

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Broad-based Assignment

General comments

Responses were received for all ten questions. Preparation and presentation of work was generally good. Most of the submissions consisted of outcomes supported by preparatory studies. Some submissions included many small sketches and media experiments and would have benefited from further editing.

The strongest submissions included thoughtful planning and consideration in the form of preparatory studies informed by first-hand observations. These were often combinations of drawing and photography. Ideas were developed through thorough experimentation of materials and clear links were made between artist research and the exam piece. The stronger submissions demonstrated a clear journey from initial studies through development and experimentation of media to well-considered and informed outcomes produced in the exam. The preparatory studies were relevant to the outcome and these candidates demonstrated skill in their choice of media. There was evidence of direct observation in the submissions, and this included own photographs and sketches from observation.

However, the majority of the lower level work lacked sufficient research from primary sources and direct observation to form initial ideas and to produce a cohesive body of research. Mobile phones were often used to take photographs which were either weak or irrelevant and not appropriately edited. Candidates would have benefited from more carefully selecting the most appropriate images to enhance their topic. Secondary references from the internet were often too small to be useful or poorly printed. The exploration of materials was limited and technical skills were weak and unrefined. The annotation in the work at this level tended to consist of detailed descriptions of the media used, rather than analysis of ideas or evaluation. References to the works of other artists were included, but sometimes images were either included without explanation, were irrelevant or not referred to again. This did little to inform development. Sometimes there was repetition, with each candidate in a centre using the same artist reference. These outcomes lacked development and were unfulfilled with little personal commitment.

The media and processes seen were mostly paint and pencil, markers and pastels. The use of photography was fairly frequent, with some candidates not simply using it for primary source material but making it the principal medium. The submissions at the lower to lower middle level often included informal photographs of friends, with perhaps a colour filter or other effect applied. This approach held back quite a few candidates. There was a common practice of painting over photographs or scanned imagery as well as tracing, particularly in weaker submissions. A few candidates used a design interpretation for the questions. Such outcomes included fashion design, illustration, textile work, calligraphy and typography.

Considerable time and effort was spent on creating backgrounds in some submissions that did not enhance or necessarily relate to the topic. In some cases this distracted from the overall composition and therefore time would have been better spent exploring more relevant alternatives.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Out of focus

This question was very popular with those working with photography. Many candidates explored the effects of blurred photographs of figures seen through various windows and other glass structures, and these were often presented as final photographic outcomes or developed into paintings. There was evidence of some excellent understanding of colour and tonal use to create mood and tension in the works. Candidates referred to the work of other artists for this development.

Some less successful submissions showed complex ideas through collage and cut up photos overlaid on paintings, with interesting effects, but some were not well planned or resolved. Other candidates illustrated

some strong drawing and pastel work which attempted to capture movement and distortion. Candidates who explored the topic through photography, illustrated their technical knowledge through the use of appropriate speed settings and exposures etc., but much imagery was undeveloped and final outcomes were not always well presented.

Lower level photographic submissions tended to merely consist of a series of very similar out of focus photographs of blurry coloured car lights, fairy lights or street lights. Drawings also attempted to capture a blurred photographic effect but were undeveloped and lacked technical skill. There was very little reference to other artists at this level and outcomes were unresolved.

Question 2: Two or more vegetables of contrasting structures; one sliced or peeled

Most candidates treated the question as a still-life format with a range of additional vegetables organised on a surface. Candidates recorded through a range of 2D media such as pencil, pen, water-colour, paint and pastels with some collage and a few monoprints. Textured surfaces to represent vegetables were used by a number of candidates with card, fabric and netting being embedded into acrylic paint.

Candidates usually set up their own still-life arrangement and their supporting work illustrated a series of vegetable studies of various quality and quantity. In the upper mark range a great deal of care was taken when preparing the vegetables with ornamental slicing and carving which were works of art in their own right. Those who didn't cut or peel their vegetables created less effective work.

