

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01

Observational/Interpretative Assignment

General comments

The majority of responses came from **Section A**, with **Question 2** 'Potted Plants' being the most popular, followed by **Question 3** 'A Bunch of Keys'. The figure option was the least popular question throughout.

In **Section B**, 'Metamorphosis' attracted a large entry from across the ability range, with substantial numbers in the upper mark range. Entries for **Questions 6, 7, and 10** were fairly even in number, and **Question 5** was the least popular.

The majority of candidates using **Section A**: Observational starting points produced work that was firmly based within this genre. There were few attempts to develop outcomes into a more fully interpretative approach, although a wide range of drawing, painting, collage and mixed media processes was used.

Submissions using **Section B**: Open-ended starting points were very varied – mostly figurative, but some abstract and some clearly influenced by artistic movements.

The strongest work was, as usual, supported by excellent preparatory studies demonstrating that candidates had used the eight weeks' preparatory period in a positive manner. Candidates had researched a range of ideas for their chosen theme, using drawing from primary sources along with their own photographs. Mounted studies were well annotated, indicating clear thinking and evaluation, reasons behind choices made, and an awareness of problem-solving. Many candidates at this level experimented with media and processes, and realised the importance of thumbnail drawings in exploring different compositions and viewpoints. Some also included research into relevant established artists' works, which had also informed the development of their own ideas.

Large numbers of candidates in the mid to low mark ranges neglected fully to address AO2: Exploration and Development of Ideas. Repetition was substituted for development, with the same compositional study often occurring with slight variations of colour or tone. Candidates tended to fix on their first idea and follow this through to the examination without considering alternatives. They also used secondary source material, photos and downloaded images to copy – and although in some cases this work showed technical abilities, it lacked personal research and originality. At this level, personal evaluation was weak and the inclusion of any notation was purely descriptive.

At the lower level, it was apparent that many candidates failed to make use of the preparatory period. Supporting sheets were thin, with many using cut and paste images and linear drawings, copied from these, to fill their sheets. A lot of time had been wasted in superfluous decoration of borders and a title page. This time could have been better spent practising drawing and painting skills and developing some ideas for final compositions.

The majority of submissions had used painting or drawing or mixed media to resolve their ideas in the examination. However it was pleasing to see alternative approaches being used. Excellent lino prints based on German Expressionist portraits showed a very high standard of technical competence in both cutting and printing. The use of maquettes and sculptures to investigate "Towering Structures" introduced a three-dimensional aspect to the question. Photographic submissions were seen which used both wet and digital processes for the preparatory work. Some questions were used as starting points for development of Graphic Design outcomes involving poster, logo, and fashion designs.

Most Centre administration was very good, with examination work placed on top of the preparatory sheets in a chronological order, and all sheets attached in the top left corner, with labels fixed in the top right. However there are still a number of Centres that fail to do this correctly. The syllabus guidelines are quite clear and Centres should read and follow them carefully. When submissions are despatched which do not adhere to

the examination regulations, it is time-consuming for staff at Cambridge, who have to unpack and make some sense of it in order for the Examiners to be able to examine the work properly.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 An iron with some neatly folded clothes in front of a basket piled with laundry

This question attracted submissions mainly in the mid to upper mark range. It provided a challenge to create a large-scale composition with contrasting forms of folded and crumpled clothing, contrasting colours, patterns and textures of the fabric and basket, and of the complex shape and reflective quality of the iron.

The best candidates produced excellent preparatory sheets exploring all the above qualities, using a range of media and processes. Different compositions and viewpoints were tried and recorded through their own photography. Patterned and coloured fabrics were used in creating surface areas as well as background. Good use was made of cropped images to fill the page with colour. The electrical flex was used to unite areas within the composition.

Weaker submissions had little preparation, mostly involving studies of individual items, often lacking in form or an understanding of surface texture. In some entries, the treatment of individual items in different media, and in colour as well as monotone, did little in conveying a sense of harmony or three-dimensional space. Backgrounds or a ground plane had not been explored and were often left unresolved, with objects floating in space.

Question 2 Two potted plants in flower

The better entries had approach the question imaginatively by taking into account relevant backgrounds such as greenhouses, potting sheds, old wooden fences or brick walls, or by placing the pots on garden steps or amongst other plants. Others had successfully placed the pots on window sills with curtains that partially hid the plants, creating contrasting silhouettes.

