

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Observational Study

General comments

This session's paper appears to have provided plenty of scope for candidates of all ability levels, and many had been clearly stimulated by the opportunity to respond to subject matter that related directly to their own interests and experiences. **Questions 1(b)** and **2(a)** were the most popular, closely followed by **Question 1(a)**. Entries for the other questions were fairly evenly divided except for **Question 4(c)** which was only chosen by a few.

As always some exceptional and highly accomplished work was entered which Examiners had no hesitation in rewarding with maximum marks? However work of the highest calibre was less so than last year, with the majority of entries falling within the middle and lower middle ranges. There was very little really weak work, with almost every entry receiving a grade.

The importance of preparatory work is now generally well understood, with only a few cases of work being submitted without any preparatory studies. However Centres should be aware that the quality of the final examination piece very often mirrored the amount of effort that had gone into the supporting work. Candidates are still failing to achieve the potential seen in the examination piece because of sparse supporting work. Both the supporting studies and the examination piece are marked as one unit, and it is not possible to reward marks in those assessment domains when there is insufficient evidence.

Outstanding supporting work was encouraged from several Centres with candidates of all abilities investigating and experimenting with a wide range of media, styles and techniques. The development of ideas was recorded by means of compositional studies, tests of varying colour schemes and experiments of varying light sources. Candidates in the mid mark range tended to make repetitious studies of individual objects for their groups but failed to show how they arrived at their final compositions. In some cases they were copying from a photograph that had been taken of the chosen subject. Weaker candidates adopted a repetitious formula with some who did not relate their supporting work to the chosen question in any way. Such entries were often a collection of unrelated drawings cut from earlier class exercises and pasted onto the page, or images of secondary sources downloaded from the Internet and poorly copied or even traced.

Some very high standards of painting were seen in both acrylic and watercolour paints. Multi media work was also submitted and the unified images achieved were of a very high standard. Digital photography is now an accepted part of many candidates' preparatory process and was used effectively to record different arrangements, different poses and different viewpoints. Stronger candidates used photography as an investigative tool. Their resulting drawings were not slavish copies of the photographs, but candidates had added surface textures, tone and structural details which had been based on direct observation. Weaker candidates merely used a single snapshot as a reference. This had often been taken with flash photography and the resultant image when copied without any interpretation lacked any sense of tone or form. It was also clear that some submissions had simply copied from a gridded up photograph for their examination piece. In one Centre all candidates had worked from the same two digital images.

Examiners are still having problems from some Centres who ignore the syllabus instructions for the mounting, labelling and presentation of submissions. These guidelines are quite detailed and clear and it would be beneficial if Centres would take notice of them. Some Centres still send in work that has been stapled together, or stuck with spray-mount which falls off, or use thick card, or even sending in paintings on stretchers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Still Life Group

- (a) Candidates in the higher mark ranges were able to represent the elliptical forms of the pots with accuracy and realised the spatial composition by overlapping the pots to create a sense of depth. The structure of the plant forms was carefully observed, and many had used strong directional lighting to cast shadows across the leaves and onto the fabric, creating an almost abstract pattern effect.

Candidates in the mid mark ranges produced more two dimensional compositions where the plants were viewed on the same picture plane. The brightly patterned cloth provided some effective colour studies, but too often candidates found it difficult to integrate this with the other elements in the composition.

Weak entries failed to establish any unified composition, with individual plants being scattered over the paper. Many had rendered the plants in one medium, and used another for the cloth. Again this did not achieve a harmonious composition.

- (b) This was by far the most popular question. Candidates seemed to be attracted to this style of question as it gave them personal ownership over its interpretation. The choice of subject was very wide, ranging from the obvious to the more tenuous and obscure. The influence of Pop Art and Jim Dine were discernable in many submissions.

In most cases candidates had taken responsibility for collecting their own objects and organising their own arrangements. In only one or two Centres did the candidates have to work from a single still life group and it was felt that those candidates, at the fringes of such groups, were disadvantaged because they could not control the angle and viewpoint of the arrangement.

Accomplished pencil drawings were seen. Surface qualities and tonal ranges were handled very well, with some exceptional treatment of reflections on glass and metal objects. Digital photography was often used to explore compositional and textural possibilities. The preparatory work of candidates at this level showed a development that linked well with the final piece.

