

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Broad-based assignment

General comments

The ten questions in this year's paper provided a broad range of opportunities for first hand observation, experimentation and personal interpretation.

The strongest submissions were supported by excellent preparatory studies and candidates had used their time well to draw from primary sources, take photographs, experiment with compositions and viewpoint, and research relevant artists who related to their chosen theme. A willingness to experiment with different media and take risks was also apparent. Much of this preparatory work was well annotated, and ideas were evaluated, explaining the candidate's thinking and how they had arrived at their final outcomes. In most cases a range of ideas had been explored before deciding on the best idea to develop for the examination.

Some candidates in the mid to lower achievement levels had understood the necessity of recording from direct observation and had researched from a variety of sources. However, inconsistencies were often demonstrated in the recording skills. The technical skills shown in the handling of materials was less confident and less accomplished than at the higher level, and despite the exploration of a range of media, they were not always appropriate to intention. There was more evidence of a repetition of forms within the studies rather than an exploration of alternative ideas and compositions. Better organisation of preparation time could have benefited the investigation of depth and detail of the subject. In addition better consideration of scale at this level may have given a stronger final outcome. The final product did not always reflect the potential apparent in the smaller supporting studies and the detail and surface qualities were not always reproduced effectively to present an informed outcome.

Where reference was made to other artists' works, they usually consisted of one or two downloaded prints of poor quality which gave candidates little information and were not always helpful. These were often accompanied by long biographical notes. Sometimes it was difficult to see why particular works had been chosen as no relevance to the chosen subject was shown.

Candidates at the lower levels relied heavily on recording from secondary sources from either the internet or other copied secondary imagery, with little attempt at recording from direct observation. Preparatory work was very light and sometimes non-existent. There was much evidence of cut and paste images, poor linear drawings and many instances of tracings made from these. There was often a lack of personal investigation and individuality, with little demonstration of the gathering of research from a variety of sources. Their recording lacked confidence and practice, and there was little understanding of the organisation of visual forms. Technical skills were limited in the handling of materials, and the ability to record and analyse in depth was lacking. These candidates may have benefited from spending more time exploring their chosen question as any ideas attempted tended to be repeated rather than developed, as a result of insufficient investigation. More focus on their question would also have been of benefit to these candidates as they often submitted insufficient supporting work, which prevented them from producing a substantial response.

Predominantly the media used consisted of a variety of paint mediums, pencil, crayon, pastel and mixed media. Photography was not often used as a medium in its own right but was frequently used as a starting point or for recording experimental and fragile work. Print and paint media were used to very good effect in some entries. Photoshop or similar, was often used to develop ideas from initial photographs with varying degrees of success. There was an over-reliance on the use of filters as an end in themselves. Printmaking was used extensively by some candidates, both in its own right as screen and lino submissions throughout, or as part of mixed media explorations combined with photography, textiles, paint etc. A small number of questions were used as starting points to develop work in graphic or fashion designs.

The presentation and labelling of work was generally of a high standard. Some centres did not enforce the size limitation however. If candidates need to work on a large scale then photographs of the finished pieces

should be submitted. Some centres submitted work of varying sizes attached together rather than on mounted sheets.

The most popular questions were **Q2: Face to face** and **Q5: Plant patterns**. Only a very few entries were received for **Q4: A figure holding a large ball** and **Q10: Cycling**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Broken or discarded electrical or machine components

Almost all submissions were taken from first-hand still life studies of the objects, sometimes arranged as a group, sometimes singly. Broken machinery, car and motor parts and circuit boards were all popular starting points. Photography was frequently used for first hand study together with drawing and the study of work by a variety of practitioners.

The strongest work used rearrangements of the objects in varying groups and with different lighting and at a variety of angles and viewpoints. Final outcomes were almost all in paint or pencil/drawing media.

The main objects used in a still life or abstract arrangement were metallic from engines and cars or from old computers. These provided useful shapes and areas of tone to draw and the developments and creative ideas were based on these.

The best submissions had clearly benefitted from some sustained observational work from first-hand sources. These candidates had set up well-considered items into still-life arrangements and carried out thorough exploratory studies using a combination of drawing and photographic techniques for recording. The aesthetic elements of line, tone, colour and texture were all shown throughout the investigative studies. Submissions at the lower levels of assessment had much less evidence of preparatory studies and outcomes showed little evidence of gathering from any first-hand sources.