Viewpoints had been extensively explored through the candidates' own photography, and the muted colours of such backgrounds contrasted well with the bright colours of the flowers. Textural differences were also well explored through experiments with a range of media.

Final outcomes were vibrant and rich in colour and texture, even though the depiction of ellipses and forms in space were not always fully understood.

Mid-range work still demonstrated a thoughtful approach to composition. The overlapping of the two pots was recognised as an important requirement of the question. The structure of the plant had been carefully analysed, and recorded in some detail. However, little attention had been given to directional light, and studies were lacking in tonal contrast, which rendered the forms rather flat. More use could have been made of cast shadows, particularly on the ground plane or across the plant pots.

Weaker work demonstrated little understanding of form in space. Preparatory sheets often consisted of similar images being drawn, with each image subsequently losing spontaneity and freshness. Invented backgrounds were sometimes unsympathetically added, often in lurid colours. There were also invented horizontal lines between the ground and background, denying the pots the required space to stand.

Question 3 A bunch of keys on a key ring

This was one of the most popular questions, and responses covered the whole mark range – but with most falling into Satisfactory and Adequate achievement levels. Whilst the subject did require detailed observation and analysis, the most successful submissions were able to enlarge without losing relative proportions, and convincingly conveyed the effect of a bunch of keys lying on a surface in depth. There was some very good use of low-level viewpoints, which gave a dynamic composition through foreshortened perspective and strongly cast shadows.

What was particularly interesting was that for such an observational subject there were some effective interpretative solutions as well. Keys had been placed in door-locks with their reflections recorded in brass door-handles. Other submissions indicated doors of prison cells, and included prisoners' hands reaching out

through the bars as well. A few had combined art-work with text to illustrate an extract from the poem “Keys of Life”.

The majority of submissions, however, were careful observations mostly in pencil and viewed from above. These tended to flatten the image, thereby negating any sense of depth shown in tonal rendering or cast shadows. Unfortunately, very few had made use of the multitude of fobs attached to the key rings; badges, toys, name tags, torches, etc. The inclusion of these could have added additional scale, form or contrasting colour and texture.

There were many weaker entries. Preparatory sheets consisted of hastily drawn linear images which showed a lack of analysis, tonal contrast and composition. Candidates had failed to understand the overlapping and interlinking of the circular rings. Some had clearly drawn around the keys or traced from photographs.

Question 4 A seated figure reading a newspaper

Although the least popular question, this attracted the most able candidates. Traditional costumes and clothes appropriate to the candidates’ cultures were represented, with figures being shown reading a newspaper in the street, sitting on doorsteps or in cafes.

The best had worked directly from a posed model for their examination piece, although their preparatory studies included their own photographs of seated figures from different angles and viewpoints. Those that had spent time over the detailing of hands holding the newspaper were very convincing. Good use was clearly made of friends and fellow-classmates posing for each other.

The newspaper text presented less able candidates with problems. The use of pure black for the type meant that the illusion of light, successfully recorded on the figure, was not carried through onto the newspaper itself.

Lower-level entries were very reliant on working from photographs, with some gridded-up copies which lacked any personal or expressive qualities. Others had resorted to tracing from their photographs, with very mechanical, lifeless results where background details had not been considered.

Section B

Question 5 Topsy-turvy

Although a small entry, this question produced some of the most original outcomes, where the best candidates were able to explore the eccentric and unusual. Interesting figure compositions were seen, featuring figures looking at the viewer through their legs. Cart-wheeling figures were another interpretation.

Deconstructing objects, and turning them inside out, produced some original new forms. The influences of Neo-Dada and Surrealism had informed other pieces resolved as sculptures.

The majority of others were more predictable, using illustrative techniques based on fairytale images to visualise a fantasy landscape peopled by cartoon characters. These showed very little evidence of any first-hand study.

Question 6 Night lights

Contextual references were used most frequently in responding to this question. Georges de la Tour, Rembrandt and Carravaggio had inspired the use of chiaroscuro to define the outlines of figures being absorbed into shadows. The night skies of Van Gogh were also a common influence.

Candidates had also used their own photography to record night scenes of moving traffic, neon signs, and reflected lights in water, as well as portrait studies of friends recorded in candle-light or holding torches.