Mid range candidates tended to draw individual objects which were then incorporated in the final design.

Weaker entries failed to achieve any unity of composition, some even going so far as to simply draw around the objects.

Question 2 Natural and Manmade Objects

This section was approached both as a still life group and as a series of studies. Those who had successfully used a study sheet approach were able to represent their chosen objects in a wide range of media and from numerous viewpoints. They had given much creative thought into the placing of the studies on the page, and this could be justly rewarded in the assessment objective dealing with space and composition. Weaker candidates tended to present a rather jumbled arrangement of studies usually from the same viewpoint.

- (a) A wide range of compositions and kinds of hat were seen. Complex piles of interlocking hats, hats placed on the seat of chairs and hanging from the back, hats on a hat stand, hats on mannequins, woollen ski hats with goggles. Party hats, clown hats, cowboy hats and many, many baseball hats.

Only a few of the most able were successful in rendering form, colour, light and shadow, and textural differences. References to Renoir and Van Gogh were well used and there were some very successful collages using patterned fabric.

Too many had become too involved with surface pattern and texture, with not enough attention given to form and structure, or of creating an interesting composition of hats.

Some very weak submissions had made very tiny studies of their hats placed on a table. They had included this within a room setting which was based more on imagination than on anything observed. Also at this level were examples of images obtained from the Internet which had been copied and presented in a scrap book fashion.

- (b) The best and most successful were enlarged images of the subject. Peanuts and coconuts were the most popular, but quite a few were attracted by the rich texture of walnuts. Many included split nuts revealing interior patterns, colour and texture. Dramatic lighting effects had also been used which transformed the shells into most unusual structures. Other examples at this level had included a crumpled bag with the nuts spilling out. Some included nutcrackers although not asked for.

Weaker work was often rather flat and relied on linear pattern augmented by colour and some attempt at texture.

- (c) Although only a few entries were received, there were some which were at the top of the mark range. Pastel and watercolour provided subtle tonal and colour changes. Creative thought had also gone into the presentation, using backgrounds of coloured fabric, fungi arranged on plates, or in jars. Some had made compositions with the fungi growing amidst foliage and around old tree trunks.

However, most candidates found the handling of form, or variations in the repeating forms of mushrooms, difficult to handle convincingly.

Question 3 The Human Figure

Submissions for this section attracted a significant number of the more able candidates. The majority of candidates had been well prepared by Centres, with a firm grasp of the structure of the human body and a very good understanding of proportion. There were very few really weak entries.

- (a) A wide range of instruments were selected from violins, guitars, trumpets, trombones, pianos and drums to traditional instruments that reflected the musical traditions of the area.

Supporting studies were particularly effective in the best work, even though examination pieces were variable. Some very imaginative studies had placed the model in folk costume playing a traditional instrument.

One Centre had submitted studies of other school pupils playing their instruments. At first glance these appeared to be very impressive, however on closer examination the outlines of where these images had been traced from photographs could be seen. All ended up with a very similar mark, as the only means of differentiating was through how carefully or expressively each had used shading with pencil. Supporting studies were more of the same tracings but from different photographs.

- (b) This was the more popular of the two questions. Most were very accomplished, although again the supporting work was often better than the finished piece. Candidates responded well to the action of drying the hair. Many had adopted a self portrait solution with towels used as turbans and reflections in mirrors being used to make a double portrait. Interesting abstract patterns were explored when contrasting the hair with bright colours of the towel. Others made use of the patterns created by water falling from showers and taps. The influence of Degas and David Hockney was used frequently to inform the work.

Question 4 Interiors or Exteriors

- (a) This was interpreted in a wide variety of ways, using features such as trees, potted plants, fountains, garden ornaments, pergolas, verandas, patio areas, water features and bridges.

The most successful compositions were made from direct observation and there were many which had captured the variety of shapes, textural differences and interplay of light and shadow. The influence of Monet's garden pictures was evident and had enabled many to widen their colour palette and broaden their range of mark making. Some very able watercolours were presented within this top range, and who had been able to capture the delicacy of different plants and show good use of colour recession.

