timed test and many submissions demonstrated evidence of work that covered all of the assessment objectives. Where candidates struggled to develop original ideas, they may have benefited from more research into the work of relevant artists to inspire different approaches to their supporting studies.

However, the works of many art practitioners were explored which informed the development of individual ideas. Many examples of artist referencing, particularly in the middle to lower levels were sourced from the internet and books rather than from first-hand contact which prevented a depth of insightful information. This could have been due to the global restrictions in place at this time.

Examples of photocopies made of photographs, print outs and, in some cases, drawings which were then enlarged and worked over the top were common. Without annotation it was difficult to know how much of the image was traced by the candidate and how much they created themselves. Clearly the control of the materials used on top of the photocopy had value which was subsequently rewarded.

Generally, the work was well organised and most candidates appropriately submitted their submissions on A2 sheets. The supporting sheets were presented with care, with related and relevant final outcomes. Where work was larger than A2 or 3D, it was photographed, often to a good standard, and was presented on the A2 sheets showing a clear and thorough representation of the work.

Some candidates needed to be more selective with the work that they included in their supporting studies. Candidates may have benefited from editing their research in order to better demonstrate their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed to a final conclusion.

Higher levels

At this level questions prompted an individual and unique response, with candidates making unexpected

links and taking the work in a unique direction.

Although few outstanding submissions were seen, it was common to all at this level that candidates' own ideas and techniques had been developed within a critical context. The work suggested a prior knowledge of a range of other artists with more specialised research carried out as topics progressed. These candidates' work was sustained and ambitious and was always informed by first-hand observation. Candidates had observed and drawn extensively throughout their topics rather than simply using this as a starting strategy and used a variety of media. The work always had a sense of purpose and candidates clarified their intentions through perceptive evaluations at each stage of development. Candidates' own evaluations informed increasingly focussed experimentation and enabled the development of appropriate skills. These secure foundations gave candidates the confidence to make imaginative progress and produce personal, skilful work during the timed test.

Middle levels

Assessment objectives at this level were generally more unevenly met. Often Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 were more successfully addressed with recording and technical skills being stronger than the ability to develop and present ideas convincingly.

Recording was made through a variety of media including photography, drawings, paintings, textiles, printing and mixed media experiments. The quality and depth of the supporting studies varied and while in some cases candidates had recorded from a range of relevant sources including secondary and first-hand, other candidates relied completely on the use of photography. They would have benefited from combining their own photography with looking directly at the object, person or place as they drew or painted their observation studies.

Many candidates were less able to translate their research into creditable responses. Refinement of ideas was often problematic for those in this range. Occasionally these candidates simply made the wrong choice of media. Some submissions seen at this level demonstrated good levels of technical skill in a range of media, and candidates had explored the starting point in some detail, but there was often less evidence of considered development and of a review of the work. The final outcomes sometimes did not reflect the strengths seen within the supporting studies. Referring to the work of other artists may have helped these candidates to resolve issues such as composition planning, ways to explore and experiment with media or trying alternative ways to manipulate their initial images.

Lower levels

Many submissions seen at this level had limited evidence of gathering or candidates had collected imagery from limited sources. Most of these submissions contained the candidates' own photography for reference with additional secondary sources. Some submissions only used photography to record visual stimulus and candidates did not attempt to draw from these or from first-hand sources.

Technical skills at this level were often of a limited standard and candidates were less able to recognise their strengths. They did not show an ability to reflect on their work and attempt to refine or improve their technical skill through sustained investigation and exploration of different ways to use a range of media. The manipulation of materials was sometimes stronger in submissions, but the lack of developed ideas meant that the work did not progress. Candidates did not build on their strengths. Consequently, the final form tended to be a repeat of an earlier image in the submission, or an unresolved form where two images had been patched together without refinement or planning.

Where candidates included artist referencing, the content was either unrelated or biographical, and did little to inform progression or direction of study.

The weakest submissions were usually a small number of poor quality studies, lacking in development, technical skill and aesthetic awareness and often based on derivative, secondary imagery, downloaded from the internet or from magazines.