At the lower level, the work tended to consist of predictable starting points, such as broken phone screens, hearts, the human body with parts missing, lamp forms, plugs and wires etc. These submissions often lacked evidence of sustained first-hand studies and responses were unimaginative and lacking in personal engagement. There was frequently little supporting work. The observational recording was often weak. Candidates demonstrated very limited photography skills and submitted poor images which were used to draw from, or included as evidence of research. The rendering of media and the technical skills were basic. Source material was limited to the odd photograph of relevant objects and some fairly basic studies, with an over reliance of secondary images. The broken objects tended to be documented in isolation of each other rather than positioning them together to form interesting compositions and layouts, involving depth and space. There was an absence of the works of others, or cultural references. The understanding of composition was quite basic which illustrated relatively flat, linear arrangements of objects. In some of the work there was very little experimentation with different media, or evidence of alternative directions that the submission could have taken.

Question 2 Face to face

This was a popular question with most candidates demonstrating a very literal approach to this topic producing drawings and studies of their own faces or those of family and friends. Other candidates observed animal faces which were often merged with human features, as well as those who combined images of the young and old.

The most successful candidates produced some exciting and imaginative work including mirror photography and interesting light used in reflections. This photography gave a solid foundation to the supporting studies and resulted in some competent final outcomes. There was a wide range of photographs taken in the studio using strong lighting with dramatic backdrops, which made for interesting images. These were manipulated and developed using research into other photographers as inspiration.

Many mid and lower level candidates had obviously looked at facial proportions through the use of photography and they attempted to observe profile compositions most often. While this demonstrated an awareness of others' work and also a certain ability to handle the medium employed, it also led to a fairly dead and unexplored feel to the submissions.

Frequently, the successful qualities apparent within the preparatory work were not translated as successfully

into the final outcome. For some, there was a lack in development during the preparatory stages. For example, there was sometimes very little experimentation with materials, and quite often, there was little exploration of alternative and varying viewpoints and compositions. Generally, in some of the responses to this question, there was a sense that those who were confident with their drawing and painting technical skills were hesitant to take their ideas further and develop their work beyond the obvious.

The weakest submissions had very limited preparatory studies with no evidence of any first-hand sources used for gathering and research. Much of this work appeared to have been copied from photographs or pictures taken from the internet. Research was limited to derivative images of wild creatures which candidates found difficult to develop beyond a few copied or traced images produced in other media, or to resolve into a final outcome. Few of these submissions made reference to other artists or art movements which would have helped them to develop their work more successfully.

Question 3 Weather

Candidates explored a very wide range of interpretations for this question. These included the effects of weather on peoples' faces, birds and animals sheltering from storms and dramatic seascapes and landscapes based on local views. Sky studies were recorded by candidates using watercolour, pastels, charcoal, photography and acrylics. Among stronger submissions there was an understanding of different cloud formations and direct observations were made of threatening storm clouds. Most candidates tackled adverse weather conditions such as storms, hurricanes and high winds.

The most successful submissions tended to take a personal approach, studying weather conditions at first hand and sometimes linking the study to climate change and environmental concerns. Local weather conditions were used to study the same landmark or figure in varying weather such as wind, rain, hot sun etc. Monet was frequently cited as an artist for study.

In the middle and lower ranges the themes were not so fully researched or resolved. Pre-conceived notions of sunsets, thunderstorms etc. were reproduced without reference to first hand sources and were often used for background effects behind silhouetted skylines etc. Very often some solid research would not be followed through into the final outcomes. Some of the work here was quite sensitive and often showed a strong use of media. What was often missing in these submissions was a sense of consistency and evidence of progression and development. Various weathered objects were studied but there was no idea of a journey and the final piece was invariably a repeat from the preparatory work, even if it was a well-executed piece.

A number of candidates in the lower mark range tackled sunshine and warm weather. Their efforts were limited by a lack of ability to accurately record cast shadows from figures and objects. This was mainly due to a failure to consider the impact of a source of light on shadow length. These candidates frequently relied too heavily on secondary material and research was often limited to images of weather drawn from the imagination. There was very little evidence of first hand observation and submissions at this level were limited in their research and recording.

Question 4 A figure sits on a stool, holding a large ball

This question was chosen less frequently than other questions. The better work contained evidence of good first-hand research and recording, using photography, drawing and painting, through the manipulation of a competent range of media. The exploration of alternative angles and viewpoints illustrated various compositions of the hands holding the ball as well as sections of stools and chairs and seated positions. However, the qualities evident in the supporting work did not always translate into the outcome and there was much reliance on copying from photographs. Less successful work lacked depth of observation and demonstrated a more limited understanding of form and proportion. There was little experimentation of background compositions and little investigation through the rendering of media of the surface, texture or material qualities of the ball etc. Some work at this level lacked imagination and idea development and outcomes tended to be a repeat rather than a developed image. There was some evidence of artist referencing, but often this did not effectively inform the development of ideas.