Mid range work had a good grasp of colour and aerial perspective and these were handled better than forms. Compositions lacked a depth achieved through differences of scale or overlapping forms.

Less successful were submissions which were almost totally based on secondary sourced imagery.

- (b) Some of the most original compositions were submitted for this option. Reflections of a car park structure viewed in a car windscreen. Others, involving reflections in the wing and interior mirrors gave a multi viewpoint composition of the car park. It was clear that many candidates had made extensive research of the concrete structure of multi storey car parks and had developed their final studies to emphasise the abstract qualities of the dramatic interplay of light and shadow, without incorporating any cars.

Mid range work made good use of the overlapping shapes of different cars, but had difficulties when trying to render the effects of reflective surfaces.

There were some very weak submissions where a photograph of a car, cut from a magazine had been gridded up and copied without any knowledge of placing it within the same perspective of any background features. Others simply concentrated on the outline shapes of cars and produced very flat diagrammatic bird's eye views of car parks.

- (c) Very few attempted this. Views of school windows predominated, although a few had looked for the more unusual, including such features as broken glass panes, shutters, bars and wrought iron grills, and plants on window ledges.

Some of the most successful had looked at the work of Edward Hopper, but most had failed to investigate the reflective qualities, or to fully render the contrast of tones between the outside and the interior.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Interpretative Study

General comments

Most Centres prepare their candidates well for this paper and understand the aims and objectives in directing their candidates towards appropriate research and work that is personal, innovative and imaginative. The skill and dexterity of media use, processes and techniques is also very strong from a great number of Centres. The preparation time leading up to the exam is used in a very positive manner by the majority of candidates, the strongest visual research often coming from direct observation or primary sources. The maturity of concepts and ideas from some candidates was exceptional, particularly when matched with a high capability in drawing and media use, composition and sensitivity to aesthetic considerations in fully communicating their intentions.

This session, however, it was seen that are a few Centres seem to be directing all their candidates towards one question, rather than allowing a free choice, which does limit the candidates freedom of personal commitment and capability. For example, all candidates from one or two Centres attempted **Question 4**, 'In the box'. In one case, all candidates did the question as a still life set up. Most individuals may well have benefited from being allowed a much freer choice. One of the most important qualities of this paper, surely, is to promote mature, personal choices, interpretation and development of ideas. This is severely limited if candidates are not allowed some measure of freedom to make their own decisions from the very outset. The six questions set in the examination paper may not appeal to all teachers, and they certainly will not appeal to all candidates, but part of the process of entering into a personal response is denied if a free choice is not allowed. Indeed, the rubric for candidates says as much. There are cases where an exception may well be made, for example when a teacher feels that a particular question is unsuitable for an individual candidate, in which case some 'editorial' choice comes into play. One Centre in recent years, for example, had already done a project similar to one of the questions, and the teacher wisely used her discretion to tell her candidates that doing that question would, at best, be boring for the candidates and , at worst, produce stale and uninteresting work.

Preparation time is very important, and a minority of Centres are either not preparing the candidates thoroughly, or not giving their candidates enough time in the art room to research and experiment with ideas. It may be that they are giving the examination paper to candidates later than they might. Some candidates had done very little or very limited preparation. Some seemed to have a limited understanding of how to develop an idea, how to research, which artists or other references to look at, or what primary sources to base their work on. Also, as usual, several submissions were obviously copied from magazines or books, and the original image was not attributed and not submitted as evidence of sources. A small number of very weak scripts had no preparation at all, and sometimes the examination piece seemed to have been done in a very limited length of time – certainly very much shorter than the maximum of ten hours, and probably less than an hour or two at most.

Work where almost all of the preparatory studies are not really studies at all but are merely images cut from magazines or downloaded from the Internet is too common. Another difficulty for some candidates is that, rather than interpreting the question with a personal idea or communicating a real experience, prefer to put all their efforts into thinking broadly around the question, without any focus on a particular response, which sometimes leads in the final exam work to a confusion of unrelated images very loosely based on the question. It often seems that such work – magazine clippings and extended but unresolved 'brainstorming' fails to grasp the nettle of a main core of an idea that the candidate wants to communicate, and that no real engagement has taken place. More time spent in editing ideas down to a few with potential for research would be wise, followed by thorough and rigorous development.

