

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Observational Study

General comments

This year's paper appears to have provided plenty of scope and stimulation for all levels of ability, and many candidates had been stimulated by the opportunity to respond to subject matter that related directly to their own interests and experiences. **Questions 1(a)** and **2(a)** were the most popular, followed by **Questions 1(b)**, **2(b)** and **4(a)**, and **(c)**. **Question 3**, *The Human Figure* tended to appeal mainly to the more skilled practitioners, but more mid range candidates did take on this challenge with some expressive and effective results. This year the portrait option **3(c)** was very popular. The least popular question was **4(b)**, *Reflections seen in a shop window*, which attracted less than ten entries.

Although some exceptional and highly accomplished work was in evidence this was less so than previous years. Generally levels of performance followed last year's trend with the vast majority of entries falling within the middle and lower middle ranges. Likewise there was very little really weak work, with almost every entry receiving a grade.

The quality of the final examination piece mirrored the amount of effort that had gone into the preparatory work. The very best was fully resolved in choice of media and technique, and it was clear that the candidate's intentions had been met. A few candidates failed to achieve the potential seen in the examination work because of sparse preparatory work. It is not possible to reward marks in those assessment domains when there is insufficient evidence.

However the importance of preparatory work is now generally well understood, with only a very few cases of work being submitted without any.

Preparatory work tended to fall into three categories:-

Those Centres that encouraged candidates to adopt an experimental approach in researching their chosen question. Such work involved the investigation of a variety of viewpoints, compositional experiments, lighting effects, colour and tonal ranges, sources of light and in a few instances relevant references to art historical influences.

Other Centres used this aspect of the examination as an opportunity for candidates to practise their final composition either in its entirety or as component parts. Such an approach tended to rob the final examination piece of any sense of spontaneity because candidates were merely copying their original picture. In some cases they were copying from a photograph that had been taken of the chosen subject.

Within the lower performance levels were candidates who did not relate their preparatory work to the question in any way. Such work was often a collection of unrelated drawings cut from earlier class exercises and pasted onto the page.

Once again a wide range of media was seen with some accomplished paintings using a full colour palette and some equally detailed pencil studies. Mixed media techniques were also employed with varying degrees of success. When introduced and practised as part of a course of study such techniques can enhance the expressive nature of the work, but should always be used selectively and not at the expense of successfully rendering form, structure, texture and spatial relationships.

Some candidates are still submitting work produced from computer aided design programmes, with little or no direct painting or drawing studies. To rely only on development of stages achieved from within the programme means that candidates' work fails to meet all the Assessment Objectives for this paper.

Direct first hand observation predominated, supported on occasions by the candidate's own photographs. There seems to be a growing trend where candidates have worked solely from a photograph of their chosen subject, with their final composition being a careful copy of the photograph. In some instances this has been mechanically grided up to enlarge. Such results tend to be flat, lifeless and lack personal qualities.

A few entries were better suited to the Interpretive Study paper with imagination rather than observation being the main focus of the work. This was especially noticeable in **Question 4**, Interiors and Exteriors, where some compositions were received which adopted a Surrealist approach based more on imagination rather than any direct observation.

Administration by most Centres was very good with clear labelling and well presented registers. The presentation of submissions was also of a high standard with great care being taken with both final pieces and preparatory sheets. There were some instances of 'blue tack' or spray mount being used to attach studies to backing sheets. This resulted in worksheets becoming stuck together or of studies becoming detached. There were also cases of studies being stapled onto backing sheets. This is not desirable or safe for examiners to handle.

A few Centres had taken a great deal of care fitting each candidate's submission into individual folders or hinged booklets. These are very difficult to open and make comparisons between work within and between Centres very awkward.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Still Life Group

- (a) This was very popular throughout the ability range. Every candidate had easy access to all the subject matter and there was a surprisingly wide range of interpretations. There were some excellent paintings and pencil studies with overlapping forms and effective arrangements. Candidates appeared to enjoy representing forms of brushes and their own art equipment. At this level the unfinished painting was treated in a number of imaginative ways: - a picture within the picture concept, where candidates had included the picture they were working on as the study on the easel; the candidate's self portrait as the picture; or the opportunity to suggest the freedom of abstract unfinished paintings.