The best entries demonstrated good control of colour and tonal contrast in creating mood and atmosphere.

The majority of submissions, however, fell into the mid to lower mark range, as many of them had simply resorted to using a single secondary-sourced image. These included views of harbour scenes, lamp-posts, moons, and lightning flashes.

Question 7 Flashback

Nostalgia and memories of childhood were major inspirations for this question. Although original research was often thorough, most candidates had great difficulty in deciding how to resolve their compositions.

The most successful involved the use of transparent overlays or semi-abstracted images from old family photographs, vintage cars, or period rooms in old houses.

The majority encountered problems in trying to combine a person with elements from the past within a composition. They tended to go for an obvious division of the paper into two equal sections, either horizontal or vertical. Images from childhood events and past occurrences were depicted popping out from or within the skulls of portrait heads, or within giant eyes. These tended to go beyond the candidates' skills in rendering complex forms into complex compositions.

Question 8 Metamorphosis

This was the most popular question from **Section B**.

A few upper-level submissions made reference to Kafka and Magritte. At this level, some innovative images were seen which showed a real dexterity in handling media and the subtle changes of surface textures from one object to another. Digital manipulation was an effective means of distorting and overlaying images. Dragonflies changed into helicopters; lollipops into roller coasters; fans into peacocks' tails. Photography was also used to record stages in the application of make-up or face-paint, to change facial features and expressions.

Satisfactory and adequate responses were more concerned with faces transforming into beasts, some recorded from direct observation, but most relying on pre-existing images of mythical creatures. This meant that originality was lacking for most of those who selected this kind of interpretation.

At the lower level, there was a plethora of butterflies, caterpillars, tadpoles and amphibians, copied from illustrations in biology books.

Question 9 Dancing queen

Most entries were in the mid to lower mark range. Carnival and cultural references were strong – but this question was interpreted by the majority of candidates as a figurative study, and, without the essential preliminary studies required, results were often weak. Most submissions resorted to secondary images from magazines, showing very little evidence of original research or any intention other than to replicate these secondary images.

There were some attempts to depict movement through the blurring of forms and colours, but there was little evidence of any work being informed by referencing Futurist/Constructivist movements and the works of (for instance) Balla, Severini, Duchamp or Goncharova.

Question 10 Towering structures

Most submissions had based their research on architectural forms: skyscrapers, towers and pylons, chimneys and power-stations.

The best demonstrated a thorough examination of these structures using their own photography, whereby they could be viewed from low viewpoints, thus exaggerating the sense of height. Some had developed these into three-dimensional structures using wood, wire, string and plaster. Research into the work of Tatlin and various architects provided an important stimulus.

Unfortunately most of the submissions had adopted horizontal viewpoints which gave no sense of height or of 'towering'. Others who tried to use perspective resorted to ruled diagrammatical outlines of buildings, developed more from imagination than anything directly observed.

There were other submissions which had explored alternative towering structures – such as trees, piles of books, still life arrangements of animal skulls, bone and ropes suspended from a tall wooden pole, and figure studies observed from low eye-levels and employing foreshortening techniques. These were generally more successful, especially within AO1, where research was predominately from first-hand observation, and which had then impacted on AO5 Personal Qualities.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design Assessment

General Comments

Once again, the Examiners report that some excellent work has been generated by the recently changed syllabus. Candidates from Centres around the world have responded favourably to the outlines of the syllabus and produced some impressive work, showing creativity, technical skill and original thinking. The best responses have reacted to the assessment structure and the question paper with powerful and appropriate research, a developmental and experimental attitude to the formation of a final idea, and a skill in handling of media and materials in order to execute that idea.

The importance of understanding the significance of the assessment objectives cannot be overstated. All Centre staff and candidates need to realise that 40% of the final mark is allocated to the process of research. This involves gathering, recording and investigating visual and non-visual information, and exploring and developing personal ideas that flow from that research. The investigation process should involve some aspect of direct observation and personal experience.

The weaker responses received by the Examiners were generally examples of work that had been poorly researched from the beginning. Insufficient investigation will not provide enough of a launching pad to create and extend personal and original pieces of work. More Centres understand this now, but there were still some cases of candidates sending in work with little or no personal research.