Extended writing on ideas, artists or possible interpretations is rarely genuinely relevant or interesting for a practical art examination. A few notes, a little annotation or explanation is all that is generally required, if anything is needed at all, for the Examiner to make sense of what is being looked at. Some candidates do write very articulately, or put together interesting notes, which are a little deeper and more personal than most writing. However, trying to substitute visual art work by words generally does little in an examination of this nature, and it sometimes seems that the candidate may well be trying to avoid the real test of producing art.

Very rarely, three dimensional works are attempted. Whilst collage or light relief work might be appropriate, sculpture as such is not. Even photographs of such work are not a very good idea, and Centres should concentrate on painting, drawing and related media. The proper place for sculpture is in Paper 5, the Coursework component.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Seen through Glass

This was a very popular question, the third most attempted overall, generating a very wide range of responses. The more successful candidates almost invariably worked from direct observation at some stage in the process, relying on strong drawing and colour to inform their final pieces with first hand experience of looking. The use of spectacles, magnifying glasses, shop windows and aquariums were popular sources. Very few candidates considered using a microscope which could have resulted in some interesting images and had wider potential for abstraction. Many used the theme as a starting point for an investigation using broken mirrors or glass into fractured images, which superficially resembled cubism and was often quite successful. A very small number used the theme to design stained glass windows, with mixed results, using black paper and coloured cellophane or theatre gel: these were sometimes hindered by poor initial design work to work out how the image would work, and a lack of skill in undertaking what is a complex and demanding craft. Weaker candidates tended to resort to the use of poor digital photos or copied images from magazines with little research or developmental work, merely choosing a picture with a window in it, for example, rather than actually going to a real window and looking through it!

Question 2 Meeting up

The theme 'Meeting up' was the second most popular question, perhaps because it is a very open ended question, and generated a very broad range of responses and some very imaginative outcomes, probably the widest range of different meanings of the question being interpreted. Some candidates saw the theme as romantic with couples intertwined; the best of these done as life drawings or based on the students own photographs. The imagination of some went to the very limits of the question in a symbolic way with references to marriage, honeymoons and family life. Where these interpretations were not based on a foundation of drawing from life or photographs they sometimes tended to be rather clichéd, or stereotypically represented.

Other students saw the opportunity for ideas related to confrontation or a meeting up of ideologies, with opposing forces contrasting or facing one another. The stronger candidates seemed to really engage with the issues underlying the difficulties facing the resolution of differences between people and nations, but in other equally strong work it was pleasing to see the coming together of different cultures, religions and nationalities.

Flocks of birds or herds of wild animals were a popular choice, and a few did paintings based on seasons or on different times in the day or phases of the moon. One unique idea was of jump leads and another was of chemicals being mixed together. There were interesting meetings taking place in the bright lights of a city at night, and the dramatic meeting between Adam and God in Michelangelo's famous ceiling, used as a starting point for very personal interpretations, one with self portraits incorporated. A few very strong studies of hands, drawn from life, with fingers intertwined, were seen, mostly from strong candidates. The idea of 'fortune' was explored at various levels, with dice, roulette wheels and lottery numbers meeting up to produce winning combinations.

It was notable once again that a lot of the weaker submissions came from candidates copying magazine photographs of, for example, embracing couples, groups of animals or of cars.

Question 3 The edge of town

The least popular question, although where candidates chose to base their work on observed local studies of their own towns they were generally very successful. Digital photos were used by many candidates to back-up their visual research and this was very positive when used as an aide mémoire.

Candidates who chose to rely purely on imagination and/or fantasy were much weaker in their interpretations, with some completely made up images based on an amalgam of half remembered street scenes and some examples of very poor perspective. It was surprising to see a few who obviously misread the question and did 'the end' of town, rather than the 'edge', with some apocalyptic images of the twin towers outrage, fire and earthquakes.

Question 4 In the box

This question was the most popular, followed closely by 'Meeting up', and produced a very wide range of responses across all abilities.

Submissions ranged from the very personal and introspective with issues of the human body as a shell or container for the soul or spirit, to the more obvious ideas of birds in cages or prisoners in cells. Sometimes the latter ideas were very successful due to imaginative viewpoints and thoughtful composition. The poor and destitute were also subject matter for some very emotive and strong work, whilst perhaps more prosaically there were one or two submissions with coffins containing skulls and bones.