Less successful work concentrated too much attention on the content of the painting, very often devoting most of their preparatory sheets to this aspect of the composition. All the entries from one Centre had compositions of the arrangement seen from the same viewpoint, suggesting that all candidates had worked from the same photograph.

Some much weaker work had viewed the subject from a distance placing the group within a room, the details of which were obviously made up.

- (b) The most accomplished of these entries wisely concentrated on the effects of drapery over the back of the chair. There were some excellent examples of the use of paint to record the texture and patterned surfaces of the clothes, employing techniques such as dry brush work, embossing and transparent overlays to build up the varying layers of the fabrics. Some included other objects on the chair. There were a few close ups of folded garments producing near abstract designs.

The inclusion of the hat presented candidates in the mid level range with problems when recording concentric ellipses. Others found the representation of the structure of the chair in space difficult.

It was evident that the attention to detail decreased as the question was tackled by those candidates in the lower mark ranges.

Question 2

Natural and Man Made Objects

This section was approached both as a still life group and as a sheet of studies. Most candidates choosing a still life format in all three options. Those who had successfully used a study sheet approach were able to represent their chosen object in a wide range of media and from numerous viewpoints. Candidates in the lower mark ranges also produced numerous studies, but from the same viewpoint, which was usually in plan format. There were a few instances where photocopies were made and then drawn over in a vain attempt to make the work appear to be more sustained than it really was.

- (a) This option was very appealing to all nationalities and cultures, and candidates were very interested in these objects both in terms of function and status.

The best submissions tended to show an enlarged image of the phone giving plenty of scope for careful shading and the depiction of form with the emphasis on clean rendered edges. There were numerous examples using the cabling to link the phone to the charger in a decorative way. There was a good understanding of negative space as a compositional device. The inclusion of a hand holding a phone also proved to be a popular interpretation amongst candidates in the higher mark ranges.

Weaker work resorted to rather crude outlines enhanced by some shading. Those using paint were rather less successful mainly as they failed to record the subtleties of reflected light seen within the predominately black casing of the phone.

Very weak entries found it difficult to represent the phone in three dimensions and the numbers and lettering caused a great many problems.

- (b) There were some very successful paintings in this option, with an emphasis on colour and texture (particularly of compost) as well as a careful exploration of natural forms. Drawings were often intricate, carefully exploring the plant detail as well as the root structure. Some outstanding multi media studies were submitted using complex layers of paint, print, texture rubbings which created varied textures to represent the roots, leaves, compost and pottery surfaces.

The representation of the soil or compost presented candidates in the mid ability range with problems. Having been able to observe the complexities of the structure of the plants and roots with considerable accuracy these candidates resorted to decorative or invented patterns or textures to represent this surface.

Lower level work was flat with heavy outlines, and weaker candidates overcame the problem of representing the compost by washing the roots of the plants and excluding the plant pot.

- (c) A limited number of entries ranged from the very best receiving maximum marks to the very weakest. The better examples had used a viewpoint closer to the edge of the plate and had been able to portray the form of the fish as it lay within the contours of the plate, and in some cases fell over the edge of the plate. There was excellent recording of the colours to be seen in the translucent quality of the skin. Coloured pencils and watercolour were the favoured media for such delicate recording. This was often contrasted by the choice of plate.

Mid level work tended to view the subject from above and results were lacking in form, especially when the cast shadow of the plate was neglected. However there were several highly decorative submissions that emphasised the pattern qualities to be found within the subject.

Very weak ones failed completely to locate the fish on the plate, or even to render the form of the fish beyond the most obvious fish shape.

Question 3

The Human Figure

Fewer candidates had used this question this year, with only two submissions using two figures. There were also fewer candidates who had used photography as a starting point with the result that the form and structure of the figures had been far more closely observed.

- (a) Only a few chose this option but several of these produced work of the highest standard, which was both technically accomplished and highly imaginative in presentation. Passages from the book had been integrated into the composition by creating areas of background of pasted photocopied extracts that had been drawn or painted over. In some instances the title of the book or name of the author had been repeated to create textured and tonal backgrounds. These candidates did not let these inventive techniques detract from the closely observed structure and proportion of the figure.