Each question offered the opportunity for personal responses at all ability levels. All the questions had a range of responses from high to low, although some questions were more popular with candidates showing particular types of ability.

The most popular question, with 26% of the responses was **Question 3**, which asked the candidates to design a repeat pattern. With around 24%, **Question 1**, the topic concerning the modern art logo, was the next most favoured, and then came the costume design, **Question 4(a)**, with around 13% of the answers. Apart from **Question 6**, the sheltered walkway design, which very few candidates responded to, the other questions were all attempted in similar, but smaller, numbers.

The Examiners reported that a few candidates may possibly have added existing coursework to their submissions to improve the quality of their preparatory work. Centres are reminded that the Supporting Studies must be made in response to the question paper. Some Centres encourage their candidates to practice the final design prior to the formal eight-hour examination period. Whilst some planning is clearly a good thing, candidates can lose the freshness and energy of their work if they are forced to do the same design twice or more.

A range of media were used by the candidates but water-based inks, paints and colour pencils tended to dominate. Many candidates demonstrated good skill level with the materials, suggesting good teaching techniques in many Centres. Digital photography is becoming more readily available as a research tool and as part of the manipulation process in the development of final responses. Some of the best work involved an organic relationship between hand drawn work and digital manipulation, where the candidate used one medium to inspire and inform work in another.

A few candidates produced three-dimensional solutions or made costumes, and in these cases photography was correctly used to record the finished work.

Not enough candidates used personal experience as a starting point to their work. Admittedly, some questions make seeking an object or a situation easier than others. Some items are easier to get hold of to observe, but all questions provide opportunities for a first-hand experience of some kind. Drawing, photography, and indeed writing, are all ways of recording such an experience.

One or two Centres seemed to think it necessary to hand-render digitally produced final images. This is not the case, for the digital image should be capable of standing in its own right.

The majority of Centres send in well-labelled work, tied together in the correct order, with the number and size of sheets of paper matching the instructions on the examination paper. Unfortunately, a few Centres are not so careful, or their candidates are not checked so closely by Centre staff, and the Examiners report some difficulties when marking work from these Centres.

Remember that fastening the work in the top left-hand corner with string or a staple is the best method of making it secure. Also, mounting everything on large and heavy sheets of card can make the packages arriving in the UK rather unwieldy and awkward.

When a disc is sent, it is advisable to print out at least the main material. A disc could supplement an entry, or indeed where animation is concerned it may well contain the final piece, but it is usually advisable to send some kind of paper response as well.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

This asked candidates to design a logo for a contemporary art gallery. The logo was then to be used on a banner and a badge. There were opportunities here to study architecture, look at modern art, and examine the context of professional banner and badge design.

Many candidates provided little evidence of first-hand research into either buildings or modern art. As a consequence the quality of the final responses was lower than it should have been.

This level of response contrasted dramatically with those candidates who had looked at the facades of actual buildings, and had made a series of drawings and taken a set of photographs. The design that these high achievers then produced was often inserted, maybe digitally, into the real-life situation that had been analysed during the research. Furthermore, the stronger candidates used the theme of contemporary art to inspire the graphic style of their logo, badge and banner. There were several examples of designs inspired by the likes of Mondrian, Picasso or Monet. However, national or regional artists would have provided similar inspiration.

For many candidates who had not conducted enough research, the preparatory work became quite repetitious, as simple ideas and basic typefaces were drawn again and again. Fonts can easily be explored, either through the computer or by looking at the printed word in the graphic world around us.

The question did ask for the final logo to be shown on a banner and a badge, but not all candidates met this request.

Question 2(a)

The candidates were asked to design a cover for a children's game, which used gardens as its inspiration and also encouraged children to measure and count. There were opportunities here to look at plants, fruit, vegetables and gardens. Possibly also to draw counting and measuring aids for children, and to look at the professional design of packaging for games.

Stronger candidates made studies in a drawn and/or photographic form, of plants, fruit and vegetables. Designs then developed from this research and care was taken to keep the imagery bright, colourful and perhaps humorous, to appeal to children. In these instances the lettering was carefully chosen and intelligently placed on the box.

Weaker candidates tended to rely on secondary sources, often some ready-made download from a computer or an existing children's game or comic book. In addition, these weaker candidates usually failed to research games for younger children seriously, and consequently had little or no idea of what might make for an appropriate cover.