A few put their friends inside cardboard boxes and photographed or drew them, and some made observed work of different types of boxes containing Jewellery, art materials, fast food or toys. A few of the weaker candidates had little or no understanding of perspective which let them down when attempting to draw boxes.

Question 5 Cycles

Where this was interpreted as 'life cycles', there was often too much reliance on text book illustrations of butterflies, frogs and insects at their various stage of life, although some images which used these in a more abstracted way relying on mark making, colour and pattern were quite successful. Some weaker candidates work was far too biological and lacking in formal elements and became merely poor copies of text book illustration.

A handful of candidates used the Buddhist concept of life and reincarnation, some successfully exploring quite subtly symbolic 'wheels of life' and other relevant imagery. Also, on a larger scale, was the idea of the planets rotating around the sun and the idea of 'time', whilst at the other extreme was the notion of the washing machine 'cycle'!

Some images were based on filmic stop motion photography, with references to Muybridge, Duchamp and the futurists, which was often quite strong visually. Fashion 'cycles' were quite popular although again there was too much reliance on lifting images from fashion magazines. The cycle of the seasons produced some interesting work and gave candidates the opportunity to display their strengths with landscape.

Surprisingly, very few candidates chose to work with bicycles, but some candidates who did produced really uplifting and individual outcomes especially where they had taken the trouble to set up real still life arrangements either with whole or parts of bicycles, sometimes using the intermeshing cogs and circles as starting points for abstraction.

Question 6 Birds eye view

This proved to be a reasonably popular question, but was open to misinterpretation or a lack of understanding of the phrase by some candidates. However, there were some very imaginative interpretations with some strong development of ideas. Aerial views of towns and landscape when used by candidates gave them the opportunity to explore a wide range of formal elements. Some of the strongest of these were done from a high vantage point in a building, either in the School or elsewhere. Some very striking perspective studies were done from the tops of staircases or of street scenes from very high up. One or two candidates, apparently, climbed trees and either drew or took photographs from this interesting vantage point. Candidates whose work relied solely on imagination or second hand imagery produced work that was generally weaker. The reflections in bird's eyes proved to be popular interpretation, but not surprisingly many candidates had difficulty in visualizing this.

Administration

Generally, it is pleasing to note that administration by the vast majority of Centres was efficient and accurate, and that the syllabus guidelines in terms of size, numbers of supporting pieces and labelling have been adhered to. However, a small but worrying number of Centres sent work that was not clearly or not correctly labelled. The most important information to include, on the front of the work in the top right hand corner, is the Centre number, candidate number, name and the question number attempted. Supporting work should be firmly attached by string through a hole in the top left corner rather than paper or bulldog clips, as the latter methods are not reliable when the work is unpacked and sorted, and very often are liable to become dislodged, with the subsequent delay in sorting out individual candidates work. Also, it is worth noting here, that oversize work will certainly not gain any more marks, and anyway is outside of the rules of the syllabus.

Several Centres over-protected the candidates' work with numerous sheets of taped down paper or cellophane, or even put work into plastic folders. The removal of such packaging is very time-consuming. If the work is pastel or chalk, a simple piece of newsprint laid over it is quite sufficient, or use fixative or relatively cheap non scented spray-on aerosol hair lacquer. Also to be avoided is the mounting of work on heavy card or other materials. This just increases the bulk, making the postage and handling needlessly burdensome.

Even more seriously, work that is dangerous to handle – glass for example – should not be sent. It would seem that **Question 1**, 'Seen through Glass' was used as an opportunity to actually stick bits of broken mirror and glass onto card. Whatever its aesthetic merits, and whatever glue is used, broken glass and similar sharp objects should not be posted.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03
Design Study

General comments

Half of the candidates chose **Question 1 Design using Lettering** or **Question 2 Illustration and Calligraphy**. **Question 3 Fashion Design** and **Question 4 Fabric Design** attracted another third of all responses. **Question 8 Interior Design** was the next most popular choice, closely followed by **Question 5 Photography** and **Question 6 Printmaking**. There were fewer submissions for **Question 7 Environmental/Structural Design**, although twice as many responses were seen this session compared with previous years.