Weaker work still showed considerable ability to research with their preparatory studies being full of experiments with different chairs and viewpoints, close-ups of hands holding books and different angles of the head. However there were problems in defining the form of interlocking hands and general proportions.

There were some extremely weak submissions that had copied a figure from a magazine illustration.

- (b) Only two mediocre entries.

- (c) This option was more popular. The best submissions produced some lively and imaginative paintings. The relationship between the head, hands and spectacles had been well explored and investigated in the preparatory work through drawings and the use of candidates' own photography.

A large number of candidates had chosen to tackle this question as a self-portrait. In others mirrors were included to give two views of the person trying on the spectacles.

Reflections in mirrored sunglasses proved an effective compositional element by some candidates.

A few had placed the figure within an outdoor setting.

Inevitably weaker candidates had problems over the relationship between the hands and the face, especially when they had attempted to use larger than life scale.

Question 4

Interiors or Exteriors

- (a) The better entries had fully explored many different options; kitchen cupboard doors, room-dividing doors, car doors, stable doors. The most imaginative had fully exploited the potential of mystery by careful attention to contrasts of light and shadow.

Unfortunately there were many weaker entries which exposed an unwillingness to research from direct observation. Amongst these were examples of compositions constructed as architectural illustrations. Technically sound but lacking in personal qualities and with no reference to any observed tonal contrasts.

Others who had at least attempted to observe open doors within their own environment simply lacked the skills to deal with the complexities of an open door in perspective.

There were some very weak submissions using Surrealist interpretations and others using imagery copied from cartoons and with no evidence of any direct observation whatsoever. Teachers should be aware of this and offer some guidance during the preparatory period so that even less able candidates can at least produce work which meets the criteria for this paper.

- (a)** Too few entries to make any real constructive comments. General observations were that other than one exceptional entry all the rest were very mediocre.
- (b)** This was the most popular option for this question with most candidates taking the opportunity to use their own gardens or a corner of the school grounds as a starting point.

The best had explored several views and had experimented with techniques to record a variety of textures. This research had developed into some rich, colourful paintings exploiting not only a variety of plants but making full use of patterns created by light and shadow.

Mid range work tended to come from those who had less skill in mixing colour and who resorted to the use of synthetic greens taken straight from the tube.

Weaker entries had neglected to consider the idea of a corner and had simply showed views of flat walls or isolated flower beds.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/02 Interpretative Study</p>

General comments

A very interesting set of work from most Centres. Many candidates responded to the set questions with some very original and personal interpretations. It is apparent that some candidates are taught very well indeed and prepared for the examination with great skill, sensitivity and care. The quality of the work seen was often such that it could only be produced in a supportive, constructively critical environment. It was also good to see more Centres encouraging observed drawing in the early stages of work, always seen as good practice, more research into artists and some very wide ranging experimentation with media and processes.

That said, judging from some entries, a few candidates seem to be receiving very little guidance in approaches to the Controlled Test. It would appear from the evidence of very scrappy preparatory work that teachers are not aware of the syllabus guidelines for preparation for the exam, with the importance of the time between the distribution of examination papers to candidates and the actual Control Test. At the outset, initial guidance regarding the selection of the question and appropriate choice of materials and processes is advised. The organised launching of the preparatory period and the time before the final work is very important. The full use of this time is absolutely crucial if the candidate is to be awarded maximum available marks in every assessment area.

Still too commonly seen, but thankfully declining, are too many candidates still submitting work that relies overmuch on copying, a process that reflects nothing of the candidate's experience or observation of the world, let alone a personal interpretation of the question. The syllabus is very clear in requiring a personal and original interpretation from candidates: second hand imagery, for example from magazine photographs, should generally only be used for reference and not as a complete source to copy from. And it is worth emphasising here that wherever possible, especially in the early stages of preparation, work from direct observation should be encouraged. If candidates do use secondary sources, it is helpful to include these as part of the preparatory studies to identify how the photographs have been used and interpreted.

From the time the question papers arrive at Centres to the deadline for submission of work, there should be at least three weeks and possibly a month for the research and development of responses. The period allowed to prepare for the examination over the three weeks or so should be seized as an opportunity to really show themselves at their best. A range of possible ideas, preliminary observational drawing and experiments, research into relevant established artists, experiments with media, materials, techniques and processes, and a playing with alternative compositions and layout are all advised.

