

# ART AND DESIGN

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Paper 0400/01  
Broad-based Assignment

## General comments

Candidates explored a wide range of media in response to the starting points. These included painting, drawing in pencil, charcoal, pastels, pen and ink, biro and chalks, printmaking (relief forms such as lino), sculpture, computer aided design, photography and body art. Sometimes, an inappropriate application of media had been selected for use in the examination. Whilst it is beneficial for candidates to explore a variety of media, it is also important that this is made in a way which strengthens the submission.

The most successful candidates usually fulfilled their potential mainly through attention to preparatory studies, and generally these were relevant to the chosen question. Direct first-hand observation was commonly seen, supported by the candidates' own photography. Exploration undertaken by most candidates was thorough and involved experiments with viewpoints, lighting effects, compositions, and media. These studies often led to a full compositional try out before the examination piece. Contextual references were relevant and their influences could be seen to clearly inform the candidates' own development.

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

At the lower level preparatory work was limited, with many cut and paste secondary photographs being poorly copied for final outcomes. Often the first idea or image was the only one explored. These candidates had to rely on limited sources for their final piece and were unable to develop their work into convincing results.

There were submissions where candidates sectioned off areas of their final piece and executed each area in a different medium. This resulted in rather disjointed final compositions where such qualities as spatial relationships, cast shadows etc., which are so vital to successful compositions, were difficult to measure against AO3 (Aesthetic Qualities). This approach would have been better included as part of the supporting work where it could be credited as part of Exploration and Development (AO2) and Control of Media (AO4). However much more successful works were seen when paint or drawing was integrated with collage or combined with photographic images.

Most of the work was clearly labelled, with the question number clearly indicated. On occasions, the question number was not indicated on the label which presented a problem in identifying the chosen question when the outcome was very esoteric.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1: Painting equipment**

This was one of the most popular questions and many candidates made good use of equipment readily available within the art room. The strongest of these included some thorough and thoughtfully structured preparatory studies.

Stronger candidates took full advantage of their surroundings and took good photographs, or made excellent observational studies, of different painting equipment, changing the focus and composition for interest. Equally their development of ideas was very strong with a wide range of exploration and media. Technical skills throughout were highly developed and final pieces were resolved and informed.

The weaker work was lacking exploration or evidence of observational work. Most were a still life drawn or painted with little back-up work. There was little evidence of any preparatory work carried out in advance of the examination. Some arrangements appeared to have been set up by the Centre with the candidates working from one side or another. This format restricted candidates' choice of viewpoint and limited the credit that could be awarded for personal qualities.

The preparatory work at the lower level was limited. The compositions either tended to consist of a collection of simple images illustrating a basic grouping of brushes or pencils, or research from individual objects in isolation. Images tended to be flat, without tonal, colour or any dynamic qualities. There was an overreliance on pencil, which lacked the observational qualities of form and surface detail, in the works of many candidates. Other materials used were limited to coloured pencil and/or paint. Media was poorly controlled, and the resulting images lacked definition, expression and character. There were limited alternatives to the final composition, and very little experimentation with a range of media.

### **Question 2: Alfresco dining**

Few responses were seen for this question and very few candidates were able to integrate a group of figures within an outdoor space.

References were made to the works of the Impressionist artists which had informed the work to varying levels.

Some candidates had interpreted the question in an imaginative way and investigated literary references or social issues. In the stronger submissions, work was confidently developed, explored and the final exam pieces were imaginative. There was often evidence of very good observational work which had informed the works.

Most submissions demonstrated rudimentary explorations of limited compositions. Source material tended to be predominantly images taken from magazines or the internet, and there was an apparent lack of artist references. The preparatory work was basic and contained a limited understanding of perspective. There was little attempt to explore a range of possible sources, or alternative images relating to the question. Instead, observation tended to focus almost exclusively on the few objects that were to form the final outcome. Media choices were often poor such as felt tip which lacked any sensitivity, alongside poster paints which were lumpy and crude.

