

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01

Broad-based

Assignment

General Comments

The questions provided a broad range of opportunities for observation, personal interpretation and experimentation and outcomes varied from painting and drawing, printmaking, sculpture, photography and graphic design.

Question 6: A vase of flowers was the most popular with **Questions 4: A seated figure** and **Question 10: Around a table**, the least popular.

The strongest submissions included well planned research and well executed supporting work, which were always informed by first-hand observation through drawing, painting, and photography. It appeared that most teachers had encouraged candidates to investigate and research their sources from first-hand, and from direct observation to form the basis of their work. They demonstrated good depth of analysis and investigation of their chosen topic. In some cases it was as if the teacher had limited expectations of what the candidate was capable of achieving and as such provided them with resources to work from. While this often led to some worthy outcomes there was a tendency for the work to be a little more remote from their own personal experiences, and the results were often predictable and safe.

The development of ideas evident in the more successful work, demonstrated alternative ways of using the source material and initial studies. Different angles and vantage points had been explored, along with cropping, layout and composition. Candidates at this level had experimented with different colour combinations, lighting, alterations of scale and focal points, and a variety of media. Increasingly candidates made reference to the work of other artists and designers and in the very best work this had clearly informed development and exploration of ideas and the expression of personal intentions. It was clear that candidates had made good use of their preparation time and had demonstrated creative and thoughtful responses, successfully fulfilling each of the Assessment Objectives.

There were several instances where candidates had explored a range of directions in their supporting studies. Some of these ideas had considerable potential but the candidate had then gone on to select a totally unrelated image with no evidence as to its origin for their examination piece. This approach undermined all the investigation, experimentation and development, which had taken place during the preparatory period. Candidates are strongly advised to avoid this disconnect between supporting studies and the final examination piece.

Mid-level submissions were inconsistent in meeting the Assessment Objectives. Many who had made genuine first-hand studies did not develop them into a coherent final composition. There was a lack of sufficient time given to the planning of alternative compositions. In others, a lack of experience and confidence in handling media inhibited outcomes. Other candidates relied on secondary sources for their ideas which limited any success in developing a personal response.

The work in the lower levels of achievement demonstrated a lack of personal investigation of the starting points and demonstrated little investigation, research or development of ideas. Many submissions at this level presented either very little or no first-hand research, relying heavily on secondary sources. Supporting studies took the form of copied imagery, either sourced from the internet or from other secondary photographs. Unfortunately those candidates who relied on secondary sources tended to produce more derivative and cliché work that lacked originality. It was apparent that candidates at the lower levels struggled with developing their own ideas. Many candidates tried to demonstrate this by presenting lengthy paragraphs of written statements justifying their work with little visual evidence, rather than making concise or pertinent comments, or annotations of actual visual studies that they had produced. The exploration of materials demonstrated poor technical skill and control, with little understanding of the organisation of visual forms. It was very apparent that the candidates at this level did not take full advantage of the potential available to

them within their question. There was occasional evidence of contextual referencing though this appeared to have been carried out as an arbitrary exercise and therefore the material included often had little relevance to the path pursued and made no discernible influence on the work.

There was a wide range of personal directions and interpretations developed by ambitious candidates. Several candidates attempted questions that had an obvious perceptual interpretation into an unusual interpretative direction. The questions on the paper are simply starting points and 'going beyond the literal' is encouraged. Examples of this occurred in the mid and upper mark ranges where candidates developed design outcomes for **Question 1** and **Question 6**. Here a broken toy had been developed into an interpretive analysis of the feelings of the child who had broken the toy; this non-literal interpretation was a good example of thinking beyond the obvious.

There were many submissions where the questions had been used as a starting point to develop their own design briefs. Unfortunately, many contained a huge amount of unnecessary written information about the candidates' hobbies and self-assessment of their achievement. Much of the relevant content was at times obscured and other candidates struggled to relate the questions to a design theme.

Most candidates tended to work within the area of painting and related media, although photography was also a popular choice of media, particularly in the recording. Many candidates had obviously enjoyed the opportunity to develop personal expression through their chosen media, from sensitive water colour or pencil studies, to bold vigorous oil pastels, paint and mixed media. There was also evidence of collage work, some printmaking and a few sculptural submissions using a variety of material and processes. Teachers submitting photographic evidence of their candidates' three-dimensional work are advised to ensure that the scale, clarity of image and three-dimensionality of the work is accurately shown. This applies to both the supporting studies and for the final examination piece. Indistinct imagery due to a lack of focus or poor illumination meant that examiners sometimes found the assessment difficult, due to lack of visual information. This is especially true where only thumbnail photographs were used to show supporting studies.

Generally, the standard of presentation was very good. Care had been taken to show the work to its best advantage and most work was well labelled. Some candidates did not anticipate the effect of the positioning of the labels on their work, in one or two cases labels hid what might have been significant areas of the final piece. Occasionally candidates did not write their Centre or candidate number legibly, which can easily cause confusion in identifying pieces of work. Some teachers had not been selective in the inclusion of material for the submissions and their candidates' achievement was sometimes obscured. Teachers should encourage the editing of material to aid clearer communication of a candidate's intention and achievement. There were a few very complicated presentations with lots of unfolding sheets and pockets containing drawings or photographs, which did not aid the examining process.

Comments on Specific Questions

Q1 A shopping bag with some of the contents spilling out

The question provided the opportunity to set up a still-life in the classroom or suitable subject matter for observational drawing and preparation at home. There was much variation in the contents of the shopping bag depicted but where candidates had considered their choice carefully and had selected items of personal interest and relevance, it resulted in higher marks for personal qualities.