The three sheets that candidates can submit as evidence of preparation are looked at very carefully by the examiner as evidence of many of the criteria that are assessed. Far too often, candidates submit one or two scrappy sketches that are worth little in terms of marks for personal research, investigation, development or making well-informed judgements

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Looking up or down

This was the second most popular question and the better candidates used primary sources and strong observation in their work, coupled with clever use of high or low viewpoints, strong tonal contrast to enhance drama, and a good understanding of composition. Much of the stronger work contained elements that were emotional, spiritual or political.

The mid-range candidates often attempted to use perspective, which was not always fully understood, and spatial relationships to create ambiguity. Escher was a popular source of inspiration for several candidates.

The weaker candidates relied heavily on imagination with no recourse to observation even though their work was often figurative.

There were many responses that employed eyes looking up or down, several that used tall buildings. One or two successfully used the attack on the twin towers in New York as a theme. Unusual viewpoints were interesting, with children or animals in trees looking down to the ground beneath, or people on cliff tops looking down at the sea.

Several candidates used the question as an opportunity to do figure drawing and painting from life, with the subjects reading from a book or writing a letter.

Question 2 Surprise encounter

This was one of the least popular questions. Most candidates had difficulty in getting beneath literal interpretation and therefore many of the outcomes were predictable with spiders, murder and treasure featuring quite widely. However, there were some rather interesting responses where the encounter was of an unusual kind. These included the opening of burial chambers, car crashes, seeing an unusual face in the mirror and an encounter between different religions. Some very good answers included strongly rendered facial expressions and figures that had been drawn from life, although many of the mid-range candidates and weaker candidates opted for made up figures or animals, which were not well observed. Some, often quite weak candidates, relied on fantasy figures or copies from comic books, which became the primary feature of the work with little thought being given to development or context.

Question 3 Made to measure

Although quite popular, many candidates had problems with their interpretation of this question and many weaker candidates felt that this was the easy option because they could answer the question by portraying a group of measuring implements. Many of these were not observed or considered in terms of composition – simply an array of rulers, tape measures, and protractors without any detectable sense of layout. Some stronger work actually set up a well organised still life of measuring equipment – kitchen scales, tape measures and so on – and these were observed with good understanding of composition and formal elements.

Other frequent responses included figures being measured for clothes or trying on clothes, keys and locks, nuts and bolts and various personal relationships such as boyfriend and girlfriend or man and wife. More unusually, it was interesting to see some quite mature interpretations using the idea of sexual stereotyping, for example in women and girls fitting perceived expectations through drastic slimming, resulting in anorexia. There were also some quite elegant studies of Justice measuring with her scales.

Question 4 A perfect match

This was a very popular question and many candidates interpreted this through human attraction and emotion, some very successfully. Lovers, marriage and wedding rings featured frequently. Well-observed preparation was a major feature in the best work with sophisticated use of colour to express or re-inforce emotional meaning or content, and a good understanding of media use. The weaker candidates relied on obvious and literal interpretations, which lacked ideas, preparation and observation, poor historical research, crude use of colour.

Amongst the interpretations were some interesting and sometimes beautiful studies of pregnancy, lottery tickets and fingerprints. Camouflage in the animal kingdom was sometimes used as a starting point, as well as the symbiotic relationship of such creatures as bees, butterflies, humming birds and various flowers. Unusual interpretations included a study of a matchbox complete with matches, heart transplant surgery, and one candidate revealed his idea of a perfect match as women and beer!

Question 5 Outnumbered

This question was the second most popular. Often, candidates used confrontational situations between various sorts of animals; say between lions and their prey, or between groups of humans, for example rich and poor. The strongest work contained evidence of very well observed natural forms or animals, some taken from primary sources or using secondary sources in an appropriate way to inform the work. In the mid range, candidates sometimes used similar ideas but without sufficient skill and sophistication of colour, organisation and media use to employ secondary sources with good judgement in a supporting role. In the lower mark range, candidates tended towards the obvious, depicting fantasy war scenes extracted from secondary sources, and producing little preparatory work.