The strongest submissions demonstrated a very impressive understanding of form, media use and composition. The compositions seen were varied and dynamic. The use of media ranged from very delicate use of line, colour and tone to energy infused mark making and a more aggressive approach to surface. These candidates were able to construct convincing representations of the subject. Artist references seen were highly relevant and generally used as starting points for the work. The preparatory work was typically full of exploration and experiment.

The submissions in the mid mark range contained some satisfactory textural studies which were rendered through a range of media. The candidates at this level were less thorough in their research and developed ideas relying on fewer drawings and paintings of single vegetables to support their final outcomes. Candidates appeared to pay less attention to compositions and the exploration of alternative backgrounds. More research into relevant artists may have encouraged more thorough investigation of the question before deciding on a final composition and idea before the exam.

The weakest submissions were also mostly observed from life but lacked the attention to composition and viewpoint. The technical skills demonstrated a lack of understanding and ability to render shape, tone and form. Objects were not grounded through the use of shadow and the arrangements were often isolated in the middle of the composition showing little understanding of the potential of negative space.

Question 3: Folded, pleated or frayed

Many submissions for this question experimented with paper folding and candidates constructed their own starting point and recorded various angles and viewpoints from a range of structures. Other responses included work in a range of media including textiles and fashion design where candidates produced some imaginative garments. These had been developed from some sensitive photographic and drawn studies of folds and pleats in fabrics. Others at this level demonstrated an innovative use of materials where paper was folded, torn and fabrics, pleated, stitched upon and printed. Texture was explored and manipulated with original thought.

In the mid mark range close-ups of figures were clothed in a range of colourful printed and pleated fabrics which filled the entire picture surface. At this level, candidates were aware of the importance of negative shapes when experimenting with compositions.

Candidates in the lower mark range explored a wide range of fabrics but most of the final outcomes were unresolved because compositional experiments were neglected. There was often very little supporting work and observations were basic. There were some examples of fashion ideas at this level but they tended to be very simplistic. These demonstrated little research or idea development. Personal involvement was limited and images tended to lack coherence. Presentation was often poor or the final artwork was unfinished.

Question 4: Distorted reflections

Candidates answering this question used varied and interesting starting points. They ranged from the use of mirrors, water, reflective surfaces and the conceptual idea of misinterpreted judgements made of a person's character based on their appearance. However, very few who attempted this approach possessed the sophistication and technical skill to develop and express their ideas in a convincing manner.

The refraction and reflection of flowers seen through water filled glasses and other containers were a successful interpretation seen in stronger submissions. The highlights and refractions of colour seen through the bevelled sections of glass were a vital part of the final outcomes at this level. Other successful submissions used photography and digital processes to distort faces reflected in mirrors, glass windows and a variety of glass objects. Candidates made a considered selection from a variety of photographic images to produce a coherent set of supporting studies. These demonstrated an imaginative exploration of viewpoints and lighting. Outcomes were developed from these initial studies using media experiments and ideas inspired by their artist research. The images collected by candidates working at this level demonstrated an engagement in the question through a whole range of media.

Candidates in the mid mark range tended to use easily obtainable references such as reflections in shiny household objects such as teapots, cutlery, kitchen utensils and drinking glasses etc. Some sources were more individual than others. Glass was very popular and gave scope for candidates to take photographs that captured distortions and magnifications. Where photography was explored, there were some well produced images using digital manipulation to develop ideas. However, sometimes candidates at this level had difficulty in taking their ideas further with some just choosing to produce an enlarged painting of one of their photographs. There was a satisfactory standard of recording but the work at this level sometimes lacked the imagination and planning seen in the stronger work.

In common with quite a few other questions, candidates at the lower level often submitted material that lacked coherence. The visual confusion of these submissions was not helped by the fairly basic media skills seen. The use of colour and tone were largely heavy handed, and were fairly brutal in some submissions. The preparatory work was very limited with just one or two typically unrelated images included. There was no real sense of a visual journey here and there was also a lack of primary source material. In some cases there was no indication of where these images had come from.