At the lower level, candidates generally took one viewpoint and reproduced it in various different media. There was often little understanding of proportion and perspective and tonal modelling was limited. Poor drawing and observational skills made this a very hard subject for study. Often students photographed their model and then drew directly from this image but lacked the skills to develop the work into a meaningful outcome. The figure was often also isolated in the middle of the composition with little or no regard for negative space.

Question 5 Plant patterns

Whilst this was a very popular question submissions were generally not strong. Most candidates had misinterpreted this question and produced patterns developed from leaf shapes. Some had attempted repeat design but the majority had just scattered leaf shapes across the page. They had failed to observe the qualities of patterns created from observing plant forms from close observation even when their own photographic research clearly indicated there had been potential.

The few stronger submissions identified a clear source from which to investigate and develop some coherent designs. Outcomes were seen in a wide variety of media including photography, print and paint. There was much good use of layering of images both by traditional methods and by some good use of Photoshop. Shadow patterns made by leaves in strong sunlight were also used to good effect. There was evidence at all levels of repeat patterns and many candidates took their solutions into print, both screen and lino, some being produced as textile design. Transparent overlays of colour were successfully used at this level. These submissions showed effective use of artists and artistic movements. William Morris, Art Nouveau and Mandalas were used to good effect. There were some successful fashion entries where patterns from nature were applied to garments in interesting and creative ways which explored a mature use of line and shape and an understanding of both human and vegetable form.

Mid-level submissions showed some use of photography to record visual information and an adequate level of experimentation with a range of media in the development of ideas. Some submissions demonstrated an ability to create repeat patterns and there were some successful attempts to flip and rotate images with use of printing techniques. Although these candidates attempted to develop and compose a final piece, they mostly failed to bring it all together in the final outcome. This was often due to unsuccessful scaling-up.

There were a number of weaker submissions. Candidates drew and photographed a limited number of different leaf shapes using simple line and with varying levels of inaccuracy, often with no attempt at tone. These images were cut and pasted or traced to form inconsistent and inaccurate sprinklings of a leaf in different directions on a page with a white background, with little success. Media studies and experimentation with colour and pattern were limited and a lack of skill in the handling of paint was evident.

Question 6 An open drawer revealing its contents

This topic provided candidates with the opportunity to explore compositions within a structure, and candidates of all levels had usually researched from direct observation. A diverse range of subject matter was selected for investigation, from clothing, toys, cosmetics, jewellery, stationary, kitchen utensils, junk, hardware etc., to more conceptual and symbolic interpretations such as, memories, life or fantasies spilling out from a drawer.

In the higher level submissions, candidates worked from first hand sources with interesting angles and perspectives. There was observation of surface, texture and pattern. Pencils, oil pastels and paint were used with success. Research using candidates' own drawings supported their outcomes, alongside research into the work of other artists. Outcomes were fully realised. Candidates studied various contents for the drawer and sometimes took their ideas into imaginative realms of dreams and the supernatural with the idea of escape from a drawer once it is open. Some ideas centred on music and memories. Surrealist artists were a frequent resource for development with Magritte and Dali being particularly popular.

At the middle level of the ability range there was evidence of recording through the careful observation of sources to create some sensitive studies using a range of media. There was much use of pencil to show the form of various objects. Candidates explored various types of open drawers, wooden drawers, baskets of drawers etc., and from different angles. However, at this level, the contents of the drawer were often explored as individual forms, with little consideration of the relationships between objects placed next to each other, and the understanding of perspective created inconsistencies. The lack of tonal contrast between the open section of the drawer against the inner part was not fully appreciated. Often the work demonstrated good technical skills but was less strong in the interpretation of ideas.

In weaker submissions candidates were unable to demonstrate an understanding of form. Work generally revealed bad angles, awkward viewpoints and incorrect use of perspective showing a lack of understanding of three dimensional shapes and little or no aesthetic appreciation. There was frequently little understanding of composition and many presented a small chest of drawers in the middle of the composition leaving little opportunity to record the intricacies of shape, form and details of objects. The rest of the composition represented an otherwise empty room with no consideration given to the integration of the main subject and the setting.

Question 7 Landmarks

There were some strong responses which were imaginative and exciting in the choice of objects, their arrangement and their rendering. These were mostly graphic design responses and although they were often successful they were also large projects to mark as work was mounted on heavy card and presented in a concertina effect. It was difficult to see the final pieces on these boards as there were sometimes 3 or 4 final products (a business card, a loyalty card, a logo, a leaflet etc.). These projects would have been better mounted on one page together. These submissions demonstrated very good technical skill and understanding of text and image working together to create successful compositions. The work showed good knowledge of colour theory and candidates had used their own images, drawn or photographed from observation, as starting points.