### **Question 3: Zigzag**

A wide ability range was seen in the responses to this question. A few submissions demonstrated a less obvious choice of subject for the 'zigzag' title of the question which resulted in more organic, less jagged outcomes. There were also fashion and textile design submissions which often simply placed zigzag patterns onto dress shapes with little referencing or development from observed images.

Photography was used by candidates to record examples of zigzag patterns found in the local environment such as tyre patterns, architectural features such as steps, staircases and brick patterns. The patterns found in woven fabric and basket construction were also popular from the direct observation of traditional handicrafts. Other work had been derived from plants and figures. In most submissions, the planning and development towards the final outcome was less well explored, making the final pieces less successful.

In the majority of weaker submissions there was little evidence of an ability to explore the question by looking for zigzag patterns and lines in natural or man made objects with very little gathering and observational studies. This resulted in images that lacked depth and interest and designs were also overly dependent on secondary sources.

### **Question 4: Stormy weather**

This question provided opportunities to those candidates who enjoyed landscape subjects and trying to inject a sense of mood and atmosphere into their work.

The strongest candidates used photography to investigate some rugged landscapes combined with severe weather conditions. Seascapes were also popular. Media and a knowledge of colour mixing was often sensitively used to express the atmospheric changes in the environment.

Other candidates explored ways to create atmospheric images representing troubled times and confusing

emotions. This included some examples of carefully shot photographs with good use of lighting.

Mid-level submissions also demonstrated an interpretative approach to the question, with ideas of emotional storms. The source material for this work was relatively broad, ranging from primary source photography, observational drawing, magazines and internet references to artists' works. Most work demonstrated evidence of the rendering of pastels, chalks, pencils and charcoal, which were expressively applied to create atmosphere and drama.

In the lower mark ranges candidates struggled with producing studies from research. Often candidates only attempted to copy second hand photographs and did not know how to develop their ideas. These candidates often interpreted the theme very literally, sometimes depending on a single photograph, then simply copying the indistinct imagery with little exploration or development. Submissions were often over reliant on secondary sources and failed to depict objects within the image with any accuracy.

#### **Question 5: A standing figure, leaning on the back of a chair**

Submissions for this question achieving mid to high marks demonstrated confidence in drawing the figure and included many observational studies exploring a wide range of viewpoints and angles. Technical skills were of a very good standard and many candidates experimented with a wide range of media and processes. The more successful submissions had considered the background. A number of candidates went beyond the question brief and experimented with two figures standing at the chair. These ambitious compositions investigated the relationship of the two figures within the room space.

Less strong submissions showed limited observational skills. There was little understanding of foreshortening or the more challenging aspects of proportion and structure of the human form or of the perspective of the chair. There was also a lack of exploration of both composition and media. The figure was frequently shown without any background context and the preparatory studies leading towards the final outcome did not usually contain any alternative compositional possibilities, differing view points, or varied media. There were very few artist references, or other source material beyond the immediate figure. Consequently, the outcome was either unresolved, or a larger copy of the candidates' limited, undeveloped preparatory pieces.

#### **Question 6: Building site**

The most successful submissions for this question showed excellent use of observational skills from a variety of candidates' own photographs and included experimentation with a range of unusual viewpoints. Candidates often demonstrated good understanding of composition in their pieces with very good technical skill in tackling complex arrangements such as street scenes and buildings. Many submissions included photographs taken whilst visiting a construction site, exploring the materials and buildings as well as the people and construction vehicles around the site

The work in the middle level was sometimes inventive and thoughtful, but with inconsistent technical skill, refinement of ideas and difficulties in understanding perspective. The preparatory work for these submissions was more consistent than those at the lower level and generally demonstrated a clear sense of development.

The weaker submissions generally showed bad angles, awkward viewpoints and incorrect use of perspective which showed a lack of understanding of three-dimensional shapes and little or no aesthetic appreciation. Candidates had often worked either totally from the imagination, inventing structures such as cranes and skyscrapers, or from secondary sourced images. These images were often drawn with the aid of a ruler and compasses, and due to a lack of observed objects the shapes, forms and structures were mostly diagrammatic.