Question 5: A person painting at an easel

Some of the work showed competently executed outcomes and preparatory work which consisted of a range of well rendered close up studies. These were based on observation from first-hand study. However, other work demonstrated inconsistencies in the rendering of media and in the observation of proportion, form, perspective and scale. There was a reliance on copying from photographs rather than directly from the figure, therefore images were often flat and lacked vitality.

More specific examples of problem areas were difficulty with foreshortening, proportion and hands and feet. Composition was an area that was virtually overlooked by the majority of candidates, and usually the figure was situated in the dead centre of the picture plane, often with very little else by way of visual context.

Question 6: Steps

This theme generated a variety of responses. Many candidates took a metaphorical or conceptual approach, with many interpretations using a wide range of sources. Ideas included steps through the seasons; the steps through childhood to adulthood; steps of life to death of nature. However, technical skills and conceptual maturity were often not sufficient to fully realise these intentions. Other candidates recorded the step by step stages of making something. Some candidates arranged items as steps and others had recorded steps in buildings and architecture within their locality. Many candidates in the higher and middle ranges took their own photographic reference and used digital manipulation to develop imagery, with varying results. In contrast, those in the lower level often used images from the internet.

Many candidates referenced the work of Escher in their research.

This question had most submissions in the low to mid range levels. The initial stages mostly consisted of photographs taken of steps and people going up and down them. The development of these images was limited. Photographs were taken locally with much repetition of the same areas and viewpoints. On the whole outcomes were not well executed with poor control of materials. There were some promising developments of pattern and texture with links to relevant artists but these were not explored to their full potential.

Question 7: Items from a junk-yard

Rusted and dilapidated cars, engines and mechanical parts were the most popular sources selected for exploration of this question. This enabled stronger candidates to take some inspiring reference photographs and to explore a good range of painted textures, mixed media and experiments with oil pastels and collage. The stronger work demonstrated some good photography skills, and these candidates had given much consideration to lighting, viewpoints, angles, focus and composition. Digital manipulation was used to good effect in some submissions to help develop a range of images and ideas. The term “junk yard” was not always taken literally, but garden rubbish heaps, untidy bedrooms and underwater detritus were also explored, with some successful results. There was less artist referencing, except in the highest submissions. The work at this level demonstrated an originality of thought and competent technical ability.

The majority of candidates in the lower mark range had collected small scale items of scrap and made individual studies of these objects mostly using line and limited tones. There was evidence of candidates working from direct observation but the control of media and techniques were very limited. The form and structure of these objects were imprecise in the preparatory work and these weaknesses were simply transferred to the examination pieces. There was very little evidence at this level of candidates exploring compositional possibilities with most attempting to invent an outcome during the examination.

Question 8: Foreshortened

The majority of candidates concentrated on the human figure with arms or legs outstretched from an acute angle. Some candidates in the mid mark range viewed human or animal bodies seen from above which showed an enlarged head as a focal point. Very few candidates moved beyond the representation of the foreshortened figure and ignored any reference to a background.

Stronger submissions contained very good studies of figures which had been executed through an accomplished rendering of drawing and painting media. Photographic images depicting the subject from inventive angles and viewpoints also showed good technical ability. Much of the work at this level focused on the figure in various poses and from various angles. The supporting sheets contained well executed photographs and developed studies, showing an expert use of media. Dramatic images of foreshortening were thoughtful and accomplished.

Candidates at the middle level also produced their own photographs and drawings and paintings, but the initial studies were not always fully explored in their idea development. Technical skills were inconsistent, but some candidates showed good ability to record from different view points and perspectives. There was less referencing of artists' work at this level and outcomes were satisfactory, but sometimes obvious. Inspiration from looking at the work of other artists would have benefited the candidates in creating more personal and individual responses.