The better candidates handled the media well, with a careful rendition of lettering, gardens and plants. The treatment tended to be flat, graphic and with an emphasis on colour and shape. Weaker candidates were less willing to mix and blend colours and took less care over their lettering.

Question 2(b)

A verse of three lines was presented as a starting point for a design. A border or illustration could be added. There were opportunities for studies in gardens, but also possibly of items connected with knowledge or thinking, such as books or writing materials. Some knowledge of professional illustration and calligraphy would have assisted.

The more successful responses showed evidence of research in typography, of thinking about the imagery of gardens, and a knowledge of how this could all be combined into a successful layout. The media chosen for the text and the background were then carefully chosen, perhaps ink or watercolour, and used with skill and concentration.

There were a few imaginative interpretations for this question, but these were in the minority. Unfortunately, many responses were limited and predictable.

Less successful responses focused only on the lettering without any consideration for the border or background. The text was perhaps written out in several styles, without much of an attempt to master any one font well.

Question 3

Candidates were expected to design a repeat pattern based upon research into shells and feathers, or reptiles and foliage. All four suggested items should have been reasonably accessible to candidates for research. It would have been helpful to look at professional wallpaper and fabric design.

There were some excellent examples of work which provided evidence of sound teaching strategies. The candidates clearly had some understanding of repeat grids, mirror repeats and half-drops. Good original studies of natural forms provided the material for the candidates to explore the structures of patterns, allowing them to examine different possibilities before deciding on a final image. The more successful candidates used colour, often paint, ink or colour pencil, to good effect. The best work was produced with high levels of skill and care and was rewarded suitably by the Examiners.

Generally, the work was produced by hand. There was little evidence of printing, which would have seemed an obvious choice, and not much more evidence of digital manipulation to generate a repeat pattern.

The weaker candidates tended to work from second-hand sources and did not understand the nature of a repeat pattern. Clearly, there are different possibilities of how to present the final pattern. However, the principle of repetition should be incorporated into these. This was not always done.

Some Centres approached this question with a set formulaic plan of study. Often the work was good, but the Centres may wish to consider the issue of individuality with regard to their candidates' work. The debate is between giving a candidate a technique and method to produce good work, and the aim of art and design to generate individual responses.

Question 4(a)

This question asked the candidates to design a costume, based upon a film genre, which would be worn at a parade for a film festival. Depending on the choice of genre, there would be suitable opportunities for personal research. Horror films might benefit from studies of masks, candle-holders or old buildings. War films could benefit from a visit to a military museum or a castle or palace, with weapons and armour. The nature of the research would very much depend upon the choice of subject matter. An appraisal of professional costume design for the cinema and the theatre would provide a strong context.

The best examples did in fact research costume on the screen, perhaps in a range of genres, before deciding to concentrate on one. A range of images was intelligently collected from Internet sources. These candidates also made some attempt to understand human form, by making some first-hand figure studies and by looking at the world of fashion illustration. The use of media was good, particularly with inks and watercolour washes. The best work was imaginative, creative and displayed strong personal flair. Some candidates actually made the costume and photographed a model wearing it. Accessories such as bags, footwear and jewellery were also included.

Weaker candidates failed to concentrate on one genre, and produced something which was not inspired by a particular kind of film. Weaker candidates also failed to understand the nature of fashion illustration or how to draw the human form. Instead, in some cases, graphic imagery of comic superheroes was used as a reference point, with the result that the candidates did not produce original designs or understand how to draw figures.

Question 4(b)

The candidates were asked to design a mural for a cinema foyer. The choice of subject matter would suggest possible research options; but looking at the interior design of cinemas or theatres would stimulate ideas, as would looking at cinema poster design.

This question generated a range of responses from very good to something more limited. The best candidates made an attempt to link their ideas to cinema genres and to the graphic style of posters and billboards. Some used photography to capture images of figures in poses suitable for their final designs. Some strong candidates looked at existing interiors and used them as a basis for the design of their own cinema foyers. These candidates often generated a sense of scale and location in their own work, whilst weaker candidates produced designs that did not convey size or a feeling for the art of mural design.

The weaker candidates would have benefited from a study of public and corporate interior decoration. Their ideas were inadequately researched, and then the development of the design indicated that there was very little understanding of the original brief.