Other interesting interpretations included several paintings of chess or other games, overpopulation in crowded cities, the blight of disease and early death in the third world, and various renderings of a starry sky.

Question 6 Changing directions

Not the most popular question, but nevertheless one that gave the higher achievers the opportunity to interpret in a personal way the idea of changes in one's life and the emotional feelings associated with important decisions. Some very able candidates enhanced the expressive qualities in their work by use of colour, texture and tone. Political events also figured and were clearly deeply felt and communicated. The maturity at the higher level with this question was impressive. In the mid-range, candidates tended towards streets, roads and transport with the use of perspective, which was often not well understood, or landscapes, which indicated some understanding of aerial perspective. The weaker candidates often made no references to anything seen, with poor composition and design: for example arrows were much in evidence but with little understanding of how to use these in an abstract way to create a successful composition.

There were frequent references to conflict and war, the problems of global warming and climate change, and choices between good and evil. Unusual and interesting responses included studies of fingers pointing in different directions, dancers in the course of their movements, the dismantling of the Berlin wall, and one painting of a transvestite.

Administration

It would be very helpful for all Centres to note the deadlines for sending work. A few packages are arriving very late at Cambridge, which delays the completion of the task of examiners.

The vast majority of Centres send work in good time, and it is well packed, labelled and organised. It was disappointing to note, however, that some – and it is only a few - still do not seem to be aware of the basic organisation needed. The work was not always labelled correctly. The details were often written in a corner on the back and were difficult to read. A label clearly written with candidate's name, number and the question being attempted is vital to identify each piece clearly. Sometimes, candidates made up their own titles for their work, which is perfectly acceptable as long as the original question number is included. The work was not always joined together by string or treasury tag, and because sometimes the link between supporting work and finished piece was not always easy to grasp it was difficult to marry up the various bits of paper in the packages. In a very few cases, work was produced on paper that was too big and sometimes it was mounted on card or sugar paper when this is not necessary.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03

Paper 3 - Design Study

General comments

As in previous years, most candidates chose **Question 1**, *Design using Lettering* or **Question 2**, *Illustration and Calligraphy*. **Question 5**, *Fashion Design* and **Question 6**, *Fabric Design* were also quite popular, but there were fewer responses for **Question 4**, *Interior Design*, **Question 7**, *Printmaking* and **Question 8**, *Photography*. Less than a dozen submissions were seen for **Question 3**, *Environmental and Structural Design*. Compared with the last session, a higher proportion of candidates achieved the upper levels of the mark range, but more poor attempts, of only a basic level of ability, were also received, particularly for **Question 1**, *Design using Lettering*.

For the majority of submissions serious preparatory research and development preceded the examination work. In the best examples this was focused and sequential, leading to a confident selection and control of visual elements and the use of media for clear graphic communication in the final pieces. Some mid-level outcomes, however, showed a competent development of ideas but lost momentum when evaluating the most effective solutions in terms of tone and colour relationships or the use of appropriate media. Less successful responses tended to falter at the early stages of research by relying too heavily on the copying of existing images from secondary sources or downloaded from the Internet. Consequently, a poor development and evaluation of personal ideas was apparent and the examination pieces lacked visual interest or impact. Each of the design briefs offered by the Question Paper need specialised teaching for candidates to develop understanding and experience. More awareness of contemporary or historical practice by designers would also help to inform research and the development of personal ideas.

Nearly all Centres were concerned to check the accuracy of labelling and ensure that the examination pieces were firmly attached to the preparatory work. However, in the few instances when work had been dispatched without such necessary procedures, considerable confusion arose. In some cases attendance registers were inaccurate or not even enclosed with the work. On the other hand, more consideration had generally been given to the mounting of the work on light weight A2 sized papers, and far fewer examples of inappropriate and loosely stuck collage materials were reported. Some Centres, though, counter to previous requests, continued to wrap each sheet in tissue paper, which led to damage to the work when it had to be removed before being assessed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Design using Lettering

The logo design brief for a company, named *ASPECT*, which supplies photographic equipment and materials led to many thoughtful responses which achieved the mid and upper levels of the mark range. Carefully chosen letterforms were integrated with selective images from cameras or symbolism often combining the human eye with lenses or shutter mechanisms. The best work grew from thorough first hand observation of appropriate sources which was then refined through a variety of experiments with line, shape, tone and colour relationships. Such candidates also considered the scale and placing of the design when showing its appearance on packaging or a business card.