The most basic of the weaker submissions included quite a few images which showed little connection with foreshortening at all, and it felt as if many of these candidates did not really understand this term or had not researched what this term might mean.

The stronger of these weaker candidates, while understanding the term ‘foreshortened’, had trouble translating this into a convincing image. There was a good amount of primary source material, with many drawings from life and candidates' own photography. A common feature at this level was candidates either tracing or directly copying a photograph, which did not demonstrate observational skills or sensitivity in media handling.

Question 9: A crowded room

A small number of stronger candidates realised that a crowd of people could be treated as a single unit. These candidates were able to use tone, colour, light and movement to represent an amorphous mass of people. The strongest works demonstrated a good selection of research, which was then used to develop ideas. A range of media was explored and rendered to produce interesting compositions which considered scale, viewpoints and detail. However, the final outcomes often lacked the finish and expertise of some of the supporting work.

The room aspect of the question was often ignored by candidates with very few references seen in weaker submissions. These candidates often used diagrammatic or cartoon images of the human body and head. Faces were often invented with no reference to observations.

Question 10: In the rain

Some stronger candidates explored methods of recording, exploring and representing raindrops through different media. Droplets of water were shown through splashes of PVA glue or carefully drawn with pencil and water-colour or paint. The work at this level also produced some effective imagery with atmosphere and mood to capture the essence of rain. Paint, mixed media and rubbed pencil and charcoal were the most popular media for creating this. Colour was subtle and marks were expressive. Work at this level was thoughtful.

The mid-range work demonstrated some individual interpretations of the question. There were some images reflected in puddles and evidence of candidates engaged in experiments with water. For example, splashing it onto friends' faces, pouring over people or recording how it splashed when dropped from a height. However, technical skill in the use of media was lacking and often resulted in the preparatory work being stronger and more successful than the final outcome.

The weaker submissions often had similar imagery; rainbows, umbrellas and tear streaked faces. Much of this imagery was copied directly from the internet and subsequently this limited the amount of primary source material seen. The use of media here was the strongest element of these submissions, but was still unrefined and limited in its range. The preparatory work generally consisted of rehearsals for the final piece, which was typically just a larger version of one of the images seen previously. The images in the preparatory work were usually quite disconnected and did little to give a sense of development or exploration.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/02 Design-based Assignment</p>

General comments

Submissions for all questions were seen. Most submissions lacked a systematic approach or evidence of each assessment objective. Often there was a lack of development of a candidate's ideas or observations did not inform the outcome.

In general presentation was good. The majority of submissions used traditional 2D media, but a few candidates made 3D pieces, and sent photographs of these. This was mainly evident in responses to **Question 2**. A small amount of digital manipulation was seen, which informed the development of the outcomes to some extent. On the whole, research and investigation of lettering was very weak, usually appearing to be an afterthought. Even when some fonts had been developed during the preparatory period, they were often not used in the final design. Many candidates did not read the questions fully or misunderstood the requirements, often omitting important parts of the question.

In some cases the amount of preparatory work was minimal. Some candidates had not given this nearly enough time, and quite a few submissions arrived as single sheets with only a final design. As a result these candidates performed poorly against AO1 and AO2.

A wide range of materials was explored to carry out observational studies and also in the development of the final piece. This was not always successful but it ensured that the scripts could gain credit in AO2 and AO4.

The strongest submissions contained evidence of thorough and individual research, including reference to the work of other relevant artists and designers. First-hand observation was used as the starting point for clearly evidenced design processes, through development, manipulation and experimentation with image and media, leading to coherent outcomes. A strong personal journey was seen in these submissions, conveying engagement with the work.

Submissions in the mid range of marks tended to show more reliance on secondary sources as starting points, and less individuality or engagement. Less investigation of materials and techniques was seen at this level, and this also meant that the quality of manipulative skills was weaker.