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Paper 9479/03
Personal Investigation

Key messages

- When carrying out research and visiting studios and galleries or interviewing artists, candidates should be encouraged to prepare considered questions, finding out about the ideas and concepts explored rather than focusing on biographical detail in order to help develop personal ideas.
- In the most successful submissions, candidates' own practical work extended beyond merely copying in the style of their chosen artists. Candidates should be encouraged to use their research and exploration to develop personal ideas that are influenced by what they have learned.

General comments

Some submissions included unique, personal and interesting subjects which were investigated with genuine curiosity and enthusiasm. Many were ambitious in both scale and content reflecting a sustained and focused effort over the course. The most successful candidates showed clear intentions that were pursued with an openness to be inspired, informed and guided by what they had learned. These candidates were able to integrate their written and practical work in a perceptive, intelligent and cohesive manner.

Portraiture and the human figure were the focus for the majority of candidates and they explored issues of emotions, gender, mood disorders and mental health. These candidates were able to gather direct observational studies either through self-portraits or using friends and family as models. Some examples were based around landscape and the urban environment which provided opportunities for a number of first-hand recordings of immediate surroundings. Other investigations explored social issues, cultural aspects, current affairs, environmental concerns and historic interests.

Many candidates were able to see work first hand by visiting galleries, museums, exhibitions and local artists' studios. Some candidates had gone to impressive lengths to interview and even work alongside their chosen artist building both a genuine rapport and first-hand skills and techniques.

Large-scale, ambitious outcomes including murals, textile wall hangings and complex installations were seen and these had often been displayed within the school. These were submitted as high-quality photographs, taken under good lighting from a variety of angles or viewpoints.

Most submissions included a mix of handwritten and typed text. The level of specialist language used was varied. Hand-written notes are encouraged as they often signal an immediacy and originality when commenting on the work of others or reflecting on progress, but these must be legible.

Many submissions focused on a comparison of two or more artists. The most effective were those that were able to take information from a range of sources, making their own unique connections through analysis and personal interpretation.

Where candidates had selected several key art works of an artist, the whole submission had a more focused approach as candidates were able to explore ideas in depth in their own practical studies with a particular focus rather than taking a general approach to the artist's work.

It is important to label photographs and other research clearly in order to differentiate between the candidates' work and that of their chosen artists. Often the artists or artworks referred to were found online and required referencing. Good quality reference material can help candidates to be more ambitious in their work and improve the quality of their outcomes.

Most of the work seen referred to the artists' use of materials or themes within their work. Some candidates were able to identify and respond to the concepts being explored and the relationship between these and the use of materials and imagery.

Higher level

At the higher levels it was clear that candidates were able to take a holistic approach to the assessment objectives and carried out continuous reflection and research to progress in their work and ideas.

At this level candidates had researched more than one artist or craftsperson and had made some attempt to view work first-hand or carry out an interview online. Visual and contextual research was usually first-hand and perceptive links were made between artworks and the candidates' own intentions and concepts.

These submissions demonstrated continuous searching for new or alternative reference material (both self-generated and found material – artist reference or others) and ways to explore and communicate their ideas. Mature referencing of contextual research was combined with practical exploration and experimentation with media in order to communicate a range of complex ideas using a sophisticated visual language. The visual research carried out to inform creative work included carefully observed studies using a range of media including paint, pencil, line, photography, and it was clear which aspect of the work the candidate was investigating in each study. For example, colour use, composition, subject matter, light source or media use.

The written work included appropriate art specialist language to communicate candidates' own thoughts and ideas generated from looking in detail at the work. Candidates were able to make informed links to areas they could explore visually for their own work as a result of their research. Candidates' own reflections and responses to what they found was both clear and insightful.

The subjects explored at this level were carefully chosen to reflect the candidates' own areas of interest. Often complex social or psychological issues were explored as well as attempts to research wider cultural and environmental issues. Candidates made reference to other areas of study such as philosophy and the sciences to support their understanding of the subject matter and this gave them in-depth insight into the area being explored.

Text and images in submissions were well placed so that connections that were being made visually were explored in more depth in written form. This showed that there had been obvious thought given to make sure the work was cohesive on each page. The practical and written elements were fully integrated to show the development of the investigation. The quality of written work was more than simply descriptive in nature. Candidates' own opinions were expressed and there was evidence of some good critical analysis. Candidates were able to integrate wider issues in relation to their chosen subject and to place artists' work in a cultural and historical context. Candidates made informed judgements about the work based on their research and used this to progress with their practical responses. The written content was highly articulate and candidates were able to integrate the research with their own perceptive interpretations and responses. This led to unique lines of enquiry and exploration of imagery.