The starting point provided those candidates with strong observational skills to demonstrate their technical abilities through painting, drawing and photography. The strongest submissions had clearly benefited from sustained observational work from first-hand sources. These candidates had worked from some thoughtful arrangements of items spilling out of a bag. Carefully observed studies had been constructed within the supporting studies, through an accomplished manipulation of painting and related media and photography. Sensitive and skilful recording of the delicate and subtle creases and folds within paper bags were rendered through drawing and painting, illustrating an observation of subtle tone and colour. Some very realistic effects had been achieved and candidates had managed to capture the transparent qualities of

plastic as it formed and distorted over the contents of the shopping. A variety of items had been selected to record, from fruit and veg to toiletries; to chocolate and biscuits. All were executed through a range of appropriately rendered media. The elements of form, colour relationships, tone, texture and composition had been explored thoroughly which demonstrated an excellent understanding of forms in space.

References to Cubism and Pop Art were seen in those who adopted a more interpretative approach.

In the lower levels of achievement, candidates often did not change their view-point and their research remained confined to a single still-life arrangement produced in a single medium. The rendering of ellipses of tins and perspective of boxed items together with lettering also created many problems. In other submissions, the relationship between the bag, its contents and the surrounding space had not been investigated and often resulted in forms 'floating' on an undifferentiated ground.

Q2 Water patterns

The starting point for all submissions here was through photography, although most of this photographic gathering of information did not rise beyond a standard snapshot. Many of the images were indistinct because of candidates using poor focusing, inappropriate shutter speeds and aperture settings. Waterfalls, waves, river rapids and water spiralling from taps or descending into plugholes were the most common starting point. Some of this visual information was developed into repeat patterns when candidates approached the question using their own design brief, while many candidates took this question to an abstracted outcome. There were a small number of fashion responses to this question, with varying levels of success.

At the higher level, candidates were able to analyse their own photography and use a variety of media to develop these images into insightful and well thought out abstracted outcomes. Supporting studies explored the effects of distortion and refraction of objects and people under water and the candidates considered several compositions taking inspiration from a selection of artists including Hockney and Hokusai.

Unfortunately, many examination pieces were somewhat literal and unimaginative. Candidates in the mid-range often presented photographs of water in movement but they were usually rather insipid and were unable to identify the potential of pattern and distortion. Too many candidates at this level were over reliant on secondary sources.

Low-level work showed limited imagination in gathering imagery and recording patterns or distortions. Many candidates had not recorded from direct observation and had relied heavily on predictable and well used downloaded secondary imagery of water splashes, droplets and ripples. The development of ideas and resulting final outcomes were simplistic and uninspiring.

Q3 A broken toy

For those who selected this question it provided a good opportunity for still life arrangements. There were plenty of armless and legless dolls and limbless character toys, cars, trucks and lorries; teddies with their stuffing falling out. One candidate used a symbolic connection 'one child's junk is another child's treasure' which was refreshing.

Some examples of 3D work were seen that were both ambitious and refreshing; candidates explored deconstructed imagery where the component parts of the broken toy were rearranged into a new image or structure. More than one submission at this level made appropriate use of research into characters from horror films to develop expressive responses.

At the higher levels, candidates developed ideas effectively creating imaginative and complex compositions. Excellent use of tone to model form was evident and surface detail and textures were rendered effectively in several media including mixed media techniques.

Supporting studies were often personal and candidates studied old toys that had been valued over many generations exploring personal histories and family memories. Many candidates used images of broken dolls and developed themes around broken lives and childhood tragedy.

The work seen at the mid-range of ability also produced some thorough supporting studies, observing and recording their sources from first-hand. However, the candidates at this level demonstrated less of an understanding of texture, form and structure and displayed inconsistencies in the rendering of materials during the recording process. Often the final outcome could be disappointing where ineffective decisions had

been made during the stages of development, suggesting that sometimes they were unaware of the potential of their own supporting work.

The weakest work resorted to tracing from photos of character toys. There lacked inspiration and only provided pencil crayoned tracings without context or completion. Candidates rarely moved beyond gathering information about single objects. The final outcomes were mostly of an individual toy although cast shadows were included. Building bricks were a popular choice at this level but a lack of understanding of perspective combined with a limited awareness of light falling on forms meant that outcomes were limited.

Q4 A figure seated with legs outstretched and feet resting on a table or stool

This was the least popular question and levels achieved were fairly evenly distributed across the whole range of marks. Commendable attempts at figure drawing with its complex structures and proportions to deal with were seen. Photography was used in almost all cases as a starting point. Most candidates found their own figures to draw and to photograph and it was encouraging to see candidates attempting foreshortened viewpoints with varying degrees of success.

Work in the higher levels included detailed studies of clothes, hands and a range of different people and positions. They also demonstrated a good understanding of the proportion of the figure and interesting and difficult angles were attempted. Most final outcomes had contextualised the figure into a setting.

The candidates in the mid-mark range had worked with drawing and photography to observe their outstretched figures. At this level there was more reliance on copying from the photographs rather than from life, through a range of supporting studies observing different viewpoints. The recording at this level could lack depth of observation, with a more limited understanding of form and proportion. Various media had been explored but some demonstrated inconsistencies and lacked refinement in the manipulation of media. Final compositions were often unresolved or simply did not live up to the promise seen in the supporting studies.