Mid-level responses achieved a competent level of research but were usually too content with developing a single and not very inventive or adventurous idea in the preparatory work, which then lost more vitality when it was repeated for the examination piece. Further investigations of figure-ground relationships, positive-negative linear emphasis and the refinement of tone and colour would have led to higher levels of achievement. The weaker responses lacked any serious or sustained research and development. Too many candidates apparently chose this question because they assumed that very little thought was needed to arrive at an acceptable solution, a misguided approach which rarely met the Assessment Objectives beyond a very basic level of understanding.

Question 2

Illustration and Calligraphy

- (a) The design brief for the cover of a holiday travel brochure entitled *WATERWAYS*, produced by a company named *Gondola* was equally popular with the Calligraphy option below. Indeed, most candidates linked the theme with the Venetian context of the poem for Calligraphy, although this was not a requirement. Some excellent research was undertaken from a range of sources, including well-known paintings of Venice with gondolas reflected in the canals. The best outcomes offered refined colour and tonal simplifications to create a unified background over which well defined letterforms were crisply rendered. Mid-level responses showed some enthusiasm for the investigation of the theme, but were less assured when establishing a relationship between lettering and illustrations. Many examples with sound intentions were seen in which letterforms were dominated or obscured by illustrations in the final pieces. Less able submissions relied heavily on tracing images and letterforms, and attempts to convey effective spatial recessions for the theme usually floundered because of a poor ability to create linear or atmospheric perspective.
- (b) Far more candidates than in the past were attracted by the Calligraphy option. This year the poem by Arthur Symons entitled, '*VENICE*' was offered. Similar to the travel brochure brief above, the research of the Venetian context covered the full ability range. The best submissions showed exemplary skills with well practised calligraphic scripts as well as highly refined illustrations, often using pen and ink media with great expertise. Mid-level responses tended to be more successful with either the calligraphy or the illustration but rarely both integrated together. For example, some very sensitive illustrations were seen but the placing, spacing, rhythm and letterforms of the words had not been given much consideration, or the poem was well scripted but very little enrichment with border decoration or illustrative embellishment had been included. The weaker attempts simply employed everyday handwriting, and preparatory investigations lacked the concern to research and develop ideas relating to the theme of the poem.

Question 3

Environmental/Structural Design

Very few submissions were received for this design brief for an Aviary at a Wild Life Centre. Most of the work seen offered competent to good 'artist's impressions' of the structure seen from one side. The use of architectural ground plans and elevations in the preparatory work to show how the aviary should be constructed in relation to the surroundings was, however, less well considered.

Question 4

Interior Design

The design brief for a stained glass window for the main stairwell in the foyer of a Cinema offered a choice of three themes, *Animation*, *Science Fiction* or *Historical Drama*, all of which were equally popular. Some candidates, though, chose this question without knowing or finding out what a stained glass window is. Others became embroiled in the design of the staircase and the foyer of the cinema but neglected to focus on the stained glass window. If candidates were ignorant of what was required by this design brief they ought not to have chosen it, and teachers should have advised them accordingly during the preliminary briefing before the preparatory period began. The better responses understood through research about the technical limitations of the stained glass process and how the leaded framework needed to be considered as part of the design. Mid-level achievements showed competent research of the chosen theme but often neglected to experiment with colour to convey the vibrant effects of light behind transparent surfaces. The poorest responses were little more than regurgitated illustrations of existing images, particularly from cartoons or fantasy comics, with no attempt to manipulate them in the context of the design brief.

Question 5

Fashion Design

For the costume design brief for a participant in a festival at a fishing port, acute observations from shells, seafood and nets led to some highly imaginative outcomes. In the strongest responses the knowledge and understanding of the intricacies of such structures informed the development of ideas for inventive shapes and forms, as well as exciting colours, patterns, textures and tonal contrasts. The best work was based on directly observed figure studies with the final designs varying from the dramatic to the intentionally humorous.