Practical work was technically explorative, covering a range of processes and there was clear evidence of the development of candidates' own responses to what they had researched. At this level candidates were able to select materials and processes relevant to their ideas and the concepts being explored. They were able to use the qualities of specific techniques and media to effectively communicate intentions.

Candidates working at the higher levels were able to select and edit their work effectively to present a submission that clearly demonstrated their journey and to show how their artist research had informed and influenced their own artwork. The portfolios reflected sustained and fully engaged study.

Middle level

At this level candidates often relied on the internet for their source material about their chosen artists, but the work they selected was individual and personal and related well to their own specific interests.

Submissions at this level displayed many of the qualities of higher-level work, but the content lacked the thoroughness and maturity, particularly in the range of exploration in the practical work.

Work within the middle range often presented an inconsistent approach towards the assessment objectives. The ability to select and control media was often notably more developed than other equally critical criteria. This became apparent when candidates responded to the work of their chosen artists. Copies and reflective

studies were made showing competent skill in the analysis of process and technique. Some candidates could have taken these observed skills further within their own work developing more independent ideas and experimentation.

Candidates carried out transcriptions of selected works by artists to gain insight into the use of materials and processes. Clearer identification of which aspect of the artwork they were investigating would have provided in-depth understanding of technique as opposed to a more general approach. This would have informed a more focused written response.

Some analysis was evident at this level and research was relevant and varied, and this supported the written elements in an engaged and informed way. Other submissions could have been developed further to generate a number of responses to the subject and to suggest greater manipulation of imagery and media.

Submissions at this level were imaginative and highly personal but further refinement of ideas and experimentation would have led to more sophisticated outcomes that fulfilled the potential seen within the preparatory sheets.

Presentations were generally well organised although many could have benefitted from further editing, particularly when presenting material downloaded from secondary sources.

Lower level

At the lower levels some candidates included artist research but none or very little of their own art work in response to this research, or others included their own drawings and photographs around a theme but did not include much, or any, artist research. Those that did include practical work, often copied an artwork from a secondary source with limited technical skill, critical analysis or development. There was less evidence of candidates using the artist research to inform their own practical work, for example to explore colour, media use or subject matter.

A reliance on secondary-sourced imagery was common both in relation to visual and contextual research. The majority of artist research was largely biographical with superficial links made between artworks and the candidates' own. It often focused purely on the subject matter or selection of materials. More in-depth research and understanding of chosen works would have enabled candidates to make stronger connections and to generate more personal and developed responses.

The candidates' own written material was mainly descriptive and any attempts at critical analysis or the expression of their own opinions focused on why they liked what they had chosen to record. Candidates were less able to use specialist language and vocabulary effectively to communicate ideas and demonstrate their understanding. It would have been beneficial for candidates to identify the concepts or themes explored and to use the formal elements to analyse how the work or piece was constructed. This would have informed the development of ideas and creative work.

There was evidence of candidates copying selected artists' works and some of this was more skilful than others. Attempts to develop their own outcomes were usually paintings executed in the style of an artist or designer. These could have been developed further to include more original ideas.

Some candidates submitted an investigation that was purely text based. Some made reference to an artist or a piece of work but did not include the image in the investigation. These submissions would have benefitted from a practical exploration or response to their chosen subject and the research. These candidates missed the opportunity to show how their own ideas and works were inspired by their studies.

Many candidates working at this level demonstrated a limited ability to select and control materials and processes and to fully explore the range of marks or techniques associated with the media. Further and more varied visual reference material which captured objects, scenes, people from different angles or with different focus (colour, shape, texture) would have been useful in developing observational studies and exploring materials.

Presentation at this level was often disjointed and confusing. A clear relationship between written and practical work needed to be shown. The presentations demonstrated limited skills in being able to integrate the practical and written elements of the investigation to show the development of work and the creative journey. These submissions would have benefitted from careful selection of key observational studies and relevant source material to show how the work progressed through research and exploration.