The work seen in the low achievement levels illustrated the difficulties of representing proportion, perspective and the placement of compositions within a background. Ideas did not progress further than basic drawn figures with a limited rendering of materials showing little observation of detail and tone.

Q5 Signs, symbols and letterforms

This topic tended to appeal more to the less able candidates, however the question proved to be more challenging than perhaps they initially realised. There were a few more successful examples of work seen that had identified a clear source from which to base their investigation. The strongest candidates engaged in critical thinking with symbolism and meaning in their signs, some candidates revealed some quite 'dark' thinking.

A few works made references to terrorism and the Syrian refugee crisis. One candidate in the higher mark range explored the idea of sign language to create a thoughtful outcome. Many others had based their direct observation on wooden letter forms that had been studied in various positions, angles and arranged together. These drawings had been executed through a small range of materials, but had been carefully rendered to show form, perspective and surface quality. Candidates had used the information to develop coherent designs, demonstrating some personal evaluation. However, the outcomes did not display much of a departure from the supporting studies.

Candidates in the mid-range were easily led to secondary sources in order to realise their ideas, usually as a design/poster solution. Most had a problem with arrangement and how to organise their compositions with the majority of submissions in response to their own design brief. Very often these were exclusively developed using photography and graphic design software. Observational drawings were not as competent as the photography and ideas were often not rigorously pursued to their logical conclusion.

At the lower levels of achievement it was clear that the candidates had very little ability to research a topic of this nature. There was a heavy reliance on secondary sources of lettering or symbols which had either been downloaded from the internet or had been copied very clumsily, and in many submissions it was unclear as to where their inspiration had originated. Many had worked from their imagination and the results of this appeared to be little more than random doodles representing letterforms, which were sometimes difficult to recognise. There was very little evidence of design development at this level, and a lack of understanding of the design process led to unresolved outcomes.

Q6 A vase of flowers

This was by far the most popular question and provided ample opportunity to showcase excellent technical ability and control of materials. Assessment Objective 1 and Assessment Objective 2 were also well covered with the addition of first-hand observation drawings and photographs taken and used to explore and develop the work.

Responses to this question ranged from highly worked collage and thickly painted interpretations to the most delicate and sensitive watercolour and pencil submissions. There were also many photographic submissions. This question provided excellent opportunity for candidates to play to their skills.

Artists used for reference included Van Gogh, Monet, Georgia O’Keeffe and Frida Kahlo, as well as 17th century Dutch masters. Occasionally a Surrealist approach was taken to this question and Magritte and Dali were used for reference.

In the higher levels, many and varied arrangements were seen with candidates focusing on a wide variety of vases, showing skills in the handling of media to produce effects of glass, metal and porcelain. Some candidates studied particular vase shapes and related studies to historic and antique vases, designing floral patterns for the vases themselves. A very wide variety of floral content was seen according to local availability of cut flowers. There were some very lively and colourful representations of exotic flowers, often expressively painted with some attempts at abstraction in the higher levels. Many candidates made effective use of the background at this level and some used strong low level lighting to create interesting shadows, setting the flowers and vase into relief.

The weaker submissions did not show enough consideration for the context, background, backdrop to the vase or an understanding about perspective and elliptical shapes at the top and bottom of the vases. Now and again vases appeared to float up the wall as the foreground and background had been completely misunderstood. Other candidates tended to draw the same set of objects, from the same angle repeatedly with little or no improvement in their understanding of the objects being observed or the use of media being employed. Many also used found images from florist sites to enhance their development studies to little effect resulting in ‘scrapbook’ collections of little merit. A few candidates used no first-hand source at all and relied solely on Internet or magazine images. In such cases the resulting outcomes were very limited.

Q7 Torn apart

Approaches to this question were imaginative and conceptual allowing candidates to research and use their own individual and meaningful imagery. Photography and digital manipulation, along with painting and related media had been used across the levels of achievement to record and explore diverse ideas. The stronger work demonstrated some very good supporting studies which had been clearly sourced from sustained first-hand observation. These had helped to inform the more imaginative and inventive outcomes. In some work, candidates had created very sophisticated studies inspired by self-portraits, or portraits of their friends through an accomplished rendering of materials, supported by effective photography. Other more conceptual ideas expressed the symbolic personal or emotional states of mind and global political dilemmas.

Middle level responses tended to be literal, focusing on physical forces represented through torn fabrics. Some effective rendering of surface texture and three-dimensional form was evident in several submissions but the full potential of media such as paint or collage was rarely realised. Others who attempted a more emotive or conceptual approach found it difficult to express such ideas visually. There was greater reliance on recording from found images and magazine pictures. In many cases, competent use of media was tempered by insufficient enquiry into the overall aesthetic of the final outcome.

Q8 Amongst the foliage

Candidates took this theme literally, with many submissions tending towards portraying something in the midst of foliage. Eyes peering from the foliage were a popular interpretation with human, ape, monkey and birds predominating in this role. A few conceptual pieces were seen, which tended to be in the higher middle range often dealing with environmental issues. Some fantasy themes were explored, a common choice was that of flower fairies and candidates had referred to the illustrations of Arthur Rackham and similar artists. Where candidates had chosen to explore a fantasy theme the more able had recognised the importance of starting their supporting studies with drawings and own photographs from direct observation. Some very good studies of light falling through trees and undergrowth were seen in the higher range submissions.