#### **Question 7: Looking through blinds or a lace curtain**

There were some strong submissions for this question. Generally these candidates had explored from first-hand sources studying hands and eyes and how views/faces were obscured by net curtains/blinds. Some good photography had been taken to support the development of work. Responses were imaginative and exciting in the choice of lighting, position, material, arrangement and their rendering. At this level candidates demonstrated excellent technical skills in a range of media and produced very careful and detailed studies looking at lace patterns and drapery of lace over faces and other forms. Many candidates had combined photography with strong lighting to explore the way light fell through the intricate patterns and different textures of the material onto faces and figures. Others had explored a range of set-ups combining plants, vases of flowers, trinkets or animals on windowsills, partly concealed by the net curtain. These ideas had been informed by the study of other artist's paintings.

Some of the weaker submissions consisted mostly of images of blinds with a hand pulling the slats apart, with slits of bright eyes peering out of the figure's silhouette through the gaps. The figure drawing was generally weak in these images and further challenges were presented in the representation of hands.

### **Question 8: Mechanical patterns**

The higher and mid-level responses to this question included very careful and accurate studies to investigate the complicated shapes and forms of cog wheels and rusty old engine parts from direct observation in a variety of media with good composition, form and tone. Candidates working at this level were then able to develop their studies into interesting final pieces, trying out a range of alternative compositions and colour combinations before deciding on a final outcome. Candidates used media skilfully to represent the metallic and reflective qualities of the mechanical elements, often using pencil and pen and ink but also exploring colour and texture to closely observe and capture these qualities.

The more able candidates included reference to other artists' work, particularly the futurists, to inform their choice of media and arrangement. Accomplished work at this level explored pattern and mechanical shape through fashion design, and interesting cultural referencing to types of pattern seen on items such as ceramic tiles and mosaics etc., that were then overlaid with the patterns from mechanical imagery.

In mid level submissions, creatures and robotic figures were developed from mechanical forms recorded during the preparatory period, but imagery remained very two dimensional with little evidence of candidates understanding the three dimensional qualities of their inventions. Submissions were supported with recording from first-hand observation and relevant references to artists. Repeat patterns were apparent and often integrated with the figure. CAAD imagery was popular at this level, with mechanical imagery being merged with photographs of the human body. Whilst these images had considerable potential for development there was a lack of evidence of the origin of the sources.

In the lower mark range candidates often concentrated on isolated components such as nuts and bolts. Little thought was given to the organisation or development of this imagery into a final composition. Often, enlarged views of one of these objects provided the image for the final examination.

### **Question 9: Cultural adornments**

This was one of the most popular questions and allowed candidates to fully engage with artefacts from their own culture, both present and from the past. There were many examples relating to costume and fashion accessories.

A large number of candidates in the upper and middle mark ranges explored this question from a multi-cultural viewpoint. Candidates at this level often explored artefacts or traditions from a range of countries. There were examples of dance and associated costumes. At this level there was an accomplished manipulation of media.

Less successful submissions lacked studies from direct observation and generally relied on second-hand research, mostly taken from the internet, and little attempt was made to develop these into new compositions. Images throughout the supporting studies were often repetitive. Much of this work was rendered in pencil and or colouring pencils with some attempts at moving into acrylic paints with varying degrees of success. The choice of media at this level was not usually appropriate to intention. This was evident in the manipulation of felt tip pen and wax crayon to execute intricate designs. In some work there were examples of traditional signage used as a starting point. However, the over reliance on traced imagery and a lack of understanding of the letter forms, restricted the development of ideas in these submissions.

Many candidates interpreted this question in a very broad way almost dismissing the idea of adornment from the question. These seemed to be the weaker entries as they worked through too many different cultures and works became disjointed and confused rather than focusing on cultural adornment.

### **Question 10: Potted plants**

This question gave an opportunity for detailed study of form, structure, colour and texture. Whilst there were some strong results, there were many more weak submissions which failed to address such qualities. A large numbers of candidates simply concentrated on a single potted plant left isolated in the centre of the picture surface.