Landmarks were sometimes familiar local buildings or structures such as bridges, crossroads, or monumental structures, which were not famous but were well known within the community. These were mostly carefully observed and recorded by candidates who worked from direct observation. There were also studies of architecture and natural landmarks with links to cultural differences and histories. Stronger candidates explored a range of viewpoints prior to tackling their final composition. In some cases, competent use of media was not as effective as it could have been due to insufficient enquiry into the overall aesthetic of the final outcome. Photographic submissions were often well recorded and presented but lacked experimental development or consideration of returning to the subject at different times in different lighting.

Less strong submissions mainly consisted of copied secondary imagery of famous landmark structures from around the world. Very little work had been derived from first-hand experience and there was very little personal engagement in the interpretation of the topic. There was often repetition of imagery, with very little range of source material beyond the basic images of the landmarks chosen for study. The preparatory work was usually just a collection of various visual elements to be included in the final piece, or a random collection of disconnected imagery.

Question 8 Connecting devices

While most submissions chose to examine electrical and digital devices, some candidates explored interpretative ideas of linking people together such as family ties, shared experiences and pastimes etc. Higher level works were much more aware of alternative technologies as a source for graphic and abstract exploration. Quite a high proportion of these were still life submissions. Candidates showed an excellent manipulation of materials to create texture and had worked from direct observation. The best candidates explored all areas with informative, detailed and technical recording and development.

However, the majority of candidates failed to explore their chosen themes beyond taking photographs and making rudimentary sketches. Many used photographs taken from one or two viewpoints and copied or traced the images, resulting in fairly basic work. Where a second image was involved, it was generally a found image and added little to the research process. There was a little interest in robotics, but much use of found images.

Question 9 A flower shop or stall

Candidates at all levels worked from direct observation to investigate their topic through a range of materials and photography. Most had visited their local flower shops and markets and some had recorded their findings in an enthusiastic and lively manner.

The strongest work included sensitive and skilful drawings and paintings to illustrate the careful observation of flowers, leaves, foliage, in pots etc., to produce a range of delicate studies, in both black and white and colour. The work reflected a highly developed rendering of materials, and candidates had captured the qualities of the subject with confidence. An effective use of photography to record the floral displays in shops and on stalls, supported the investigations and references to the works of others was apparent. However, in some of the work at this level, the success of the final outcome was hindered by the candidate's inappropriate choice of medium and the lively qualities within the supporting work were not reflected in the outcome.

Most submissions however, focused primarily on simple representations of flowers that were frequently taken from magazines and traced or copied. The materials used to do this were very limited – usually heavy lead pencil and crayon. The observation, particularly of colour, was very weak and the final piece was generally a slightly scaled up version of the preparatory work. There was little or no evidence of research or artist references.

Question 10 Cycling

Most examples for this question focussed on compositions of cycle parts and did not make any reference to the act of cycling itself. Candidates could have focused on any of the many different aspects of cycling: cycle racing, cycling to school, or for pleasure; or referencing the Futurist art movement for ideas to suggest the idea of motion and speed.

Nearly all candidates took the bicycle as their theme and photographed bikes both on the road and in pieces. Many made admirable attempts at drawing wheels, spokes and gears etc., focusing on the mechanics of the bike with some success. End results often emerged from patterns found within the earlier drawings or detailed observational pieces.

Still life groups showing bicycle frames and parts, were attempted by many candidates. The recording of cogs and sprockets, especially when viewed elliptically presented these candidates with major problems when recording form and structure however.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design-based Assignment

General comments

In this session **Question 8** was the most popular question, with **Question 5** the least frequently chosen.

The quality of the research shown was generally poor and this was usually reflected in the final outcomes. It was often unclear where the research material had been sourced. There was very limited annotation explaining where the images were from and final outcomes often appeared to have been accidentally reached with little planning, sense of direction or purpose despite the directed starting points. In many cases candidates ignored the directions given in the questions that act as prompts. In particular the phrases 'based on your first-hand studies', 'use your own studies' were not noted. There was heavy overreliance of imagery taken from the internet and very little in the way of first-hand observation. The question paper provided detailed explanatory notes regarding what first-hand studies are and what secondary sources are. Candidates should be clear that copying and downloading secondary images is not good practice and will not enable them to show their full ability against the assessment criteria. The same imagery often appeared from different candidates at the same Centre where they had followed a prescriptive course of study. In such cases the work showed very little personal response. The same downloaded imagery also appeared repeatedly from different Centres suggesting that the practice of permitting candidates to download an image and copy it is widespread. This does not allow candidates to access the full marks range for the component.