Pattern work abounded in response to this second most popular question and some good printmaking skills were also evident. Some impressive photography was also presented with candidates looking at inventive compositions and macro studies of branches and leaves.

There were other submissions containing many photographic images of plant forms. These illustrated a sensitive recording and exploration of shape, scale and space, demonstrating a sound understanding of tone and composition through an excellent range of clear, sharp images which were executed to a professional finish. Unfortunately the final outcomes did not develop from these excellent photographic supporting studies. Instead, poor ideas had been taken from the photographs and then poorly executed in other media, often bearing little resemblance to the preparatory images, resulting in incoherent outcomes. Many submissions at this level demonstrated a creative and imaginative development, though inconsistencies in the thought processes were more apparent. Ideas could be repetitive and not always fully resolved.

The work seen at the lower mark range lacked the necessary research and development to be able to produce a creative outcome. The limited supporting studies had, in many cases, hindered the progress of an informed body of work. Observation was poor, as seen in the interpretation of foliage where the recording lacked an understanding of tone, depth of space or form. Many submissions at this level missed the opportunity to explore the variety of subtle colours available to them within their subject matter other than arbitrary unmixed green, straight from the tube, and as a result outcomes tended to lack refinement.

Q9 Tension

This question threw up some topical contemporary subjects such as the migrant crisis, refugees and the trauma that they face. Most solutions to this quite popular question were delicately attempted by avoiding opinions but raising issues.

There were some candidates who made a link with Munch and 'The Scream', with many taking advantage of the expressive potential of this question by studying tortured faces, most effectively in paint. Human figures and faces created from knots and twisted ropes gave a surreal quality to some candidates' work. Other sources of study included high-tension wires on telegraph poles; knotted wire and ropes; various types of springs; elastic bands and studies of the human figure and face shown under both physical and emotional stress.

Figures and equipment involved in mountain climbing, weight lifting and other aerobic activities were also popular responses to this question. The initial gathering and recording was developed into complex themes, as a result of in-depth experimentation during the preparatory period.

The candidates at the mid- and lower levels had often over used predictable second hand sources, such as faces screaming, heads clasped in hands, droplets of sweat and clenched fists which very often resulted in some obvious final outcomes. Poorly executed photography had also often been used as a basis from which to make some unimaginative drawings. There was a lack of analysis within the observational work, which was also hindered by weak technical skills while manipulating materials. The very weak candidates relied on the repetition of images which were often undeveloped and lacked cohesion.

Q10 Around a table

There were only a few submissions seen in response to this question. There were a number of interpretations in spite of the limited uptake. These included highly decorated place settings with a decorative table centrepiece, groups of figures sitting around a table involved in playing card games or eating a meal. Most responses were literal and many candidates underestimated the need for rigorous observational drawing and careful drafting of compositions. Most candidates had difficulty creating a convincing pictorial space. Too often, a lack of understanding of perspective resulted in seated figures floating within the imaginary space.

More able candidates focused on the detail of the items on the table such as the reflective qualities of the glasses and cutlery, as well as the figures. Some had made good use of computer software such as Photoshop to manipulate their images and develop their ideas. Cezanne was influential in studying table positions and positioning figures. These candidates gained high marks for exploration and ideas as well as personal qualities.

Submissions achieving marks in the middle mark range demonstrated difficulty in creating a convincing pictorial space. Too often, a lack of understanding of perspective resulted in seated figures floating within the imaginary space.

Few candidates took the opportunity to inform their work at the preparatory stage, by exploring the numerous examples of this theme found in Art Historical contexts.

Lower level work contained limited supporting studies with very little observational work and poor technical skills. There was little evidence of an exploration of composition or materials and the candidate's work suggested that they had little understanding of how to research and develop ideas.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02

Design-based Assignment

General Comments

All the questions were attempted, the most popular being **Question 1**, 'C21 Sixteen'. The least popular questions were **Question 4** 'A waste collection area for a park', **Question 5** 'Geometmix stage design' and **Question 2** 'Design for a bridge'.

Very little formal or even rudimentary understanding of the design process was evidenced in the candidates' work. This included demonstrating an understanding of design/designing as a process and a component of visual culture with aesthetic, social and functional outcomes. The journey from concept to outcome was demonstrated, from initial thinking to research to development of ideas to final resolution.

Overall there was poor exploration of media, with predominantly pencil, paint and coloured pencil being used. There were no contextual references and in the case of many candidates in the lower mark bands, there were only a few examples of photographic research related to the chosen question.

However, there was a rise in the number of candidates using primary source material and making first-hand studies, and some candidates were able to use this visual information to develop sophisticated and individual work in the upper mark bands. Although in many cases the reference material was wasted, it did have a positive impact on the development of ideas and the outcomes for some candidates.

There were a few cases where candidates submitted their final outcome without any supporting studies which had a drastic effect on their mark as there was negligible research or development of ideas.

Most teachers adhere to administrative requirements as outlined in the syllabus but there are still some who do not tie the submissions together with the final outcome on top of the supporting studies. Placing work in folders which are taped together is unnecessary.

Comments on Specific Questions

Q1 C21 Sixteen

This was by far the most popular question but most candidates were marked between 9 – 50; with only 1 candidate scoring above 70. Much of the supporting studies contained numerous drawings or colour studies of trainers which did not assist the development of the logo and became the main focus of the final outcome. Some submissions consisted of fashion designs with some well executed illustrations.

The stronger candidates had done research into local sports teams and sports equipment through their own photography. Good control of media was evident with some ability in composition and relating image and typography.