Submissions in the lower mark range did not contain enough initial research and candidates were heavily reliant on poor quality secondary sources. Ideas were limited and not explored thoroughly. Candidates possessed poor technical skills. Sheets of preparatory work were often filled with irrelevant information, very large lettering, and unrelated material which did not add to the submissions. More time spent doing relevant research and developing ideas would have benefitted these submissions, and would have enabled the candidates to make informed decisions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Earth sciences banner

Stronger submissions contained evidence of first-hand observation of bones, shells and fossils. Many candidates included photographs taken during a visit to a museum where they had carried out research. Several candidates at this level referred to a specific designer which informed the final outcome, the use of space and ways to present their observational studies.

In the strongest submissions, candidates were very confident with the theme and had a systematic approach to answering the question. Strong, relevant observational studies were evident and candidates used these studies in their development of ideas. Candidates carefully considered types of banners and they explored

which type and style of banner could be most suitable for their interpretation of the brief. Many of these submissions also showed the final design in context on a building. These candidates considered the impact of their design. Development of ideas showed a good understanding of aesthetics and many candidates explored a wide range of media expertly, particularly lettering and font style. Critical analysis was evident throughout.

The mid-range examples also showed some evidence of first-hand research and some museum visits, but these candidates did not investigate the topic in the same depth seen in the stronger works. Other candidates at this level relied on secondary sources of research. These submissions lacked the understanding of the subject matter and also the compositional skills seen at the higher end and there was little evidence of planning towards the final design. A lack of practice meant that manipulative skills had not been developed to a good standard and there was little attention to the design and placement of lettering and its relationship to the image.

Weaker submissions relied on second-hand sources or invented skeletons and bones. Some candidates merely pasted downloaded images onto their sheets with no evidence of development of ideas. Weak manipulative skills were evident, with virtually no attention given to the lettering.

Question 2: Jewellery

The stronger submissions contained evidence of photography and first-hand studies of tools, as well as high levels of imagination in the design of original jewellery with form and function in mind. Aesthetics were considered at every stage and final designs were presented on jewellery mannequins using metallic paint and a light source. Research into existing jewellery design from carefully selected sources was also seen. Candidates used strategies such as changes of scale, distortion etc. of tools to help in the design process, and outcomes often displayed a high level of creativity and imagination.

This was less apparent in the mid range work, and candidates had often taken only a few poor quality photographs to develop designs from. Examples of other jewellery were included but were often very familiar examples seen in adverts. Some first-hand observation was seen but this lacked the in-depth investigation seen at the higher level, and also did not show the same high level of manipulative skill. Several submissions contained pictures of pieces the candidates had made themselves from tools and wire and the quality of these was variable.

At the lower end of the mark range, limited observation skills and a lack of experience with media impacted adversely on the design development. Many candidates merely produced ideas of a spanner or screw attached to an earring or similar, with no imaginative manipulation of ideas seen.

Question 3: Sculpture based on chairs

A very small number of submissions reached the mid-high level of marks. These showed that candidates had understood what the question was looking for, identifying abstract elements in selected chairs and human forms, using positive and negative shapes and using these ideas to produce ideas for large scale sculptures. References to artists such as Escher were used in this process.

Other submissions, at the lower end of the mark range, displayed a lack of research and understanding in their responses. Some used this as a chair design question and others just drew a chair or chairs.

Question 4: Cloudspotting to Stormhunting

The strongest submissions showed some in-depth research into weather effects and used this research to produce strong outcomes, supported by some expressive studies of clouds and stormy weather.

The mid-range work used a mixture of primary and secondary research to develop ideas from. Some quite atmospheric and imaginative ideas were produced. However, in many cases these were let down by a lack of refinement in the handling of media. Some candidates attempted to show how the CD and cover would look, including titles and even bar codes. Quite a wide range of media was explored in many of these responses.

Most lower range work was based on secondary sources of research which were mainly images taken from the internet. Consequently there was no real sense of engagement or understanding of imagery. Manipulative skills were not refined through practice or experiment.