Projects, artwork or class exercises that were completely unrelated to any of the questions answered were frequently presented as part of submissions. The submission must be work that has been produced in response to the question paper. Candidates must not submit work that has been carried out prior to receiving the question paper. Many submissions showed no relation to the questions set and were supplemented with random and unrelated work that lacked research, experimentation or ideas development.

The very best work seen was well presented and showed a mature understanding of the processes needed to successfully answer a design brief. The candidates at this level showed a competent ability to edit their work and to submit only their most relevant pieces. On the whole this work was presented well, although there were still submissions where very little editing had taken place as every little sketch and media experiment, however poor or irrelevant, had been included. There is no need for candidates to attach pieces of tracing paper to the back of the supporting sheets.

Examples of the students' own photography were sometimes included, particularly in the higher level work but there was very little good use made of computer graphics.

The most popular choice of media and was paint and pencil. There were some three-dimensional submissions seen and a few that used origami. There were few printmaking submissions. There were also attempts at collage, especially for **Question 9** where seeds, spices and dried beans had been attached to work. These had however, often fallen off. Cartoons were often included in submissions.

Experiments with media were carried out by nearly all candidates but almost always as class exercises. These showed ideas in collage, printmaking – lino, monoprint, etching, etc. and there were some really applicable and interesting pieces but then they were not taken forward into the final outcome. Textures and colour were also explored but were then often not applied to the designs.

There were some expert examples of painting and drawing, digital outcomes and photos of 3D work but generally the artwork lacked innovation. A lot of glitter was used which generally did not enhance designs. There were also some submissions which contained little or no supporting studies.

In the better submissions reference to artists and their work was used cleverly to inform and develop individual ideas.

In the lower mark bands annotation consisted of detailed descriptions of the media used which did not satisfy the requirements for higher mark bands. Research information on artists was sometimes included without explanation and was then never referred to again.

In some cases all candidates in a Centre answered the same question and there was evidence of a very formulaic approach with little, if any, personal engagement in the topic. These submissions were rarely successful when judged against the assessment criteria.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – Dental practice

This was quite a popular question. The majority of designs were for posters and most candidates used pencils, paint and some computer graphics.

Generally research was secondary and came directly from the internet with very little first-hand research shown. There was very little evidence of idea development and the technical skills and presentation were of a poor standard. Work seen in the very lowest ability range relied heavily on secondary source images such as cartoon teeth, toothbrushes and open mouths. These were usually downloaded images from the internet or sometimes imagined. There was no use of formal type demonstrated.

Some candidates did present a range of fonts in their research. Only a few were hand rendered and the majority were printed from the internet in black and white list form and were never referenced or considered in the final design.

A small number of more successful candidates had followed the instructions in the question to carry out their own detailed studies from first-hand research and there were examples seen where candidates had realised these opportunities and produced primary research with drawings of actual mouths, teeth and sweets. A few candidates had visited dentists and taken their own photographs however. There were some well-drawn studies, with first-hand photographs of open mouths showing their teeth. At the higher levels, candidates explored several ideas in depth, leading to final designs that were developed more thoroughly. Interesting images were seen of pincers, dental equipment and false teeth.

There were some competent drawing skills seen with some submissions showing clearly organised work developed into fully realised ideas through a series of different layouts. However much of the work for this question was directly from imagination and was then simply used as the final outcome with very little success.

Question 2 – FIT

This proved to be a popular choice of question but there were few strong submissions seen.

The most common outcome was a design for gym outfits for men and women based on computer games or manga figures. Candidates often presented cartoon men and women in superhero outfits with the word FIT added. There were submissions that featured animal-inspired costumes with no link or reference to the question. Generally the quality of drawings was very limited and some drawings were unfinished. Another frequently seen interpretation was muscular men or women, mostly taken from secondary internet images standing on a catwalk. Little consideration was given to lettering if it was used.

Some first-hand research was seen with a few photos taken in gyms and bedrooms but these images were not developed well and were used without considering the design of the overall artwork.

Question 3 – ‘Silver’ by Walter de la Mare

This was the question with the most creative responses but these were not supported by evidence of first-hand studies. Most submissions used images and only a few used pure calligraphy. There was some evidence of experimentation with media and techniques – sponging, sewing or collage but mostly paint and pencil were used.

Dark moonlit landscapes with **silhouetted trees** were most commonly seen. However, little primary evidence was used to produce the designs. Often the type was hand written but poorly produced and there was limited planning or design skill evident. Fashion interpretations were often developed too, with women in silver costumes walking through the night. Here, silver pen was generally used for drawing and lettering.