Work seen in the mid-range lacked the depth of research into sports teams or sports equipment and those that did tended to provide only a few photographs and minimal drawings. A lack of research and development of ideas held back marks being awarded.

At the lower mark range, which most candidates achieved, work did not demonstrate an understanding of the set task or the design process. Skill with media and aesthetics was limited and whilst some visual research was carried out it was not developed significantly into a range of ideas. Many candidates could not cohesively or coherently manage the development of a logo/branding alongside designing sports clothing.

Q2 Design a bridge

Few candidates attempted this question. However, at the higher level it produced some good drawing from primary sources, developments of ideas through contextual research and model making, all of which fed fairly cohesively into the final outcomes. A 3D model of a bridge was constructed by one candidate from distorted plastic spoons.

Many of the weaker candidates lacked the technical ability to make drawings that could be developed into designs for bridges, or did not use the drawings they had done to develop ideas, thereby leaving a gap in the design process. Little evidence was seen of any existing bridges through photographs or drawings. This question seemed difficult for candidates to tackle on a practical and conceptual level.

Q3 Entrances and Exits

This was the second most popular question attracting submissions across the mark ranges up to 89. The best candidates had researched doorways and windows through drawing and personal photography. A few candidates developed a range of ideas, producing final stage sets or posters. Some of the better candidates also researched film and theatre design which influenced outcomes. Some candidates referenced the work of Saul Bass and analysed his use of colour, form and composition which had a positive bearing on their outcomes. However, this was seen in a number of candidates' works and became repetitive. There is a difference between slavishly copying an influence and using it as a catalyst to develop personal ideas.

The mid-range work typically showed suitable research of subject matter, but lacked sufficient development of ideas to produce coherent final outcomes. There were difficulties seen in the composition, relating text and image, and few candidates had considered the function of their outcome or placed it within a context.

Most candidates at the lower level used a plethora of cut and paste images of doors and windows from magazines or downloaded images from the Internet as their research, which lacked any personal qualities. Poor drawing, a lack of ideas development, the use of cartoon characters, and Norwich contextual references did not avail these candidates with better marks.

Q4 Camouflaged recycling area for a national park

This question was not very popular. The tripartite nature of the question proved too challenging for the weaker candidates to attempt. However, two candidates responded to the challenge and achieved over 70 marks. One candidate submitted a highly personal journal full of research on environmental art and artists, the journal itself an art piece with additional pockets and fold out attachments. The outcome was less accomplished in its presentation but the candidate showed a clear vision about recycling, environmental issues and their impact. The weaker submissions were predictable, consisting of screens covered in leaves or designs based on trees or fungi. Initial drawings were limited and research and development poor.

Q5 Geometmix

This question was about as popular as Q4. The best work seen had started with primary drawings from architectural features and mostly had a good control of media. One candidate in particular produced a strong series of preliminary drawings which, although small, were very accurate regarding perspective and design development. These studies were then synthesised from primary starting points into highly imaginative drawings developed into a successful and very personal final outcome.

One mid-level candidate developed ideas from observational drawings of the bridge and strings of his guitar which worked well as a technical drawing and as a design outcome. Another candidate at this level used his cultural knowledge of African village life to develop ideas based on the village homes, mud pathways and African drums as part of the background setting for an authentic African festival.

At the lower level there was little in the way of supporting studies; research comprised Internet searches of random photographs and poor drawings. Little thought was given to personal solutions, design function with form, and integrating this with architectural research, structures and placing in context.

Q6 BrOKen

This question provoked a range of interpretations, with some candidates using broken objects to inform imagery and others looking at health issues such as smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. More personal qualities emerged with some candidates investigating adolescence and the range of problems they face. This question was the third most popular.

The very best work had used Photoshop to develop primary sourced drawings and also researched a range of material used in health and safety campaigns. Supporting studies contained a variety of typefaces together with a range of ideas and layouts, showing a good understanding of the graphic processes.

At the mid-level candidates began to create images from their first-hand studies using a range of media. Initial ideas were imaginative; one candidate used a crushed drinks can on a car seat to explore the effects of drinking and driving. However, there were many examples of supporting studies being of a higher standard than the final outcome. Typography was often seen as an afterthought that was added at the end.

Much of the work at the lower level was copied or traced from existing designs and lacked personal qualities. Poor manipulation of materials and limited exploration stifled achievement.

Q7 Lighting based on studies of hands and feet

This question provided some interesting responses although few candidates went beyond literal interpretations using hands and feet holding lights. Most candidates at the higher level produced some well observed and analytical drawings and a good range of photographs taken from different viewpoints. Some final outcomes however, were the product of a single idea. The use of media and drawing ability at this level helped candidates to achieve good marks, as well as looking at Rodin and contemporary lighting designers.

Candidates in the mid-range produced some individual work using personal photographs and well selected secondary studies. Photography played a strong part as many candidates played with lights and cast shadows. Often this work had real potential which was not fully realised in the final outcomes.

The lower level candidates made minimal studies as supporting studies, mainly from secondary sources. A lack of planning, research and ideas development was evident and much of the final work was just too obvious in its interpretation.

Q8 William Blake poem

The fourth most popular question and it elicited the most expressive and personal responses, particularly for candidates more inclined towards illustration and/or fine art. In many cases, candidates took the opportunity to develop personal symbolism and meaning, often basing their ideas on Surrealism. Some candidates used part of the quote as a starting point whilst others researched the whole poem.