The Examiners noted an increase in the numbers of candidates achieving the higher levels of the mark range, which mainly resulted from strong teaching for one or more of the specialist design briefs offered by the question paper. Preparatory studies, in particular, were well focused on research and development of ideas, showing an awareness and understanding of the various design problems, as well as a commitment to solve them. There was less resorting to an unselective use of 'cut and paste' of magazine images to bolster supporting sheets, and a greater willingness to engage in direct observation through both personal drawing and digital recording. Computer processes were used effectively, and often with expertise, to develop design ideas and, sometimes, for the final examination piece itself. The less successful responses invariably resulted from poor preparation, a limited or inappropriate use of media and processes or a lack of interest in, or understanding of, the specific problems of design brief.

Most Centres complied thoroughly with the instructions to despatch each candidate's work firmly fastened together with the examination piece on top. Confusion did arise, however, when supporting sheets were not attached to the examination work and labelling was unclear or inaccurate. Some Centres are still allowing candidates to encase each sheet of their work in tissue paper, or use collage elements, such as sand, seeds, beads, sequins or glitter which become detached, both of which practices cause considerable mess and inconvenience to the examining process.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Design using Lettering

The logo design for a computer software company named KLIKON was undertaken by over a fifth of candidates. The most able submissions evolved from strong research of keyboard symbols, mouse forms, wires, plugs and circuit patterns, leading to an inventive development of shapes integrated with well chosen letterforms. Such candidates also engaged in a thorough refinement of their ideas through a selective use of tone, colour and line for shapes, shadows and borders. The circular format of the CD-ROM for the final design inspired many excellent solutions, but there were fewer successful outcomes for the other option of a small advertisement for a newspaper.

Mid level achievements offered a competent development of shapes integrated with letterforms, but usually showed less concern to explore the selection of colour and tone further to enhance the figure-ground relationships. In the weaker responses a basic ability to simplify forms and shapes was apparent, but limited research and experimentation with media led to a lack of visual impact. The additional task of the design brief to show how the logo might look on a CD-ROM or a small advertisement was rarely attempted with any commitment in the less successful submissions. Thus, with only half the question was answered, the opportunity for a higher mark level was wasted.

Question 2 Illustration and Calligraphy

- (a) The menu cover for an oriental restaurant named *The Moon Palace* attracted as many responses as **Question 1**. Candidates of all levels of ability enjoyed researching architectural styles, decorative motifs and Chinese calligraphy to develop rich and evocative outcomes. Many excellent designs were seen, for which the integration of imagery and lettering had been exhaustively developed in lively preparatory studies. The consideration of tonal contrasts, selective colour and decorative borders to create a strong visual impact was generally very impressive. It was also refreshing to see some candidates' attempts to make a dummy of the menu by exploring different systems of folding to enhance overlapping and revelation. Mid level achievements often showed much potential at the preparatory stage but lacked further refinement to achieve a full integration of all the elements in the final designs. Sometimes what was presented was really a painting with the lettering added as an afterthought. Weaker attempts relied rather heavily on copying existing images downloaded from the Internet or simply listed a selection of meals rather than considering the problems of layout.
- (b) Although there were fewer submissions for the Calligraphy option of this question many good hand-crafted scripts were seen in response to Shelley's poem *The Waning Moon*. A revival of interest in traditional calligraphic hands was noted in the work from some Centres in which the teaching had established a thorough practice of well spaced and rhythmically flowing scripts. Some accompanying illustrations and decorative borders were also beautifully refined to integrate with the mood of the poem and enhance the total unity of the page. However, at mid levels of achievement very competent illustrations were often seen in conjunction with unevenly spaced or awkwardly formed writing. The fewer less able responses for this option offered little more than everyday handwriting clumsily fitted into attempts to reproduce already existing images.