Question 4(c)

The question asked candidates to design an award for presentation at a film festival. The candidates would need to look at existing awards, and the nature and form of professional products — not just for the film industry but indeed for other areas of public life. It may well be that the final design is inspired by the human form or film/video cameras, or other items from the cinema industry. There are opportunities here for candidates to research from first-hand experience, and this should inform any final designs that materialise.

This was a less popular question and tended to generate weaker rather than stronger responses. Some candidates tended to copy existing awards with very little personal input added. Where the research was minimal then an idea, often a quite predictable one, was repeated several times during the course of the preparatory work, with little or no development taking place.

A few stronger candidates researched the topic much more thoroughly, tried to generate a more personal and original solution, and tried to reflect the idea of the glory of the award. Some candidates went further than drawing a design and actually made a three-dimensional version. This was then photographed. If candidates take this route, which is to be encouraged, then several good photographs from different angles and some suitable annotations may be necessary.

Question 5(a)

This question asked candidates to design a stained glass roof panel for an observatory. There are limitations to the nature of first-hand research for the theme of the solar system, but there could be opportunities to look at the interior of buildings, roof designs and equipment such as telescopes. Looking at stained glass windows in religious and other public buildings would of course provide a sound cultural context.

The research for this question tended to be poor, and limited to a view of artistic impressions of the planets. This inspired some exciting work using colour and texture, but overall the responses were quite predictable. Most candidates did not appreciate the technical features of a stained glass design and ended up with an illustration which might be better suited for a book on space travel. The rendering of spheres and the drawing of circles and ellipses all created problems for weaker candidates.

Stronger candidates had created colourful designs that were rendered well in paint or ink. Some candidates had tried to depict the transparency of stained glass designs by using glass paints on plastic sheets.

Question 5(b)

This question asked the candidates to design a circular mosaic floor panel based on the theme of the solar system. Again, a study of star-gazing equipment, such as telescopes, might provide a first-hand experience, and an investigation of professional mosaics would provide a useful context to the work.

Again, there was a limited response to this question, with many of the weaker candidates failing to produce enough original and personal research. These candidates also made little attempt to understand the nature of a mosaic, with its fragmented qualities and yet its ability to create a whole from many small pieces. Stronger candidates did begin to understand this and tried to show how the final design would be constructed. Some used card pieces to good effect to suggest the ceramic tesserae.

Question 6

This question asked candidates to design a sheltered walkway through a waterfall. There were opportunities to draw waterfalls, rocks and streams from life. This may well depend of course on the landscape in which the candidate lives, but if waterfalls are difficult to find then studies of jets of water may be easier to produce. Walkways through towns, cities and indeed country areas, may well provide ideas for personal design.

There were very limited responses to this question, but there were a few very good ideas on show. One candidate had used plaster, fabric and twigs to build an expressive and personal model. This was then photographed well and presented on suitable sheets. Another candidate explored the idea of the viewer being under the waterfall; and another produced some lively design drawings of rocks, water and walkways. The limited number of successful entries were usually personal, creative, and drawn well with an understanding of scale and perspective. Weaker candidates had made little attempt to research the topic or to produce alternative solutions before deciding on the final one.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03

Historical and Critical Assignment

It is encouraging to see that the number of candidates opting for the Critical and Historical Assignment continues to increase each session. Teachers report that this Component provides an excellent foundation to the Personal Study at A level.

There were several outstanding submissions seen which met all of the Assessment Objectives to the highest level. Such submissions were exceptionally well sustained, coherently structured, elegantly presented and highly personal in all practical and written analyses and evaluations. An encouraging number of candidates also achieved a level of excellence through direct contact made by visiting art galleries, and interviews with artists and designers. Most submissions were based on written and visual analyses but there were also some who concentrated on the more practical option, often with varying effect. A very stimulating range of local practitioners' work and architectural sites were focused on to inform analyses, comparisons and critical understanding. Considered planning of layout and presentation led to a variety of inventive formats. Whether produced through desk top publishing or handwritten, a concern for the structure, sequence and integration of the material with notations and headings offered a refined clarity of communication.

