

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0989/01
Coursework Assignment

Key messages

- The majority of candidates chose to explore painting and related media and photography. Other candidates chose to explore textiles, design, digital media and sculpture.
- Stronger candidates used a combination of recording approaches, including from direct observation and photography and did not rely solely on the internet.
- Weaker submissions reflected limited investigations into ideas and explorations. Observations often relied on secondary sources.
- Artists' references and/or cultural research were limited and often superficial in the weaker responses.
- Candidates should label their own photography to clearly identify them as their own.
- In some responses, it was difficult to identify the chosen theme and the direction that the work was developing into. In some of these cases, the work was not sufficiently concluded and the final outcome was not clearly identified.

Higher levels

At these levels, candidates had thoroughly explored their chosen theme. Ideas were based on detailed observational studies and other recording from a range of sources. These studies demonstrated sensitivity in the use of line and a good understanding of the visual elements in general. The drawings and sketches produced were thoughtfully selected and relevant to candidates' ideas and themes, leading the way to further exploration and development. Candidates avoided repetition and made observations exploring different viewpoints, lighting, and compositions.

Thorough exploration with different media was also seen in the stronger responses. Candidates explored a wide variety of media to further develop their theme and ideas. They were confident at handling different media and often applied different techniques to the same study focus to analyse media use and decide which achieved the best effect. Texture was explored thoroughly with some highly accomplished effects with paint or mixed media, as well as creative use of printing techniques.

Stronger candidates also considered different compositional arrangements for their final pieces and final outcomes were sufficiently planned and subsequently more successful.

Candidates also referenced relevant artists and designers and this enabled them to focus their critical understanding and decision making process, informing the media use in the final outcome.

Candidates were able to successfully review and reflect on their work to make informed decisions and find creative solutions through their development, leading to a body of supporting work that directly informed their final outcomes. An excellent level of skill was often shown with the handling and manipulation of their chosen media in producing a final piece. These submissions demonstrated a coherent journey and were systematic and logical in their investigations. Candidates applied thought and effort to their work throughout. Where annotation was used it was relevant and suitably reflective.

Middle levels

There was less evidence at this level of recording from a wide range of sources to investigate a theme, particularly from direct observation. However, while there was often a reliance on secondary sources, the reference imagery was purposefully chosen and ideas were communicated through an understanding of the visual elements.

Some candidates were able to show thoughtful observations which were effectively recorded using a range of media but were sometimes less able to fully develop these further into individual outcomes. At times the

media was less suitable for the proposed intention or a concept was abandoned before being fully implemented. Some media explorations, particularly those using torn paper or explorations in backgrounds, lacked a clear purpose.

Themes were often inventive with thoughtful explorations of ideas originating from relevant sources. Portraiture was especially popular at this level, particularly self-portraits through first-hand recording and the candidates' own photography. The portfolios were often coherent, but the development was often the weakest area of the work. Candidates did not always demonstrate how their ideas evolved and would have benefitted from taking a more consistent approach to produce a fully resolved, successful final outcome.

Artist research was often included in the submission at this level, and this was usually relevant to the candidates' own work, however the research did not always inform the development of ideas or progression of the media used. Candidates should consider why the chosen references are relevant to their explorations. For example, they wish to learn from a chosen artist's technique, or perhaps the context of the artwork is relevant or interesting. These considerations will help the artist's work inform the candidate's own ideas or techniques.

Generally mid-range submissions had evidence of coherent journeys, but the candidates would have benefitted from a much wider range of initial observations followed by more explorations. This would have helped them develop their ideas into more resolved and creative conclusions.

Lower levels

Submissions at this level included limited recording. One or two pages of small pencil drawings were sometimes the most that was produced. First-hand recording was very limited at this level. Some candidates used only imagery taken from the internet or copies of artworks as their initial source material, even when the subject matter was accessible and could feasibly be observed through first-hand experience.

Many of the submissions did not show more than a limited exploration of media and the technical skills seen at this level were lacking in ability. Candidates would have benefitted from drawing from a wider range of sources in the initial stages of the project. This would have furthered their development.

There was evidence of research into the work of other artists, but often this research was not related to the candidate's own work or concepts and so did not help with the development of ideas as effectively. Sometimes candidates focused on the biography of artists rather than what it was about the artists' work that interested them. At this level candidates were less able to use their artist research to inform their own work or to make links between the work of others and their own ideas and images.

Candidates at this level often lacked the focus to analyse, reflect and refine their work effectively as it progressed. This resulted in outcomes that lacked technical development or clarity of thought and sometimes the final outcome was unrelated to the portfolio work. In other cases, candidates selected a variety of their development ideas and attempted to combine them all into one composition that lacked cohesion. More time spent considering a composition, using thumbnail sketches for example, could help these candidates bring their ideas together into a more fully resolved final outcome.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0989/02
Externally Set Assignment