Question 5: The Windmills of your Mind (quotation)

The best submissions made design briefs and produced responses from these showing strong imaginative and manipulative skills.

Mid range submissions for this question also displayed imaginative qualities, and were fairly expressive and personal. A good range of media was seen and manipulative skills were developed to a reasonable standard.

The weakest works lacked coherence and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the question. Some submissions were seen where the connection with the quote was tenuous.

Question 6: Aquarium poster

The best submissions contained evidence of visits to aquariums to draw and photograph fish and other sea creatures at close hand. A high level of skill in recording was evident at this level, and this research was used to inform a wide range of studies and ideas before selecting the best. Candidates at this level referenced relevant artists such as Hokusai, and also experimented with a wide range of media to select the most suitable. Ideas for the layout were explored in some depth and there was evidence of good planning. Lettering was considered and in some cases the candidates designed their own.

In the mid range, submissions showed more reliance on secondary sources of imagery, mainly the internet. Some candidates took their own photographs and worked from them. Imagery of fish, turtles etc. was widely used, and there was a reasonable level of ability in the rendering of media. At this level, the arrangement of items to form the final composition was often weak, or jumbled. This was mainly due to a lack of planning. Some interesting media were used, including transparent cellophane.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates mainly relied on secondary-sourced images or invention. Many lower scoring submissions had a cartoon response to the theme with some basing their studies on Disney designs. The resulting work appeared repetitive and clichéd and often lacked sufficient development of ideas and explorations of different media. Most of the submissions at this level were a combination of sea plants and clown fish sometimes with jellyfish included. The composition of the items placed the plant life at the bottom and the creatures around the edges leaving a gap in the middle for the text. Weak manipulative skills were seen, with messy and crude use of oil pastel and paint. These candidates had not acquired any understanding of form and structure in their subject matter, and lettering and placement were also weak.

Question 7: 'Science Today' or 'Medical Matters'

The strongest submissions were based on first-hand research from objects such as those found in a school laboratory. These candidates showed the ability to make confident studies of technical and medical equipment, and then used these to create dynamic designs. A good understanding of lettering and composition was evident in the work at this level.

The mid-range examples contained evidence of research from primary and secondary sources, and candidates sourced past covers from various medical and scientific magazines. Some of the imagery used showed a degree of ability in recording and rendering, while other subject matter was weaker.

The weaker examples demonstrated very weak recording skills and a lack of imagination in the layout and use of colour, lettering and composition.

Question 8: Bees Knees

Most candidates included images of bees and honeycombs. A few candidates managed to take photographs of bees and used these to help inform their development. The best responses demonstrated some very strong observational studies and inventive development. A lot of candidates used hexagons as the basis for graphic ideas, with some success. These candidates considered the packaging as a whole, and developed a coherent identity for the product. Many candidates either made labels and attached them to actual jars before photographing them, or used Photoshop to help visualise the packaging. The best of these managed to produce professional looking products.

In the mid range, there was less evidence of first-hand research. Many candidates found suitable secondary images on the internet. Some candidates had done some recording at first hand of flowers and this was used in the development of ideas. Again, several examples of actual labels stuck onto jars were seen, but these

tended to look less refined than at the higher level. Also, digital manipulation was used to generate ideas and to visualise packaging.

At the lower level, very little research was seen, and what there was came from secondary sources. These submissions often did not consider form or function when exploring design ideas. Lettering was also a secondary consideration. There were poor drawings of jars with no understanding of form, and manipulative skills were very weak.

Question 9: Traditional toys repeat pattern

The strongest works showed evidence of very strong, well-observed research. A range of toys had been sourced and candidates made excellent studies from them, in different positions and using a range of media. These studies were used to inform the development of several ideas and different types of repeat were explored, using both traditional methods and digital manipulation. From these, final choices were made. A high level of skill in the use of media was seen in these submissions, but there was little evidence of research into the work of other artists.