Question 4 – DESKco

This was a successful question in terms of primary research and observational drawing. There were many examples of rulers, rubbers, pencils, pens, staplers, etc. Some of these were drawn well first hand but some candidates had simply traced around the objects. Pencil was the most popular medium. However, the initial ideas were rarely extended and there was often very little supporting work to show any development. Overall there were few strong submissions and much of the work showed very limited technical skills. If it was included at all, typography/logo was often drawn by hand very poorly.

In some cases there was evidence that all candidates in a Centre had followed the same approach to this question. Exercises unrelated to the question were submitted and there was almost no personal input from the candidates, except in a few stronger works where some individual ideas had been added.

Question 5 – Surface

This question was chosen by only a few candidates. Submissions showed various interpretations with some candidates producing patterns for fabric and showing its uses, and others focusing on the materials used to produce 3-D objects. There was some evidence of first-hand research here which contributed to some successful outcomes.

Question 6 – Bedroom Storage

This question was chosen by a small number of candidates. Most submissions were at the lower end of achievement and there was very little evidence of first-hand research in support of the work. Occasionally in the stronger work there was reference to the work of other artists and these submissions demonstrated the journey from reference gathering, with some primary drawing and photos, through to the final outcomes. However, overall idea development and experimentation were limited in all submissions seen.

Question 7 DROP

Most submissions for this question were at the lower end of the ability range. Although it was quite a popular question most submissions relied heavily on cartoon images from the internet. The same images of watering cans, taps and hoses were frequently seen and this meant that there were few personal qualities in the work. There was little primary evidence of research and hardly any first-hand photography. The most popular medium was pencil with some colour but the work lacked drawing or design skills. Typography was mostly hand written and lacked reference to existing or relevant examples. If examples were included they were often ignored when the finished outcome was produced.

In some of the better submissions some first-hand drawing and photographs were seen which resulted in a more original approach. Some excellent and innovative headings relating to water were included. Some thoughtful references to water shortage problems in the Third World were seen. Mostly however, there was a reliance on drips or water pouring from taps, hoses, watering cans or globes and sometimes all of them together.

Question 8 – Fatfish Cafe

This was the most popular question.

Stronger candidates had inventive ideas for this question but in the lower range the research was limited, idea development was lacking and technical skills were poor. Paint was used by the majority of candidates but very few showed great strength in this medium.

Some candidates focused on the staff uniforms mentioned in the question and interpreted this question as a fashion outcome showing one or two, or a range of uniforms for the staff of the cafe with crabs, fish and water on the front of aprons or T-shirts. In these submissions less consideration was given to the cafe name than the images. There were many copied cartoons of men and women used to display the designs.

There were also other submissions which developed ideas for cafe interiors, seating, flooring and décor and fish were the dominant images on menus, walls/murals, floors etc. However, there were few first-hand drawings or photos of fish except in a small number of stronger submissions where some satisfactory illustration was produced. Most images had been sourced from the internet and there was limited research shown. On occasion when drawings were included in weaker submissions, they were abstracted so much that they became cartoons.

In a small number of stronger submissions research included drawings and photos of fish and shellfish. There was good experimentation with media and idea development and evidence that different designs for layouts and type had been considered. This resulted in well-planned final outcomes.

Question 9 – Organic

Coloured watercolour pencil was the most popular medium for this question with a narrow range of colours used. On the whole the candidates' technical skills were poor and their ideas lacked imagination. There were some submissions which showed an attempt to gather research by photographing a selection of different seeds and nuts but overall research was only minimally evident. The standard of drawing of pods, spices, nuts, etc. was quite poor at the lowest level and the use of typeface was limited. Most candidates chose to embellish a found typeface with leaves and organic foods, rather than creating a typeface from organic foods.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/03 Critical and Historical Assignment</p>

General Comments

There was a range of subject areas covered for assignments including architecture, fine art, painting and sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, and textile and graphic design.

There were some strong submissions which included evidence of some first-hand experience and involvement with the subject matter which had clearly contributed to the attainment levels of these candidates. Most submissions however fell in the middle range of the assessment criteria.

Methods of presentation included large and small sketchbooks, A3 and some A2 sheets of mounted work, sometimes with essays attached, and some spiral bound and digitally produced A4 submissions. There were also a few loose sheets of A4 paper in plastic files or clipped together, which contained hand written or word processed text. When CDs are presented, a printed hard copy should also be provided for clarification.

The use of the approval forms ensured that many candidates had selected an appropriate topic and had identified suitable first-hand sources from which to gain vital research and experience. Centres are advised to ensure that these forms are used by all candidates.

Higher levels of achievement

The submissions at the higher levels of achievement demonstrated more personal engagement and sometimes a practical involvement with the subject matter. These candidates had usually established a clear focus by making a first-hand visit to a gallery, artist's studio, workshop or a site of architectural significance.