Key messages

- Most responses were well presented, labelled clearly and collated in an ordered way.
- Some work was presented within plastic wallets which obscured viewing. Some candidates submitted work on heavy card or on sheets larger than A2 but there was a reduction in the use of unnecessary flaps and pull-out sections, which made the work much easier to see holistically. Responses were better edited and more concise.
- Unnecessary background decoration and embellishment was sometimes included in a way that distracted from the supporting work itself. Evidently, this would have been time consuming to create and did not add value to the overall response.
- The strongest work included firsthand observation used in combination with candidate's own photography. Secondary-sourced images and research into artists' works were also utilised.
- Many candidates copied from photographs they had taken. Although often skilfully rendered, the understanding of form, structure and texture was limited. Where appropriate, direct observation should be encouraged as it helps to promote a deeper understanding of the visual elements.
- There was evidence of an increase in the use of digital media. Some candidates combined this with handmade imagery which provided interesting possibilities for development and presentation. Candidates were mostly good at indicating where this software had been used. Others relied heavily on digital media and it was difficult to ascertain where and how the imagery had been created.
- Many submissions used artists' work for either subject or media reference. This formed an important element in the work's development and helped the candidates to create an informed outcome in the examination. Gallery visits and evidence of other direct contextual engagement had increased from recent years. Visits sometimes informed candidates' ideas and this was indicated with annotation.
- A reduction of unrelated class studies being included in submissions was noted. This helped to create succinct and focused journeys throughout the submissions, and it was clear that thoughtful editing had been utilised to present the optimum examples of work.
- Successful submissions demonstrated clear intentions. Recording was purposeful and derived from firsthand study. Weaker work lacked cohesion due to preparatory work being insufficiently explored and not progressing to inform the final outcome.

General comments

Many candidates explored the work of other artists but not all used the references to improve ideas or choice of media. Many candidates focused on the 'style' of the artist as opposed to a deeper understanding carried into their own work. It is important that candidates cite their sources to enable accurate assessment. Many candidates stated whether images were primary or secondary, but there were others that did not identify the origin of the source.

Many submissions were cohesive, demonstrating a logical journey from initial ideas to a final outcome. However, some opportunities were missed by others to gather first-hand observational information, which could have aided development. There was an over reliance on secondary sourced imagery which often dominated the research.

Most candidates chose painting and related media to realise their outcomes but there were also examples of printmaking, textiles, jewellery design, digital manipulation and graphic design, photographic and 3D submissions. The majority of candidates included photography within their submissions as a means of recording information or to document large scale work. Most were well considered and in focus and enhanced the submission, particularly at the higher level. Responses were seen for all questions and all starting points provided examples where candidates had approached the topic with imagination and original concepts.

Higher Levels

At this level, candidates made personal and considered observations in relation to their chosen question. Ideas were sophisticated and candidates demonstrated a broad enquiry into the subject matter when selecting reference material. Insightful observations were shown through detailed studies and thoughtful photography. These candidates effectively combined their observations from primary and secondary sources to communicate intentions and inform development. Starting points were investigated with a sense of curiosity, developing ideas through connections made between the works of others and their own continuous observations. Idea exploration was in-depth, showing insightful links between the reference material and their own discoveries.

Stronger candidates selected a range of relevant media. The confident application of materials demonstrated expression, control and sensitivity, during the rendering process. Candidates utilised media to effectively communicate ideas, showing a clear understanding of the inherent qualities of their chosen discipline.

Work was effectively developed from relevant reference material in conjunction with their own ideas and candidates often reflected on progress. Ideas were explored maturely, in a variety of ways, enhanced by a range of quality visual stimuli. These informed explorations helped to direct the work and fulfil intentions.

Candidates demonstrated careful editing of their work. Well written and useful analysis accompanied ideas, adding to the overall communication of intentions. Candidates presented a coherent body of work, demonstrating independent thought processes and sustained engagement.

Middle Levels

At this level, a large number of submissions appeared to work through each Assessment Objective in isolation. The natural flow and crossing over of the skills that encourage an organic progression towards the final outcome was stilted by a more rigid, formulaic approach.

Many candidates identified an intention, enabling a personal response to their chosen question. The work was less focused than at the higher level, but a good range of technical skill was apparent, showing individual ideas. However, some examples were less coherent and difficult to follow.

The ability to select reference material and the recording of ideas in response to the topic was competent. Some candidates relied too heavily on secondary sourced material and less ideas were supported by their own photography and observational studies.

Those that did provide firsthand observations were mainly executed through photography, and subsequent thumbnail sketches were made from these photographs. Fewer candidates worked directly from observation in other media, but those who did produce hand-drawn studies, were able to achieve a richer understanding of their subject matter, demonstrated through their choice of media.

At this level, the rendering of materials lacked the vigour and consistency observed in the higher-level work. Ideas and observations were communicated through a range of media, with some submissions containing digital graphic processes. In these submissions, candidates did not clearly demonstrate where their ideas originated prior to developing and exploring their imagery through software.

Idea development varied in approach. Some were methodical, where artist research informed ideas. Others were explorative, where candidates experimented intuitively with media and image construction. Final outcomes demonstrated some understanding of the visual elements and candidates often indicated several ways to present their ideas. The most successful responses were where the knowledge from these experiments informed the examination piece.

Lower Levels

A heavy reliance on secondary sourced imagery limited the scope for individual recording and observation at this level. There were weaknesses in the ability to generate a cohesive idea, and an inability to explore the starting point with depth and creativity.

This poor source material prevented the demonstration of skilful observation or the necessary information to develop relevant ideas.

Candidates' own photography consisted of previous images that fitted with the chosen question, rather than considered images. The quality of these photographs negatively impacted subsequent work. Drawings of digital cartoons were also evident where candidates copied characters rather than developing their own. Recording and observations were often minimal. Most candidates at this level opted to draw from photographs rather than from direct observation of firsthand material in front of them. Those who worked directly from the subject matter demonstrated a better understanding of the visual elements, form in particular.

There was some ability to explore materials, but many candidates were limited to merely colouring in between the lines. The work that did demonstrate some control in the use of media explored tone, gradation of colour and texture through mark-making.

Development was often inconsistent and references to the works of others was limited. Many simply applied the colours or images taken from an artists' work to form the background of their own imagery. Some candidates used their artists' colour palette, or mimicked the use of brushwork, to good effect, but were unable to progress further.

Some scripts demonstrated a creative journey, but it tended to be very brief. Others demonstrated little connection between the content in the supporting sheets and the final examination piece.