In the higher mark range candidates were aware of the need to compose and group a number of pots into a final arrangement. These pots were linked by spatial overlap and cast shadows. Subjective viewpoints were seen in the upper mark range which illustrated arms and hands involved in the process of placing the plants into pots. The best works were characterised by very thorough studies which included excellent drawings and paintings from first-hand observation. Candidates working at this level were able to experiment confidently with materials such as paint, oil pastel, photography, digital manipulation, collage and textiles to describe the surface qualities, texture and structure of the plants. These studies made excellent use of looking from a variety of interesting view points often using lighting to exaggerate shape, form and colour. Candidates often took the theme into a conceptual area or abstracted the final piece from formal traditional observational work. Good elements of rendering occurred predominantly in acrylic paint with tonal and compositional experiments in evidence. Final pieces were informed, thoughtful and imaginative.

Mid-range candidates recorded potted plants seen on patios and walls. The inclusion of a background environment meant that these compositions were related to the entire picture surface. Also at this level, candidates experimented with the effect of weather and lighting conditions on potted plants which resulted in dramatic cast shadows and silhouetted forms when the plants were viewed against sunsets. Plant forms were sometimes integrated with the human form and flora and fauna spilt out between ribcages, the tops of heads, etc. Abstract ideas such as these had often been inspired by surrealism. At this level the use of media was often inconsistent and there were areas where the level of skill was very low, but often the candidate showed a significantly higher level of ability in one particular medium. It would have been beneficial if these candidates had been encouraged to pursue a path that emphasised their strengths.

Work seen at the lower level included initial drawings from observation and secondary-sourced images but supporting studies did not have evidence of development of ideas and exploration of media use. An understanding of form was also lacking and there was little consideration for composition. Objects often floated within the composition without any sense of being placed on a surface. In some instances, all candidates from a Centre worked from the same arrangement. This practice meant that candidates were unable to fulfil the potential within the personal qualities assessment objective.



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<p><b>Paper 0400/02</b> <b>Design-based Assignment</b></p>
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## Key messages

Candidates should be reminded to address all points of the question to ensure their submission is fully focussed.

Most candidates would benefit from undertaking more first-hand observation of their topic rather than relying on secondary sources.

## General comments

Candidates at the higher levels of achievement showed an ability to edit and select their most relevant pieces and paid particular attention to the way they presented their work. Less strong submissions included more sheets than necessary. These submissions focused on quantity rather than quality, with less attention paid to showing their research and ideas in consecutive order. The weakest submissions often included repetitive secondary research and pencil sketches which were not always relevant and showed no continuity.

In some centres all candidates had answered the same question and all the work was very similar in content. This limited many of the personal qualities that could be shown. It was also common to see the same secondary references in these submissions which resulted in almost identical final images.

There was evidence of good primary research in many submissions, particularly in **Questions 4, 5 and 10**. Weaker candidates collected much of their reference from the internet and this often resulted in prints which were too small or inadequate to work from. Although some of their own photography was also seen, this was not always of a useful quality.

Little relevant annotation was seen except in stronger submissions. There was a tendency at the lower and mid-levels to have no notes at all or to describe the media used rather than ideas and the decision making.

The 2D media and processes were mostly paint - watercolours and acrylics, plus pencil, crayons, markers and pastels. Most of the submissions using drawing and painting fell into the mid or lower assessment range and candidates would have benefitted from more work focusing on compositional skills here. There were some 3D final outcomes as well as collage and lino and woodcuts seen in final work. Candidates' own photography was seen quite frequently in the supporting work at all levels. There were also a few final outcomes using computer graphics. Some of these showed an expert use of Photoshop or Illustrator and work was very successful, imaginative and well presented.

There was research about artists/designers from most candidates but they were not always relevant to the chosen themes. Occasionally in lower band submissions, artists were included who had no relevance to the question answered. Designers were not always mentioned by name, and examples of book covers, logos, illustrations were seen without any notes to justify their inclusion.