These submissions often contained evidence of some personal engagement with the process involved in producing the works being explored. This had provided insights into the way work is developed and made. A few candidates had gained useful first-hand experience of the subject by working alongside the artist in their own studio.

Some of the strongest submissions were in the form of a hand-made book/folder, containing mounted sheets and pages, demonstrating strong visual elements in the form of photos, drawings and some personal material-based responses.

The best submissions showed a high level of awareness and understanding of the topic. The quality of the language used in making evaluations and/or recording observations through annotating thoughts and feelings was articulate and informative.

Mid-levels of achievement

Some submissions at this level would have benefitted from a more detailed exploration process as first-hand research and experience of the topic was often quite limited. Use of the internet as a secondary source for research was regularly seen. This often inhibited the personal engagement of the assignment when used as the only source. A few candidates had featured their own work as the main source for exploration. These submissions would have benefitted from the selection of examples by other recognised practitioners as a comparative focus for investigation. This process could have then informed, and possibly inspired, some practical-based responses. A first-hand experience such as a visit to an exhibition was sometimes added at the end of the assignment but had little relevance to the examples displayed in the submissions.

Candidates often included interviews with the chosen artists which added little of any significance to the assignment. Questions could have been constructed which would have revealed more informative insights into the ideas and development behind the works in question.

Lower levels of achievement

A few candidates had submitted work which was not substantial enough and consisted of just a few A4 pieces of paper which contained some written notes. These candidates would have benefitted from making use of the available approval form. This would encourage the choice of an appropriate topic as well as helping with the planning of suitable intentions for making the assignment.

Many of these submissions were seen to contain little or no evidence of the use of first-hand sources for research or experience of the topic chosen. The internet was often used for downloading information and images, with the assignments concerned showing little in the way of personal involvement. These submissions demonstrated very little evidence of how artists and designers develop their ideas, the exploration of themes, or the addressing of any issues.

ART AND DESIGN

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

The majority of candidates had followed an individual course of study during the completion of their coursework project, and a range of individual themes and sources of inspiration had been selected for investigation. Topics included shells, flowers, portraiture, interiors, still-life, insects, wildlife, landscape, shoes, natural forms and architecture. The topics had been investigated and developed to varying levels of skill and technical ability. Candidates had manipulated a range of materials, techniques and processes to investigate and explore their topics such as pencil, charcoal, pastels, paint, ink, collage, photography, textiles and digital media. Most of the candidates however, had mainly explored the materials within the area of painting and related media.

Responses showed evidence of imagination and the development of personal interests. The best work always arose from in-depth research from first-hand study of chosen subjects. There were also examples where research into the work of other artists, designers or cultures had informed candidates' ideas. These candidates had not just copied the work of others but had analysed aspects of their subject or technique to inform their own work. However, there were many submissions which included downloaded copies of written biographies, lengthy descriptions of technical processes, downloaded photographs of poor quality or of images that had no relationship to the theme. These could not be credited as having made any contribution to candidates' own development.

There was evidence of over direction in a number of Centres where all candidates had followed the same theme or approach. This structure gave little freedom for candidates to develop individual ideas and prevented candidates from accessing the full mark range, especially within AO5: Personal vision and presentation.

The candidates in the middle mark range sometimes relied on secondary sources, usually taken from the internet, for use in the investigation of their starting points. These candidates also often included their own photographs in the supporting work. These often showed a lack of technical knowledge and understanding of composition needed to produce successful and effective images. Studies incorporating a variety of media were seen but the work often contained inconsistencies in technical ability and in the formal elements of tone, form and composition.

In some cases the supporting work was stronger than the final piece which did not always reflect the candidates' best ability or stronger ideas. In other submissions, there was more evidence of strength in the candidates' final outcomes, but unfortunately this had not been supported by sufficient research.

There were many examples of weaker work containing little evidence of first-hand study and much use of imagery from secondary sources. In these submissions very little supporting work was submitted and it usually contained a limited breadth of study and showed weak technical skills. The research lacked the scope for developing ideas and there appeared to be little purpose in the manipulation of imagery. Photography was sometimes used to record but the quality of images was often poor due to insufficient skill in the handling of the camera. Artist references were either rarely included in the supporting work or were irrelevant to the topic. The supporting work was not thoroughly developed and there were very few clear ideas apparent. There was a lack of exploration of materials which prevented the development of technical skills. The final outcome often demonstrated a lack of understanding of form, balance and colour, with a limited technical competence in the control of materials. Often, at this level, the materials used were not the most appropriate choice of media to communicate intention and the final outcomes were very often unresolved or incoherent.