At the mid levels of achievement competent research was evident in the preparatory work, but the potential for clear graphic communication often became confused when models were depicted as secondary elements in harbour settings or on boats which dominated the presentation. Teachers need to advise future candidates that this question is about designing the costume, not creating a pictorial interpretation of a setting which might well obscure the details of what has been developed. Candidates should also be advised that bolstering their preparatory sheets with photocopies from books about 'How to draw fashion models' or cuttings from magazines does not attract any marks. The less able responses seen for this question were inhibited by poor figure drawing skills and a reliance on tracing to record information about sea life or fishing equipment.

Question 6

Fabric Design

The repeat pattern design brief for a headscarf or a necktie based on observations of *Art Deco* or *Op Art* led to many well researched and lively developments for the examination pieces. Most candidates chose *Op Art* as a source, referring to artists, such as Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely, as sources. The best work showed a full appreciation of the organisation of pattern, rhythm, colour and tonal contrasts to create visual vibrations and illusions of movement. Cut paper and collage techniques were often used very skilfully to enhance the precision of edges. Final outcomes were effectively presented in, and related to, formats using triangular shapes for the necktie or a square for the headscarf.

The fewer submissions based on *Art Deco* were less well researched from appropriate sources and often missed the qualities of geometrical abstraction and subtle colour relationships. Mid-level responses developed from thorough research, but showed some limitations in the refinement of shape, tone and colour. Less able submissions offered little more than copies of existing designs downloaded from the Internet. These were usually poorly rendered, thus losing the precision to engage the eye.

Question 7

Printmaking

A substantial number of responses were received for each of the three themes offered. *Feathers* and *Instruments* were equally popular, but *Puppets* was chosen less often. Several candidates from Centres which specialise in teaching in relief, stencil and wax-resist processes submitted outstanding prints, for which thorough research and experimentation preceded a confident use of media and colour in the examination work. Mid-level achievements showed a good exploration of the chosen theme, but either the control of materials and processes was less assured or the design and compositional ideas lacked development. It was apparent in the weaker submissions seen that some candidates were attempting printmaking for the first time, as poor research and control of materials led to very elementary outcomes.

Question 8

Photography

Not so many responses were received for this specialisation, but some prints were seen for each of the three themes, *Dance*, *Unwrapped* and *Elevated*. A few candidates achieved high technical and aesthetic levels by exploiting lighting and movement for the theme of *Dance*, and one excellent submission explored social and gender issues through the theme of *Unwrapped*. Several mid-level interpretations focused on foreshortened views of buildings or the human figure for the theme of *Elevated*. Although contact prints showed an interest in investigating a variety of viewpoints, the final prints often lacked a concern to evaluate the potential for tonal richness and abstraction of shapes. However, no submissions seen for this question fell below a level of technical competence.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04

Paper 4 - Critical and Historical Study

General comments

It was good to see that more Centres opted to enter candidates for this paper this session, albeit with a similar number of entries. Studies were generally well researched and presented well, making good use of local and wider resources. The actual subject matter varied depending on the environment so that different Centres submissions had quite a distinctive feel which was very interesting to see.

A number of candidates made excellent use of first hand resources and visits which helped to inform and inspire some really good submissions based on the candidate's experience. Interviews with artists and designers and photographs taken at these sessions were also used to good effect.

The balance of text and images should be maintained throughout the study and presentation needs to be well organised. In some cases the organisation tended to deteriorate as the study progressed.

Weaker submissions were sometimes untidy and poorly managed and visual display often haphazard where cutting out was random so that the overall look was untidy. There is time allowed to ensure good presentation is maintained.

Centres should remind themselves of the demands of this paper as there is a tendency for some Centres to make too much emphasis on the element of practical art work at the detriment of the text and analysis. It is possible to develop answers with a more practical presentation but it must still include a substantial commentary or annotation which shows the thinking and critical awareness of the candidate.

Excellent work was often carried out using computer aided design programmes. Images were often very clear and well labelled but in weaker submissions there was little attempt to relate images to text or even label images correctly.

A number of candidates effectively illustrated their projects with their own photography and their own sketches and this often gave a personal touch to the work which is to be congratulated. There were some problems with candidates who submitted their own art work which in many cases bore no relation to the chosen theme and this did not help to clarify the objectives of the project.