This series nearly all work was well presented and most submissions were ordered clearly on A2 sized paper or thin card as required. Some candidates put tracing paper between each of their sheets which was not necessary. Work was usually well labelled on the front of the sheets.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1: NerG**

Generally this question was chosen by weaker candidates. First-hand research consisted mostly of sketches of trainers, boots and balls of various shapes and found images of sportsmen and sportswomen. Pencil, paint and markers were used. Only a few visual or typographic references were made to the reference in the question that the design was to promote the sports and fitness 'at their school'.

In the stronger works a variety of well-constructed typography was included. Candidates at this level found and produced their own references which enabled them to create individual solutions to the design brief. The strongest candidates showed a competent and proficient range of observational work which was sometimes supported with photography, experimenting with viewpoints and compositions. However, there was limited experimentation with different media at this level. Even though candidates presented a range of fonts in their research they were not always referred to again. Some were hand rendered, but most candidates just printed out a few examples. These candidates missed the opportunity to research their ideas in depth or develop the designs thoroughly.

Weaker submissions were often poorly researched with limited idea development. They often had simplistic final artwork with little exploration of type. Copied cartoon figures were seen at this level.

#### **Question 2: Who has seen the wind?**

Pencils, paint, ink and biro were the media most used in answering this question and some interesting ideas were seen. Tree drawings and/or photos were included in some submissions but they were often static and unaffected by the wind. It was only in the stronger work that thought was given to ways of portraying the wind visually. The better submissions were well planned and executed but many of the weaker submissions were rendered in pencil and had limited research to develop the range of ideas required and were often repetitious. In these works candidates' initial ideas did not include any calligraphy or designed type. Primary research was included in only a few submissions, which meant that many candidates missed the opportunity for observational drawing as a starting point for ideas. Secondary research was more usual. Reference to the work of others, often the Impressionists, was sometimes included and used constructively in the better work.

#### **Question 3: Climb**

Much of the work focused on horror and thriller films in mood and content.

Stronger work included proficient and expert observational drawings of a range of staircases inside and outside buildings mostly from personal photographs which were displayed alongside. Work was in a range of media including watercolour, coloured pencils, felt-tips on coloured and ripped papers, with some photography and photo-montages. Preparation included a range of compositional studies including the context for the stairs, with connections to M.C Escher, to produce impossible staircases. This reference to artists' work helped to generate ideas.

Middle range candidates showed some creative starting points and a competent ability to record from life or from photographs, but often relied on computer images or games for inspiration. Most candidates combined printed images with hard-edged designs of stairs and related images. Although drawings showed some technical skills, they lacked an understanding of composition and relationships of forms and shapes.

In the weaker submissions first-hand drawings/photos were not always included and if they were they were not always useful as reference. Secondary images of ladders were frequently seen. The limited research prevented these candidates from exploring a range of ideas and mostly it was only the images that were given any consideration. The type was often poorly rendered. Final artwork at this lower level was produced in pencil, paint or biro.

#### **Question 4: Cutting Edge**

This question gave candidates good opportunities to produce primary research using observational drawing or photography. Mostly the images were of leaves and flowers and occasionally draped fabric or photos of models wearing contemporary fashions. Secondary research was seen more frequently.

Fashion and costumes were the most popular focus for this question and posters were frequently seen. In most cases, the ideas were very literal in that the candidate transposed shapes of leaves on to a pre-existing form of garment.

A good range of media and processes were used to produce ideas and experiments. As well as pencils and paint-watercolours or gouache and their own photos, candidates used pens, stencils, rubbings, collage, fabrics and digital manipulation.

Although there were some well-conceived submissions where the question had been well understood, most submissions for this question were in the middle range. Often there was little reference to 'Cutting Edge' other than as a heading. After the initial reference gathering, candidates in the lower assessment bands often either designed costumes which bore no relation to their drawings of leaves etc. or posters covered in leaves/flowers that showed no reference to a fashion event or 'Cutting Edge'. Type, if included, was not given as much attention as the visuals. These candidates usually relied on found images rather than drawing from life, or had no reference at all. They demonstrated some drawing ability, planning and ideas development but lacked compositional skills.

In the very weakest submissions a lack of observational drawing, research into fashion designers, and ideas development had a strong effect on the work of candidates, many of whom relied on a silhouette or outline of a figure and covered it in leaf shapes without considering how the leaves would describe the form of the body.