Mid range submissions showed evidence of the use of secondary images as well as primary sources and many candidates had taken their own photographs of toys and worked from these. Various different types of repeat was explored, but these were often very obvious spot or half-drop repeats and lacked flow. Some candidates attempted to show how a package would look wrapped in their design, and some had used digital manipulation to help the development of design and colourways.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates relied on secondary sources to work from, often on a single idea and the designs lacked vitality or flow. Very basic images of a limited range of subject matter were used. Rendering skills were weak, and the use of colour was not explored in depth.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03
Critical and Historical Assignment

General comments

Most submissions were within the middle and lower levels of areas of achievement with a few stronger submissions seen. The assignments were presented in sketchbook formats, with some folders and files of mounted and annotated A4/A3 sheets of work with mounted photographs, drawings and text. There were also some digital presentations submitted. Candidates who had submitted outline proposal forms benefitted from stating some clear intentions and indicating appropriate sources from which to gain first-hand research and experience of their chosen topics.

The evidence clearly demonstrated that the strongest candidates had gained valuable research and experience by making visits to galleries and studios. The selected works had been carefully recorded and explored with vital personal observations and critical judgements being made. Candidates at this level demonstrated more evidence of personal engagement through a visual and written analysis of the ideas and methods behind the works investigated. These stronger submissions demonstrated a coherent journey of exploration with personal practical experiments clearly informed by the research and experience gained. Text was thoughtfully interwoven amongst the candidates' photographs and illustrations. The text was clear and easy to read, containing thoughtful personal observations and insights into how the work had been developed. The valuable experience of having viewed the works at first hand had clearly informed and inspired the strongest candidates. These submissions all demonstrated an ability to evaluate in an articulate and well informed conclusion which indicated a good level of understanding and awareness of the chosen subject.

Submissions at the middle levels of achievement often relied too heavily on second-hand sources (particularly from the internet) and contained little in the way of a more personal engagement with the subject. These candidates would have benefitted from taking their own photographs or making some drawings which would have contributed a more personal element to the research and would have recorded stages of the assignment. The use of second-hand source material, which was often downloaded and contained too much biographical information, did not demonstrate the candidates' personal initiative enthusiasm for the chosen topic. However, some of these assignments did contain some evidence of material based experiments in response to an interest shown in selected works. Further developments made as a result of a more in-depth visual exploration of the works would have significantly benefitted these candidates.

Weaker candidates were mostly inhibited by a total lack of any evidence of first-hand experience of the topics chosen. Topics were often poorly presented and incoherent. These candidates usually did not submit a proposal for their assignments. This process would have helped the candidates to select an appropriate topic for investigation and to indicate some promising sources, first-hand if possible, from which to gain valuable research and experience of the chosen topic. In some of these examples, a little evidence was seen of an exploration of a process being made. However, the understanding was found to be limited as demonstrated by the small amount of text and annotations included. The ability to evaluate was clearly limited by the lack of substance within the assignment.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/04 Coursework Assignment</p>

General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study, followed by Graphic Design and Photography. There were few Fashion and Textile Design entries and even fewer 3D Design and Sculpture.

Stronger candidates' work was well structured to allow for achievement levels to be maximised. Starting points were from relevant first-hand observations, using drawing, painting and photography predominantly as media. These candidates made intellectual choices when studying and investigating the works of other artists and cultures. Personal involvement was evident and was intrinsic to the work, particularly in the development of ideas and preparation of a resolved outcome. There was evidence of a high level of ability in the control and application of media and a well-executed final outcome.

Work in the middle range often demonstrated evidence of a good technical ability that was not always supported with a satisfactory exploration of ideas. A formulaic approach was often seen whereby all the relevant stages were included, but without a personal connection. Candidates at this level were not always able to critically assess their own work in order to develop their strengths.

Weaker submissions reflected more limited investigations into ideas and explorations and observations relied on second-hand source materials. Artist or cultural research was very limited or not included.