Question 3 Fashion Design

The costume design for a participant at a flower festival was also a very popular choice. The majority of submissions were clearly informed by previous coursework experiences in terms of figure drawing techniques, the use of appropriate media and the inclusion of swatches of materials. Several outstanding designs were seen but all successful outcomes had been developed from thorough direct observation of the structures, colours and surface textures of flowers. Such research led to inventive forms and shapes which were knowingly adapted to articulated poses of the human figure. At mid levels of achievement there was a tendency to base preparatory investigation on cut and pasted magazine images of flowers and figures, rather than engage in recording from observation; this inevitably limited the potential to develop personal solutions, despite the evidence of competent execution. Less able candidates, however, often chose a far easier path by randomly placing a collage of flowers, sequins and glitter on the shapes of standard outfits. The poorest submissions, as usual, were severely inhibited by poor figure drawing skills.

Question 4 Fabric Design

Of the three themes offered for the repeat pattern design for a shower curtain, *Water sports* was the most popular, but a substantial number of responses were received for *Gymnastics* and *Athletics*. Many excellent designs were seen, particularly from Centres which specialise in teaching the development of intricate, interlocking and rhythmical or dynamic repeat pattern techniques. Thorough research of figures in action informed the abstraction and simplification of shapes for experimentation with positive-negative counter changes of line, colour, tone and texture. As with other questions, the refinement of the relationships of visual elements in the supporting sheets led to some very personal and sophisticated outcomes. Mid level designs usually set out in the right direction but limited research inhibited the potential to develop any complexity in the pattern through colour and tonal refinement or the cropping and shifting of shapes to enhance a sense of movement. Weaker attempts tended to place images of objects in rows, showing little awareness of figure-ground relationships. Some very poor submissions were seen which offered no awareness of how to develop any kind of pattern at all!

Question 5 Photography

Following suggestions from Centres the photography question this session was given a more specific design context, that of images required for a travel brochure. Of the three themes offered *Unusual viewpoint* was the most popular but there were also many responses to *Canopy or roofscape* and *Waiting or ready to go*. A few candidates misunderstood the question and actually produced a full layout of a brochure; this was not necessary as the requirement for one main and two supporting prints with the preparatory contact sheets remained the same as in previous years. Several candidates submitted strong work, showing good technical expertise and well considered compositions which had evolved from recording at specific locations, such as stations for *Waiting or ready to go* and places of historic interest or natural beauty for *canopy or roofscape*. Much of the mid level and weaker work was for *Unusual viewpoint*, some of which lacked any element of surprise or compositional interest, and showed a very poor sense of visual investigation using a camera.

Question 6 Printmaking

The printmaking question was also given a specific design context, that of a greetings card. This did encourage a sense of purpose, enlivening the responses to all three of the themes offered, the most popular of which was *A domestic animal*. Most submissions achieved competent results with relief or block printing processes, following thorough preparatory research. Many evocative images were also seen in response to *Towers or bridges* and several good etchings were received for *Fossils or ferns*. Less successful approaches led to repeat patterns using stencilling techniques. Such candidates would have been able to present more relevant work if they had chosen **Question 4, Fabric Design** as they basically ignored the requirement for the specific context and format of a greetings card. A few very weak responses were submitted which consisted of little more than photocopies of existing images arranged in a collage.

Question 7 Environmental/Structural Design

Although no more than a dozen responses were received for this question, this was twice as many as seen in previous years. There was evidence that more Centres were willing to prepare their candidates appropriately for this design problem and, consequently, the requirements were better understood. The design brief for a sculpture garden to also include a pond, a bridge, a fountain, seats and pathways motivated candidates to engage in interesting research and develop imaginative plans. Most submissions were of a competent to high level, the best of which presented clear ground plans and articulate illustrations of an entrance viewpoint. The placing of sculptures among the other features, as well as shrubberies and flower beds, demonstrated a firm understanding of spatial relationships within the requirements of a human environment.

Question 8 Interior Design

The design of a mosaic for the floor of a circular viewing area of the reptile house at a zoo led to many excellent responses, for which preparatory research into reptile forms, skins and carapaces was supported by an awareness of historical and contemporary examples of the craft. The circular format encouraged a focus on twisting, writhing and rhythmical design which the majority of candidates exploited fully. The most able work showed a selection and refinement of line, colour and pattern well organised into tesserae with an awareness of the intervening network of mortar on the design as a whole. Some potentially able work attempted to create an elliptical view of the mosaic as seen by a visitor to the reptile house; this involved an unnecessary difficulty when the requirement was to create a circular design seen on a flat surface, although computer techniques could have been used subsequently to show such a view. The less successful approaches showed a lack of understanding of the limitations and aesthetic qualities of a mosaic by offering a painted design without consideration of how it would be affected. The fewer weaker attempts floundered at the preparatory stage because of inadequate research and investigation.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/4

Critical and Historical Study

General comments

There was an increase in the number of candidates and Centres compared to last June.