#### **Question 5: Workshop**

This was a fairly popular question and screws, nails, nuts and bolts, hammers and other tools and right angled metal corners were drawn by the majority of candidates to represent the letters of the logo.

Reference photos were sometimes stronger than the observational drawings, but this was usually not recognised.

In the weaker submissions there was little reference to gathering ideas and those few ideas submitted were not developed in any depth. Much of the work was very formulaic. In a few submissions there was evidence of the beginnings of original designs. Illustrator was sometimes used to produce some complex ideas and other candidates made some well-observed initial drawings but they all failed to edit or resolve the design problems for the final artwork. Sometimes the painting of the backgrounds were given priority over the type.

#### **Question 6: Wall of Cafe**

This was a popular choice and cups were the most popular images used.

Most candidates used 2D media and processes – pencils, markers, bios, gouache and watercolours with some collage and occasionally 3D submissions were seen.

The stronger candidates submitted some proficient and expert research of cups, saucers and jugs in a range of situations, including contexts which had been observed from life or taken from personal photographs. Coffee colours and tones were common in works.

Many weaker candidates copied or adapted their reference of a poster with a flowing white script on a black background. This design adaptation was very popular and the same image was seen in different Centres. The weakest works had very little reference and often the images were poorly drawn with little evidence of research.

#### **Question 7: Bathers**

Few candidates chose this question. In the submissions seen there was evidence of experiments with clay and photography and this showed some initial development of ideas. Often research was not thorough enough to allow for this to be taken further however and did not provide potential for alternative ideas.



### **Question 8: Jewellery – Hats**

This was quite a popular choice of question although not all candidates had a clear understanding of what was required. Portraits of women wearing jewellery and sometimes a hat were frequently seen. The drawing of the face often took priority over the jewellery designs and sometimes jewellery designs were presented on their own, were drawn well but were unrelated to hats.

The majority of reference was mostly secondary and showed small selections of ordinary hats. Only a few candidates looked at hats from different cultures and decades. However, these were often presented then ignored and pieces of jewellery designed with little reference to them.

Final responses were carried out in pencil, watercolours, biro and some collage. There was evidence of some adequate drawing and painting ability, but composition and presentation skills were limited.

### **Question 9: Cloth Cabin**

Only a few candidates chose this question and all the responses were in the mid to low range of assessment. The submissions showed a limited understanding of the process needed to create a design and very limited drawing skills. The brief was sometimes not followed.

### **Question 10: Book Design**

This question was chosen by a number of candidates but not many final outcomes fully answered the question which stated that the book design should target a teenage market.

Materials used for the final outcomes were mostly pencil, markers, watercolour and bright acrylics, with a little use of ink.

Relevant and interesting research was gathered by most candidates for the stronger submissions. Beetles were the most popular insects, with a number of good drawings and secondary images of flies, worms, dragonflies, ladybirds and butterflies. A few candidates took their own photos of insects but often they were too small to work from.

The mid-range of submissions showed good potential with some satisfactory research drawings and the development of ideas showed individuality, but the final outcomes were not planned sufficiently well and often included poorly produced type.

Type was not given much consideration in the weakest submissions and was often added in handwriting. The weakest submissions had very little research or gathering and consequently the candidates were unable to develop more than a couple of simple drawn images. These had very limited technical ability and resulted in poor, barely identifiable insects.

# ART AND DESIGN

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<p><b>Paper 0400/03</b> <b>Critical and Historical Assignment</b></p>
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## General comments

Most topics chosen were within the area of Fine Art.

In the strongest submissions candidates had often made visits to exhibitions containing works by their chosen artists which helped to inform their work and this clearly benefitted these assignments. It enabled the candidates to make significant personal observations and well-informed critical judgements. This resulted in more personal and well-focused evaluations of the chosen topics. These submissions contained more evidence of personal engagement with the subjects chosen which demonstrated a higher level of understanding and awareness of the process and ideas behind the explored examples.