At the higher level, one candidate blended a group of faces together as if melting from one to another, all showing different expressions of wrath. Although executed in pencil, the final outcome was highly accomplished and supported by a range of ideas in the supporting studies. Another candidate produced a very expressive figurative painting using a range of reds/oranges to promote the idea of wrath.

In the mid-range work varied from comic strip story telling of a broken friendship to Munch-like screaming characters, and to Shakespeare's mask in tragic scenes; all interesting ideas but some less able to make aesthetic judgments with editing.

The interpretation of the poem at the lower level was limited and therefore the selection of imagery was basic and literal. Candidates lacked an understanding of composition and when typography was used, rendering, spacing and control were poor. Few candidates developed more than one idea.

Q9 Hollowed out fruit and vegetables

The best work demonstrated a high degree of originality and engagement. Marks were spread across the whole of the mark range and this question was overall the third most popular. At the higher level candidates had used their own fruits and vegetables to make maquettes of furniture and there was evidence of drawing, painting and photography from primary sources in the supporting studies which informed the design process. Candidates used their studies to investigate the properties of fruit and vegetables and how the forms could be used as furniture. Several candidates also researched contemporary furniture designers as a catalyst for ideas.

At the mid-level there was a lack of joined up thinking in the development of ideas, although some ideas showed much potential. Only a few candidates at this level looked at furniture designers preferring to rely solely on imagination.

The weaker work lacked research and ideas development. Most candidates interpreted the theme literally and just took a fruit or vegetable, hollowed it out, and stuck legs on it. This did not display any understanding of the design process.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03

Critical and Historical Assignment

General Comments

A broad range of subject areas were investigated such as fine art, painting and sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, fashion and graphics. Levels of attainment were mostly within the 'limited' to 'very good' band of marks.

All the submissions at 40+ marks contained evidence of some first-hand experience of, or involvement with the subject matter, which had clearly benefitted the attainment levels of these candidates.

There were various methods of presentation seen but most were sketchbook, there were a few spiral bound A4 submissions produced from a set web site template.

Higher level

The stronger submissions all demonstrated personal engagement and sometimes a practical involvement with the subject matter. A clear focus had been established through 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 and perceptive observations gained from visits to studios and galleries, which had provided useful insights into the way work is developed and made. The environment in which an artist works can reveal key insights into how ideas are developed, so it was good to see that a few candidates had gained this vital first-hand experience of the subject by working alongside the artist in their own studio. A deeper understanding of the process and methods involved was evident through some intelligent personal observations, shown by photographic records with coherent and informing annotations. A few of the strongest submissions were in the form of either a hand-made book or folder that contained mounted sheets and pages, demonstrating strong visual elements in the form of photos, drawings and some personal material-based responses. One candidate had explored art forms and installations constructed from recycled materials, and had produced some imaginative personal experiments, informed by earlier research and gathering.

One very strong photographic assignment contained some imaginative comparative examples; the thoughtful placing of strong images had enhanced the whole assignment. It was clearly and appropriately annotated, demonstrating an informative journey of discovery.

Where genuine and first-hand observations were made it usually indicated a high level of awareness and understanding of the topic. This was demonstrated in particular in an assignment that explored the contrasts between the works of two sculptors. Intelligent observations and judgements were made by the candidate, contributing to a thorough and well written personal evaluation of the topic.

Mid-level

Work at this level contained evidence of some first-hand sources for research and/or experience of the chosen topic. Use of the Internet as a secondary source for research was regularly seen which often inhibited personal engagement with the assignment. Some candidates had featured their own work as the main source for exploration; in such cases these submissions would have benefitted from the selection of examples by other recognised practitioners as a comparative focus for investigation. This process could have informed some practical-based responses. In some cases a first-hand experience, such as a visit to an exhibition, was added at the end of the assignment but all too often this had little relevance to assignment.

A few photographic submissions showed evidence of some practical engagement, but there was too much focus on the technical aspects rather than any evaluation of the aesthetic qualities involved. A thoughtful and considered approach to the presentation of these assignments would have helped to create a clearer and

more coherent format. Some were difficult to read due to poor hand writing or the use of conflicting and distracting colour combinations.

Lower level

Many of the submissions contained little or no evidence of first-hand sources for research or experience of the topic chosen. Downloaded information and images were prevalent with the assignments showing little in the way of personal involvement. Submissions at the lower levels of attainment demonstrated very little evidence of how artists and designers develop their ideas or exploration of themes. Some weak examples were seen which consisted of catalogues and lists of works, all of which were downloaded from the Internet. Some examples contained very few or even no images at all, in all cases candidates would have benefitted from seeing some actual examples of works by an artist or designer. This would have provided the opportunity for a more personal and engaged response from the candidate.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04

Coursework

Assignment

General Comments

Most candidates had followed a course of study within the area of Painting and Related Media although there were also Graphic and Photography responses in this series. Photography was also apparent in most submissions as a method of research rather than a developed area of study. There were very few 3D Design and Textiles responses and only a few Printmaking submissions which were integrated with Painting and Related media processes.

The candidates had selected a diverse range of individual themes and sources of inspiration on which to base the exploration of their work, including topics such as portraiture, insects, wildlife, landscape, still life, shoes, toys, flowers, nature, graffiti, cultural identity, interiors, architecture, mosaics, musical instruments, t-shirt design, physical emotions, eyes, dragons and so on. Ideas had been developed to varying levels of skill and technical ability.