At the mid-level of achievement, the majority of submissions demonstrated a good level of research, selection, organisation and presentation. There was clear evidence of personal commitment, interest and enthusiasm, leading to articulate written descriptions and comments. Computer processes were used well to organise and integrate visual and written material. There were no doubts that first-hand familiarity with the works focused on had motivated a personal interest in the investigation, but there was also a tendency to place more emphasis on works of international renown which were only accessible from secondary sources. The best results were apparent when these examples were compared with local first-hand research.

Weaker submissions did not meet the Assessment Objectives evenly enough to achieve more than an adequate response. These studies invariably showed a very heavy reliance on secondary information from books or the Internet. Surveys of media and processes often lacked personal analysis or even simple references to the contexts, styles, themes and aesthetic qualities of particular works. Such approaches offered little for comparisons or evaluations. A minimal amount of consideration was apparent in the structure, sequence and presentation of the material. Some submissions included no more than two or three illustrations which were poorly reproduced and which were given uncertain or inaccurate notations. Covers, titles, introductions, conclusions and bibliographies were often neglected. Some submissions were bolstered with irrelevant scrap book materials, unselective biographies and regurgitated technical manuals. There was a sense that many of these submissions were the product of last-minute compilations, rather than planned projects in relation to specific intentions.

The following points are worth noting in order to improve outcomes;

- define a clear project title;
- keep the intentions precise;
- identify appropriate sources for first-hand research;
- ensure that illustrations are well presented;
- make trimming, mounting and labelling tidy;
- edit material which has been downloaded from the Internet;
- be evaluative with text, as well as factual and descriptive;
- annotate any practical work and ensure that it is relevant to the submission.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04
Coursework Assignment

General comments

Most candidates followed a Painting and Related Media course of study. Textile Design work was quite popular, but other areas of study received only a limited number of entries.

It is pleasing to note that in almost every case candidates had pursued a serious course of study which showed evidence of good teaching of a variety of approaches and a range of media. The best had encouraged the development of individual ideas, the resolution or depth of which varied according to the level of direct observation of initial sources. When candidates chose subjects which they could research from first-hand observation, through their own sketches, photography, colour studies and written notes, they could be justly rewarded in all of the Assessment Objectives. This usually involved working from natural and man-made forms; the local landscape or architecture; or using themselves, friends or family to work from the figure.

Some had chosen ambitious themes relating to environmental issues or issues of a social nature, such as drug misuse or poverty. Others had chosen mythological or fantasy subject matter, and some had attempted to explore more abstract emotive themes like love or the stresses of being young. Whilst a few were able to carry their work through to some creditable and highly personal outcomes, most found it difficult to find suitable sources of first-hand research, and had to make use of downloaded material from secondary sources. They also often found that the complexity of translating abstract concepts into visual compositions was beyond their skills level.

There were examples of Centres adopting a contextual approach to chosen subjects. Candidates were encouraged to work in a very wide range of genres, media (both two and three dimensions) and wide ranging techniques. Outcomes referenced work from Realism, Neo-Dada sculptures, Surrealist paintings, Futurist studies of movement and Cubist still-life studies. There was much evidence of the individuals' own research in Museums and Art galleries. There were also a few candidates who submitted Art Historical essays or long biographical notes downloaded from the Internet, which had taken up a considerable proportion of their time, but had little or no relationship to their own practical work.

Care and attention to the organisation of the submissions had been efficient in the majority of cases. Folders consisted of discrete projects with sheets of relevant supporting work.

These had usually been mounted in a logical sequence so that the 'journey' a candidate had made from starting point through to the final outcome was quite clear. The addition of relevant notes was usually helpful, but long essays documenting technical processes are not required. Large-scale work or 3D work was submitted through good quality photographs. Final outcomes were clearly labelled as such, as were supporting sheets, and all work was securely fastened at the top left corner.

However there were still many examples of submissions exceeding the requirement of 4 sheets of mounted work (eight sides). Centres should be mindful that evaluation and selection is part of a candidate's process of development and can be credited against AO2 and AO5. The work selected as supporting work should be genuinely supportive and relevant to the project and the candidate's development, and not just a series of finished pieces or unrelated class exercises submitted to create the impression of commitment.