These strongest submissions made evaluations which were articulate and informative indicating a high level of understanding and awareness of the chosen topic. The visual content was well supported by written notes and annotations which helped to provide a fluid and very coherent journey of discovery through the assignment.

Submissions at the mid-levels of assessment often relied heavily on second-hand sources (particularly the internet) for research of the subject. This inhibited the investigation and these submissions would have benefitted from using more relevant and appropriate first-hand sources. In some cases the internet was used as the only source for research and this clearly limited the level of personal engagement demonstrated in the assignment. A few candidates featured their own work as the main source for exploration. These submissions would have benefitted from the selection of works by other recognised practitioners as a comparative focus for investigation.

Interviews by email with artists were often included but were limited by the quality of questions used. These often only resulted in providing unnecessary biographical details about the artist rather than any meaningful insights into the ideas and process behind the making of the work. Sometimes a visit to a studio or exhibition was not fully exploited to significantly inform and engage the candidate with the assignment.

In weaker submissions there was little or no evidence of sources of first-hand research of the subject. The internet was the only source used. In some cases, the topic for exploration was far too broad and lacked a clear focus.

Submissions consisting only of downloaded images and information from web sites on the internet were not sufficient to fulfil the requirements of this paper. Again, the appropriate use of a proposal form would have helped to advise and guide the candidate towards a more suitable topic and approach for exploration.

Assignments were presented as small and large sketchbooks, A3, A2 and sometimes with very large mounted sheets of work. Several A4 plastic files containing digital presentations were seen. A few submissions included a CD which usually contained photographic material also presented as hard copy in the assignment. When CDs are presented, a printed hard copy should also be provided.

Where centres had used the available approval forms, candidates benefitted and their work showed outline intentions and indicated sources for first-hand research for approval.

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<p><b>Paper 0400/04</b> <b>Coursework Assignment</b></p>
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## General comments

The most popular area of study was Painting and Related Media, and some candidates had also creatively explored mixed media and printmaking. Other submissions focused on Graphic communication, Photography, 3D Design and Textiles. Many candidates also used photography as a method of research in their supporting studies, to explore and develop their theme in more detail.

The strongest work seen included first-hand observational drawings of subjects relevant to the candidates' themes along with their own photographs which were used as starting points for ideas and material studies. Ideas were developed using a wide range of media and compositions were carefully planned. Candidates' work was supported by relevant artist research. The final compositions were well executed and all of the work demonstrated consistent technical skills throughout.

Submissions in the mid-levels of achievement showed an expression of personal ideas and evidence of a competent level of skills, but limitations were seen in the range and depth of research and exploration.

Less successful work showed a lack of first-hand research and candidates had not investigated their chosen theme in any depth.

With the exception of the best submissions, little annotation was seen this session unless it was information about the media used, or descriptions of an artists' work. Those candidates with the lower marks often did not include the names of their referenced artists against the printouts of their work. Candidates in a few centres all had the same references and artists' work, which led to similar, or the same, images chosen for their final outcomes. The only difference was the quality of their drawing and painting skills.

Most candidates presented their coursework on A2 sheets which were securely fastened and clearly labelled. Many candidates had taken care to present and organise their work during the development of the projects.

Some submissions exceeded the recommended number of sheets for the supporting work and would have benefited from further editing to emphasise candidate achievement and the refinement of ideas, towards an outcome. Other work would have been more successful had it been sustained to give a relevant depth of investigation and development.

Generally, centres had identified a correct order of merit, but had either made insufficient differentiation between candidates of obvious differing abilities, or had not recognised, nor placed candidates of similar ability in the correct positions of the mark ranges. Submissions were often overvalued across all of the assessment objectives as the evidence within the work did not support the marks awarded by the Centre.

## Comments on Areas of Study

### **Painting and Related Media**

This was the most popular area of study with work produced in pencil, pastel, paint, mixed media, charcoal and pen. There were some printmaking submissions where candidates had edited photographs combining portraits. The supporting work was excellent. A range of different starting points, ideas and approaches were explored and relevant artists were referenced. Work was developed well into large scale lino prints which were well executed and showed an understanding of the medium.