The most successful candidates had gathered their visual information from various sources and produced many studies from direct observation in response to their starting point including, drawings, paintings, sketches and photography. The development of ideas was often inspired by related artist's research, which often informed the direction of their work and led to some well-developed final outcomes. In the better submissions there was evidence of the exploration of local artwork and artefacts, along with other contemporary works. This was effectively used to inspire ideas and the appropriate connections between the artwork studied and their own development and analysis. At this level candidates had given careful consideration to the presentation of their work to express their ideas and intentions with clarity.

The work of less able candidates contained limited evidence of first hand study with much reliance on imagery from secondary sources. Photography was sometimes used as a recording process, but the quality of the images tended to be unclear due to limited technical understanding. Imagery was often fragmented or unrelated to a theme and initial sources were unclear. The breadth of study was limited, lacking the scope for a development of ideas, and final outcomes were very often unresolved or incoherent. The lack of technical competence prevented them from producing high quality work, which was also hindered by the lack of exploration of materials and a lack of focus or purpose in the manipulation of imagery.

The general standard of presentation was good. Most candidates had taken care to present their work in a coherent manner that demonstrated the development process of their ideas and skills, however, some photographs of 3D work were far too small to illustrate detail satisfactorily. Candidates must label all images, photographs and source materials clearly in order to differentiate between their own work and that of others. This was particularly relevant in graphic design submissions. Candidates in the lower mark bands had a tendency to add irrelevant exercises to their portfolios – colour wheels, colour mixing samples and work from earlier irrelevant projects that were totally unrelated to their chosen themes. Submissions sometimes exceeded the maximum size requirement; in such cases a more focused study or a reduction to the size of the imagery (or using photographic evidence) would have been useful. In other cases more creative editing, in order to display the best of the candidate's achievement and to demonstrate their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed to a final outcome, would have been of great benefit also. A few candidates had submitted additional sketchbooks along with their two A2 supporting sheets. These contained unrelated imagery and did little to enhance the overall standard of their work.

The general standard of teacher assessment was poor. The majority of teacher marks were very generous. The overvaluing of technical competence and presentation of final outcomes was particularly prevalent. To be valid, an individual assessment must identify clear evidence within the work against each of the five Assessment Objectives, and these measured against the achievement levels printed in the syllabus. Often inaccurate assessments simply used the same mark in all five objectives when there were clear limitations in some areas of the candidate's work. There were several Centres where the order of merit was erratic and

the marking was very inconsistent. It was noticeable that in some cases teachers put lower quality work in between two better submissions. There were a significant number of Centres who submitted work for candidates in more than one area of study and had not carried out a rigorous internal moderation process to ensure consistency in their assessment. This always resulted in an invalid order of merit.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

There was much evidence of portraiture, some of which was well executed and displayed an understanding of facial proportion and paint application. Other work would have benefited from more practice with figure drawing and artist research to inspire more inventive methods of observing and expressing facial qualities.

There were some good examples of exploratory manipulation of mixed media and macro photography that had been developed into exciting painted media studies. Photography was a popular method of researching and also a process for developing ideas which was often integrated with other drawing and painting media.

Some work could be very formulaic in approach. A particular example of this was where the candidates had each worked on a graffiti project with every candidate completing the same media exercises. Some of this work demonstrated strong technical skills, but this approach provided very little opportunity for personal expression or creative individuality in either ideas or outcome.

The best candidates included first-hand observational studies as an integral part of the investigation and development of their work. Rather than simply being an initial stage, these studies were undertaken throughout the projects as required to solve problems. Candidates continually evaluated their studies which informed further experimentation and research. The best ideas were always informed by researching the work of carefully selected artists, enabling a depth and richness to develop in the candidate's independent and personal thinking. Successful work was seen using a variety of media and processes but all of the best submissions demonstrated the candidates' increasing sensitivity and control of their selected media as their intentions were clarified. Final outcomes were resolved and reflected the depth of learning that had taken place between the start and conclusion of the project.

The responses at the middle level of ability tended to vary in areas of skill. For example, submissions sometimes demonstrated good technical abilities but demonstrated a lack of engagement when recording from direct observation; or there was more personal involvement, demonstrating original and exciting ideas but lacked the technical skill to execute these ideas successfully. Other candidates produced some potentially exciting ideas but did not support them with sufficient visual investigation and studies. However, many candidates with weaker drawing skills realised the potential of the use of photography to complement their observational studies. The exploration of a range of media was more successful when it was used with a sense of purpose, such as interpreting the progression of ideas or linking their own work with the work of an inspired artist. However, the inspiration from the works of others tended to be interpreted by well executed copies, rather than by the realisation of a visual analysis. Their limited understanding of the meaning behind these copied techniques meant they were unable to extend the technical ability learnt from the works of others, into their own work.

Candidates at the lower level of achievement did not produce sufficient research on which to base their work. Their observational skills were not adequate and submissions often relied very heavily on secondary source material taken from the internet. There was very little reference to first-hand sources. Supporting sheets included copies of images often traced, coloured-in and rearranged or consisted of images derived from the imagination. Technical skills were not developed and the candidates struggled to produce outcomes that reflected their initial ideas. Too often they presented fragmented studies with little scope for development and it was sometimes unclear where the candidate's inspiration had come from.