In almost every Centre the order of merit was accurate. Approximately 50% of Centres were also satisfactory in their application of the Assessment Criteria and marking. Most of the remainder were too generous – usually as a result of assuming that their best candidates were in the top mark range regardless of assessing their levels of achievement against the published Assessment Criteria. Some had rewarded candidates' levels of effort and commitment, rather than applying an objective evaluation of their outcomes measured against the attainment criteria.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

At the highest level was work demonstrating a mature and independent approach. Candidates had been encouraged to develop work based on their own observation and experiences. Their subject matter had been thoroughly investigated through a variety of techniques. Exploration and development was based around personal decisions which were well documented with evaluative notes. There was evidence of candidates developing ideas independently and of sustaining their interest to produce a final outcome which fulfilled their intentions.

An understanding of the work of others both past and present was seen – the selection of which was relevant and had been used to inform candidates' own personal creative development, and not just used as material to copy from.

The use of photography was common in the better supporting work, both as a means of visual research and in providing interesting combinations of images when scanned and digitally manipulated. There were some especially successful examples when such work was printed out and overworked with drawing and paint processes, or collaged into painted compositions.

Mid-level work was generally lacking in the range and thoroughness of first-hand research and exploration. The development of ideas was limited and there was a lack of sufficient visual material from which to work, so that the resulting final outcomes were little more than skilful copies from secondary sources. In a few cases the reverse was seen. There was extensive research and a lively experimental approach, but this potential was not sustained because candidates were less proficient in basic drawing skills or ability to compose balanced designs. The final work was lacking in aesthetic qualities.

Some very weak work was submitted, consisting of a few quite scrappy sketches or laborious but poorly-executed copies from secondary sources. It is difficult in such cases to see how Centres can reward so highly for individual personal responses, for investigating original sources, or for demonstrating informed aesthetic judgements.

Some candidates had specialised in Relief Print making. German and Austrian Expressionist artists such as Kirchner, Kokoschka, Beckmann, Heckel and Nolde were major influences in the better examples. Self-portraits were taken as starting points, with printed outcomes being of a very technical standard, although submissions were lacking in range or depth of research and experimentation. Some very weak work was also seen consisting of one crudely cut and printed example from each candidate, with very little research or exploration. Personal qualities were difficult to identify.

Textile Design

This was the second most popular area of study.

The better entries demonstrated research which was based on observational studies, with many referencing local cultural artefacts. Ideas were explored using a range of textile processes, involving batik, tie-dye and stencil printing. These were carried through to large final pieces.

Some less successful submissions were lacking in aesthetic qualities. They had failed to resolve balanced designs or to use colour in a harmonious manner.

A few repeat patterns were seen, which were colourful and lively. Had more evidence been provided on investigating sources, developing original ideas and refining designs, the work would have been a lot more personal and informed.

Graphic Design

The majority of entries were of a satisfactory standard.

The best came from one Centre where all candidates had followed a similar approach – developing ideas into logos, a letterhead and advertising material. They demonstrated proficient research skills with good control of processes.

Other entries combined original photography, digital manipulation and typography.

Some submissions wrongly regarded hand-copying of digital work as being evidence of the development of ideas. These candidates would have benefited from experiments in digital manipulation and on the layouts and typography used.

Photography

There was evidence of some excellent work, which was distinguished by a concern for detail, colour and texture, and executed with a high degree of technical competence. Other examples had used innovative techniques to extend their creative processes. For example, one candidate had used installations both to deploy the work and to examine display methods.

Mid-level submissions were technically competent but lacking in a range of research and exploration skills through digital manipulation. Final results were more like a series of snapshots.

There was some ambitious digital video work which was edited with music. Qualities of lighting, surface textures, posture and movement were recognised, although the manipulation of the medium could have been developed more persuasively to inform the theme.

3D Studies

Work in this area included use of materials such as clay modelling, papier-mâché and cardboard with fabrics.

One Centre had encouraged candidates to work across a number of skills using the same theme. Ideas had been explored through jewellery-making, weaving and clay modelling, as well as painting and drawing. This multidisciplinary approach had been well documented with photographs of work in progress.

Some candidates had worked on a large scale, resulting in some ambitious sculptures based on figure studies and architectural model-making. Whilst candidates are commended for the potential of such projects, Centres should be mindful of using all of the assessment criteria, rather than being distracted by the scale alone or by the considerable effort which may have gone into the production of such pieces. There must be evidence of the research and investigation which has led to the development of each candidate's ideas.