The majority of the submissions had been developed from themes and topics relating to the figure, landscape, local architecture or a still life subject matter, but the most popular was portraiture.

The strongest work often demonstrated a good understanding of colour and texture which sometimes resulted in the production of confident and dramatic final outcomes. High candidate engagement was evident, and at this level candidates were able to match their technical skills with self-reflection, and well-considered critical thinking and analysis. These candidates had recognised the importance of recording from direct observation in response to their starting points and investigated sources often inspired by their locality, or from collected and arranged artefacts. The reference to artists, designers or other such practitioners was also used to inspire and inform development, particularly in the execution of technique, colour and composition. The stronger candidates successfully developed their observational studies through experimenting with a range of appropriate media, colour, texture, and through a range of compositions. The work at this level was intelligent and demonstrated individuality and the creative manipulation of ideas.

Mid-level work showed evidence of engaged research, but candidates' knowledge and understanding of planning and developing compositional ideas and an aesthetic awareness was weaker.

The technical skills of the candidates at the lower level were not developed and the work contained weak observational skills. They had often not produced sufficient research to base their work on. Candidates often relied very heavily on secondary-sourced material, or centred their recording on one arrangement or object, from which to produce repetitive images numerous times, in varying media. Whilst these studies were often aesthetically strong with skill in the handling of media, they did not form part of a visual journey of development. In other submissions, the supporting work consisted of sheets which included copies of images from the internet, sometimes traced, or even printed out and over-shaded with pencil crayon. In other work, the origin of sources could not be identified, but appeared to consist of a series of made-up images.

## Graphic Design

Submissions presented in this area of study were situated in the middle and lower areas of the ability ranges.

Most Graphic submissions began with the candidates' own photography which had been used to record ideas, and then explored through a number of alternative digital manipulations.

The strongest works used imagery recorded from first-hand experience and candidates manipulated their findings to inform their final outcomes. While the mid-range work demonstrated some personal qualities in the inventive investigation of imagery, colour and composition, it was rare to see an in-depth exploration to refine ideas. The use of lettering was also often particularly poor. However, there was more evidence of a personal engagement in these submissions, and an individual design was the result.

In the work of the candidates in the lower mark range, submissions were heavily reliant on secondary-sourced images with some candidates collecting many examples of other designers' imagery, while producing very little of their own work. Candidates used a formulaic approach and text was usually explored through amalgamating existing typefaces into new arrangements. Consequently, the work was repetitive and final designs were uninventive.

## Photography

Most submissions were in the mid-ability range. Whilst a few candidates had included a small printout of a photograph sourced from internet sites such as Pinterest, very few had researched the work of influential and established photographers in an attempt to inform and inspire their own work. The investigation of their theme would have benefited from including and exploring a wider range of source material in the initial stages of their projects, with further experimentation of their media. Other candidates demonstrated a personal connection with their theme by either setting up their own photoshoots from arranged objects, dressing their models in the relevant attire, or posing their models in a specific way to communicate an idea. Technical skills however, were not consistent.

The most limited work often relied on the simple application of readymade filters in an attempt to develop images. The work frequently used images taken from the internet as the main source of inspiration, and where there was any reference to the works of other photographers, this was unrelated to the construction of their own images, and not used to inspire development. Where candidates had worked from or set up their own photoshoots, this often took the form of a single shoot without variety of subject matter, lighting, viewpoints, depth of field or consideration of composition. The work at this level demonstrated little of the candidates' own imagination or critical thinking.

### **Textile and Fashion Design**

Some good photographs were included in the supporting work for these submissions and these were often developed into strong final designs.

Fashion drawings and textile pieces were also submitted as part of the supporting work in other areas of study. Batik swatches were popular and in general demonstrated a good understanding of the technique and process. Embroidery and stitched examples were also included mainly for the purposes of surface embellishment and decoration.

### **3D Design and Ceramics**

There were very few responses to this area of study in this session. Examples of clay modelling, plaster sculpture and mixed media assemblage were seen. All final pieces were submitted using photography. Most of these were of an adequate standard, showing the work in good light and from several angles. There were often additional photographs of the work in progress.