Graphic Design

Most candidates had worked to defined briefs. In the most successful submissions this practice was linked to actual contexts and enabled alternative ideas to be investigated, explored, evaluated and realised. Unfortunately weaker candidates tended to work to over simplistic briefs that demonstrated a limited understanding of graphic practices, resulting in superficial work.

Some teachers adopted a formulaic approach requiring all of their candidates to carry out a series of prescribed tasks which resulted in very similar imagery and graphic products across all of the submissions. The absence of choice to explore, experiment and develop individual research and ideas restricts those candidates with the potential to produce personal work.

Work in the higher mark range demonstrated an effective understanding of the design process, demonstrating a clear development from the initial drawings to the final outcome. Candidates illustrated a clear understanding of colour theory and effectively used this knowledge to review and refine their work to a successful conclusion. The design imagery was inspired by their own initial drawings from observation and also from a collection of their own photographs. The integration of text and image was well considered and candidates had hand-drawn several designs for different font styles, as well as using the computer to experiment with size, proportions and colour. A good understanding of the formation of lettering was evident in this work.

Candidates' work in the lower mark range was typically lacking any first-hand research; instead it was often from secondary sources or even doodles. Weaker submissions relied heavily on images from the internet and text was very often simply downloaded and arranged in a variety of combinations and colours. It was not always clear in the supporting studies as to which pieces were the candidate's own work and which were downloaded or copied from existing designs. A little annotation alongside the work would have been helpful in these instances as candidates did not clearly illustrate the progression of ideas or the different stages of design, and the originality of the design was unclear.

Photography.

The few better submissions always contained evidence of extensive research with the camera, documented with many thumbnail contact prints showing a variety of viewpoints, camera angles and scenes under different lighting conditions. Digital enhancement or image manipulation was relevant in the development of the candidates' intentions. Candidates' own critical judgements had been informed by researching the work of other relevant photographers, or in some cases artists. Final outcomes demonstrated an excellent aesthetic awareness as well as high levels of technical control.

While many other submissions contained good individual photographs, there was limited evidence of candidates critically reviewing their methods and revisiting subjects for 2nd or 3rd shoots in order to refine their work. Few candidates had researched the work of other photographers or artists in order to develop a critical method and ask the question 'what makes a good photograph?' The weakest submissions were extremely poor quality images. These were poorly printed and composed, amounting to little more than a single unconsidered shoot of a subject matter that they cared little about. Many candidates at this level were unable to develop their work beyond merely applying a few simple Photoshop tools such as filters or colour adjustments.

Textile Design

A wide range of textile printing techniques were seen; block, stencil, flour paste and so on. There were some examples where embroidery had been added to embellish their work, making their outcomes far more original and personal. The final printed outcomes on very large sheets of material were well designed and used several complimentary techniques on each. The colours were very rich and well-coordinated.

However, in some submissions the final textile prints had been made-up professionally into clothes, shoes or bags to a high standard. Although they showed a good use of the printed material they gave an artificial impression of the candidates' true ability, as they were not produced or designed by the candidate. The clothes were sent with the projects which made the work very bulky, it would have been better to submit photographs in such cases.

Other submissions using stencil printing were very formulaic in approach, but the candidates chose individual themes and developed designs from a few well observed first-hand drawings of objects. However, the designs were very reduced in size and excessively over printed. In most submissions the quality of printing was not prioritised. Too many prints had been included in too many different colours; in such cases it would have been better if careful editing had been employed.

Symmetry and inversion were used well to investigate alternative designs for large Batik panels. Colour was used to good effect and skills were competent. While the scale of the work was ambitious, the imagery was mostly reliant on flat shapes with limited evidence of detail and refinement.

3D Studies

Some of the most successful submissions in this area of study had used a mixed media approach. Observational drawings were used as the starting point for investigations where they had researched a variety of artists who used similar materials and techniques such as printing onto fabric, working with textured surfaces in clay and building 3D structures from card and paper. The research and ideas development were thorough and the unusual media and presentation very innovative.

One outstanding example consisted of free standing glass panels sandwiched together and supported on wooden grooved blocks. The glass layers contained a variety of objects such as feathers, individual etching prints and drawings. A maquette aided the final construction which was well made and presented; in addition photographs of the free standing sculpture were also seen.

Another submission explored the surface qualities of different natural forms and created a series of prints and relief studies in textile and clay. The supporting studies followed a clear process of observation, experimentation and self-evaluation and the technical skills were refined to create a successful final piece. In other submissions, 3D work in the form of two very large, four-sided ceramic pots had been decorated with mosaic patterns designed and competently applied by the candidates. They had researched the work of Gaudi and developed their original designs from first-hand research they had made from flora and fauna. The candidates had simplified their designs into mosaic patterns and had considered each side of the pot as the pattern worked around it, resulting in an effective final outcome.

Good research of the work of other artists and ceramicists enabled some candidates to develop promising ideas for their own ceramic pieces. However, the candidates' own practical work was not informed by first-hand studies and lacked sufficient experimentation with the media to enable them to develop the sufficient detailed skills to realise their ideas. Consequently, final outcomes were mostly disappointing and unresolved.

The weaker submissions generally included downloaded copies of existing forms such as clay sculptures, found on the internet. The supporting studies of these submissions did not contain any evidence of investigation or recording from direct observation. They merely documented the candidate's ability to recreate or copy other artist's work in clay and then create a slightly different version of their own, instead of producing their own drawings from first-hand study and developing their own ideas into clay. The photographs of the final outcome were of poor quality, therefore the competence in the construction of the work and technical skills of the candidate were difficult to assess.