The presentation and organisation of the work for the majority of the submissions was good with material well displayed and clearly demonstrating candidate achievement. Many candidates had presented their coursework on A2 sheets which were securely fastened and clearly labelled. Others submitted work on heavy card and the sheets had been attached together in a concertina style. Some submissions exceeded the recommended number of sheets for the supporting work. This work would have benefited from editing to enhance candidate achievement and to demonstrate the refinement of ideas towards the outcome.

Overall, assessments were mostly generous and in some cases substantial adjustments were required to the standard. A number of Centres had not standardised assessments of their candidates working in different areas of studies and consequently produced invalid order of merits. Some of the individual candidate record sheets submitted were completed well, making pertinent and helpful comments but others just showed the number of marks awarded with no supporting comments.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

Most candidates had produced their coursework project within this area of study.

The few submissions achieving the higher marks were often very personal and demonstrated high engagement and involvement with the topics selected by candidates. These candidates had worked mostly from direct observation in response to their starting points, particularly during the initial stages of their supporting work. They recorded from sources or themes inspired by their locality and collected forms and artefacts, and composed still-life arrangements and figure work. Research and ideas were explored and developed through materials such as paint, pencils, pastels, ink, collage, mixed media etc. Candidates had used their own photography to produce observed studies to accompany developed compositions executed in various media. There were clear links to their artist research which supported development and often fed into their final outcome. There was evidence of critical thinking through the evaluative comments included in their work. Often the most effective submissions had chosen everyday subject matter as their theme and figurative representation was common. When candidates attempted a more imaginative interpretative approach, these were usually a form of surrealism. There were a few attempts at abstraction where the influence of Cubism or patterns inspired from the study of traditional cultures were seen.

The most common weakness in middle range work was a lack of sufficient exploration of ideas and experimentation with media. Whilst initial studies or ideas showed some potential, sustained exploration and experimentation were not evident to allow candidates to develop and refine the work.

Some candidates in the middle range demonstrated ambitious and well-informed personal ideas that had been explored in some depth in words and quick sketches. However these candidates had not translated this considerable conceptual potential into fully formed artworks as there was very little experimentation with media and their skills were very limited.

There was evidence that a significant number of candidates had followed highly-structured courses that used a set range of references and processes. In these circumstances, the work of all candidates in a Centre was very similar. Whilst work of this sort was often technically competent, the limited opportunities for individual choices about the direction, methods and subject matter of investigations reduced the works' personal qualities and creativity.

Weaker candidates did not demonstrate adequate observational skills or produce sufficient research to base their work on. Candidates often relied heavily on secondary-sourced material with little recording from first-hand sources. This work often contained images derived from the imagination, traced images and other research where the origin of sources was not identified. Very often the work lacked direction and the fragmented imagery did not show scope for development. The supporting work at this level was also disconnected to the final outcome.

Photography

The work at the higher mark range included several photo shoots which demonstrated candidates' ability to investigate a subject matter taking into consideration the exploration of angles, viewpoints, compositions and the arrangements of subject matter and scale. The work was developed using a range of experimental techniques including the use of Photoshop and other digital image manipulation programs. The best work also referred to the work of other photographers and candidates took appropriate inspiration from this

research. Where the work was annotated, candidates working at the higher level had used relevant terminology to explain the processes and to demonstrate an understanding of their chosen media.

Many of the weaker responses lacked significant content, had few images and showed minimal changes to very ordinary photographs by using a 'suntan' tool to alter the colour of faces slightly, to stretch a scene or to clean an image with a cloning tool. Sometimes it was difficult to see the development of changes as they were randomly applied and discarded afterwards. Themes of dancers at temples, street life, trees and children playing were included. In the mid-range there were ideas and images with some strong potential but often these were not developed further than being slightly manipulated. The errors that should have been altered e.g. crooked horizons and tidying of badly cut out images, were left unchanged. All candidates followed a similar and prescribed way of presenting and annotating their projects.

Graphic design

Some competent digital skills were shown but the work tended to be rather mechanical with less evidence of candidates' abilities to make independent aesthetic judgements about their work. Unexpected ideas and creative developments were rare as candidates followed prescribed steps rather than a more open process. However some good use of photography to investigate subject matter was seen.

The majority of submissions relied heavily on images sourced from the internet and text tended to be produced from existing typefaces then put together with the images in a variety of combinations. In these cases there was very little creative work contributed by candidates. The work often contained little or no annotation to clarify the progression of ideas or the different stages of design. This did not aid communication of the direction of work. Overall the technical skills demonstrated were limited. Some submissions contained computer generated work which showed some knowledge of the program used but did not demonstrate any exploration or development of techniques or ideas.

Fashion and textile design/3D design

Very few submissions from these areas of study were seen.