The standard of presentation this session was very variable but generally acceptable. The stronger submissions showed carefully edited and mounted work that followed the natural sequence of the creative process.

The majority of centre assessments were very generous. Technical competence and presentation of final outcomes was generally overvalued. In several centres the orders of merit were rather erratic and the marking inconsistent. There were other centres that had entered candidates in more than one area of study and had not carried out a rigorous internal moderation process to ensure consistency in their assessments.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

Submissions were very varied and covered a full ability range working under many themes such as still-life, figurative, imagination and abstract. Portraiture and using self-portraits to explore facial or emotional expressions were very popular. Painting media was predominantly in acrylics, oil and watercolour but some candidates worked in other media including pencil, colour pencil, pastel, collage and printmaking. Some candidates also used combined media, and many used photography as a means of recording and developing ideas.

The strongest submissions showed excellent exploration of ideas, comprehensive experimentation with media, and depth of investigation from first-hand sources and exciting and personal aesthetic choices. Technical skill and material control was matched by intelligent investigation, enhanced with critical judgement. A good understanding of colour was effectively used, illustrating painterly approaches and expressive colour to inform both the supporting studies and the final outcome. The strongest ideas were always informed by researching the work of carefully selected artists, enabling the candidates to develop depth and independence in their work.

Candidates in the middle mark range generally worked to their strengths and chose appropriate media to explore their topics. However, submissions lacked consistency in developing ideas, and lacked an analysis of experimentation. With this candidates may have been able to clarify their ideas and intentions.

Weaker submissions lacked sufficient relevant research, idea development or technical expertise and any planning for the final artwork was very limited resulting in unfinished or poorly executed outcomes. In some cases these were not as well produced or as exciting as the supporting work. A reliance on secondary sources rather than first-hand studies was a defining characteristic.

Graphic Design

Designs of books and packaging for commercial advertising were seen. Stronger submissions reflected an excellent understanding of the principals of design with many candidates using contemporary IT processes. Candidates used first-hand observations including drawing and photography and ideas were explored effectively with candidates making excellent aesthetic choices. In some cases story boards were developed to show consideration of composition and colour. Effective links to existing designs and others works were also included to inform personal development.

Most submissions fell into the lower achievement levels. The few reference photos seen were out of focus and poorly composed preventing any creative use of the images. There was little development or planning and digital manipulation was poor. The typography was sometimes not well suited to layouts and images. The absence of clear design briefs in some submissions restricted the candidates' ability to explore, experiment and develop ideas with purpose and to work towards resolved outcomes. Layout, colour and the use of text in relation to imagery was a particular weakness at this level.

Photography

The strongest submissions had final pieces which clearly reflected aesthetic awareness and were technically proficient. Candidates had gathered a variety of sources and used effective computer manipulation techniques and processes to enhance their themes. Candidates explored the subject matter fully to demonstrate a knowledge of the visual relationships such as taking photographs from different angles, viewpoints and exploring scale and lighting, and also expanded upon ideas. Atmosphere was captured through the skilful use of techniques and the work expressed more of a narrative than was apparent in the lower level work. Excellent links to other artists were included and used. Some candidates also included analogue photography as a process.

In weaker submissions, photographic work tended to consist of shots that had been taken in one session with the photographs not fully exploring a theme. The themes were all similar using plants and flowers, and many of the studies were shot with little thought to composition, lighting or focus. There was some evidence of observational work and idea development but little manipulation or attempts at an original personal outcome.

Fashion and Textile Design

Submissions in this area demonstrated limited evidence of relevant research in response to a theme, with most of the work focusing on the technical process of constructing a garment. Consequently, there was little development of an idea. The practical construction tended to show limited skill and creativity, with a lack of organised visual forms or technical ability.

3D Studies and Sculpture

There was very little evidence of 3D work as a focused area of study during this session. However, a few candidates had experimented with collage, low relief work and had constructed small maquettes in their supporting work to further explore their ideas within Painting and Related Media.