Where photocopies and down loaded images are used these should be as clear as possible as poor reproduction gives the study weak impact.

The strongest submissions were those where candidates had built up a body of research materials and visual evidence for their studies and then refined it for a final write up and presentation. Higher outcomes showed an engaged involvement and development.

Handwritten submissions must be clear and written without endless crossings out. There is time allowed to ensure that the presentation is resolved and of a good standard and candidates should be encouraged to revisit and make submissions as presentable as possible.

As was the case last year, real contact with art works and exhibitions was a major factor in many of the more highly successful outcomes.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/05
Coursework

General comments

Approximately three hundred submissions were seen from twenty-one Centres. This was slightly fewer than last year, and consequently the range of work seen was rather limited. Most submissions were for Painting and Related Media. Some 3-D work was seen as well as Fashion and Textiles, and Photography. No Graphic Design was submitted although some Printmaking was seen.

It is pleasing to note that in almost every case candidates had pursued a serious course of study which included 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.

Whilst the best had included relevant references to other artists and which had positively informed their own work, far less of this practice was seen this year. Some candidates had submitted Art Historical essays or projects on artists which had taken up a considerable proportion of their time, but had no relationship to their own practical work.

Some submissions consisted of several pieces of finished work without any identifiable supporting sheets providing evidence of research and investigation of the subject, experiments with techniques, and development of ideas towards the final outcome. Since this activity forms 50% of the Assessment Criteria those candidates who fail to provide adequate evidence are denying their work access to the full mark range.

Presentation seemed generally improved. Work was better organised and selected and was relevant to the final piece. Where photography was used to show ceramic and sculpture they were of good quality, well lit and taken from different angles. It is generally helpful if the work is photographed with something which gives some indication of scale.

Centre assessments were very similar to last year. In almost every Centre orders of merit were accurate. Approximately 50% of Centres were also satisfactory in their application of the Assessment Criteria and marking. Most of the remainder were too generous, and a few had undervalued their candidates' levels of performance.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

This area of study dominated submissions and the standard covered the full ability range.

At the highest level was work demonstrating a mature and independent approach. There is clearly some very sensitive and supportive teaching in many Centres where their courses really encouraged their candidates to develop work based on their own observation and experiences. Research centred around personal decisions and there was evidence of candidates developing ideas independently in order to arrive at final pieces which fulfilled their intentions.

Mid level work was generally lacking in the range and thoroughness of first hand research. The development of ideas was limited as there was a lack of sufficient visual material from which to work, and the resulting final pieces were superficial.

In one or two cases the reverse was seen. There was some extensive research and a lively experimental approach, but this potential was not sustained as the candidates were less proficient in basic drawing skills in rendering form and structure. The final work was lacking in aesthetic qualities.

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

3D Studies

Although there were only a few submissions the general level of attainment was of a very high standard. A mosaic relief was very carefully executed and it was clear how the design motifs had been developed from first hand observation.

Another very accomplished wire and modelled sculpture had evolved from the candidate’s own paintings and the influence of the work of Naum Gabo could be detected in the elegant final piece.

Mid level entries lacked sufficient or convincing research. The quality of the photographs hardly showed the structure and detail of the finished work, and Centres should pay particular attention to this as this is the only evidence examiners have when moderating such work in the UK.

Some extremely weak work was also seen and which had been correctly identified by the Centre’s marks.

Fashion and Textile Design

The best from this area of study were some fashion illustrations of the very highest level. The work demonstrated a thorough knowledge of contemporary fashion illustration but the candidate had produced some original research and investigation. The presentation also showed much originality and imagination.

Another equally impressive entry had a mixed approach which included some of their own jewellery designs to complement their fashion designs.

There were examples of silk painting and batik within mid ability levels, which showed competent skills in research and development into designs relevant to their chosen craft.

Some block and screen printing was seen at this level. The repeat patterns on dyed fabric backgrounds were very colourful and lively. Had longer been spent on investigating sources, developing original ideas and refining designs, the work would have been a lot more personal and informed.

Photography

Only four submissions were seen and only from one Centre. Details of their performance will have been included in the Centre report.