Projects were generally well researched and presented. Good use was made of local resources such as public buildings, visits to art galleries and interviews with practising artists and designers. The actual subject matter varied depending on the local environment, so that candidates' work had quite a distinctive feel.

Interviews with artists and designers, and photographs taken at these sessions were also used to good effect and these experiences gave excellent insight into how artists think and work. This proved to be a very strong feature in some of the work with mature written responses and analysis.

A balance of text and images should be maintained throughout the study, and presentation needs to be well organised. Some candidates did not take care over their cutting, sticking and labelling and this gave their projects an untidy look. Candidates have the time to ensure that their work is well presented.

Candidates are reminded that, if they focus on an element of practical art work, submissions must still include a commentary or annotation which shows the thinking and critical awareness of the candidate.

Some excellent work was often carried out on digital art and design programmes, but in weaker submissions there was little attempt to relate images to text or even to label images correctly.

Handwritten submissions are as equally acceptable as word-processed projects but the writing and presentation must be clear and written without endless crossings out.

Where photocopies are used these should be as clear as possible as poor reproduction gives a project a weak impact.

Many candidates illustrated their projects with their own photography and sketches and this gave a personal touch to the work. There were, however, some problems with candidates who submitted their own art work which bore no relation to the chosen theme and which did not help to clarify the objectives of their project.

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

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

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/05
Coursework

General comments

The entry was very similar to last year's with about 120 Centres entering work from approximately 1200 candidates.

Whilst results were very variable it was clear that many Centres have excellent schemes of work in place that support, guide and strengthen their candidates' abilities.

When Centres had implemented such a structure, which emphasised the importance of first hand research, experimentation with media, the development of original ideas, and critical evaluation of work in progress, all their candidates were able to achieve their full potential within their individual levels of ability.

Many Centres still impose a common theme of set exercises. Whilst this approach may be valid for the early stages of a course of study, there should be scope for each candidate to pursue their own line of research and to develop work of an independent and personal nature. This is especially important as 50% of the mark scheme falls within this domain.

There are still many Centres where it is quite obvious that the teaching is centred round candidates copying images from magazines or downloading from the Internet.

One clear piece of evidence that really tests candidates' ability to carry out independent and individual research is the sketchbook or workbook. The best are full of insights into the thinking and personal involvement of the candidate. Even when there are mistakes, blind alleys and indulgent copying, there is still a freshness and spontaneity that makes these documents almost a visual diary, and against which a moderator can measure the 'journey' that has been made.

Unfortunately many are just a disparate collection of class exercises or studies unrelated to the selected project, which have been cut out and mounted within a sketchbook, and which could have been compiled at any point of the course.

Presentation was generally well organised and selected work was relevant to the final piece. A few Centres sent in too many projects. Candidates were not being encouraged to be selective and organise their submissions to show relevant research and development towards their final outcomes.

There were still a few folders containing a jumble of unsustained studies, copies of existing works or magazine and downloaded images, and disconnected class exercises which were totally unrelated to any identified final piece.

CIE Examiners are concerned that teachers in the larger Centres are not selecting an appropriate sample to send into Cambridge for moderation. The ten selected works should include the top marked candidate and the weakest marked, as well as a selection covering the intermediate range. Some have missed the bottom candidates, and some have excluded a whole cohort from a particular mark band (e.g. no work at all from candidates marked in the 50's).

The individual mark sheets can be an invaluable aid in the moderating process in identifying the basis on which teachers award their marks. Whilst it is not necessary to write lengthy comments, a few notes do give a useful insight into particular qualities that may not be easily evident on first examination of the work.

CIE Moderators have expressed concern over the decline in quality of photography which is submitted instead of the actual work. This almost always used to be of a high standard, but since the availability of digital cameras it would appear that many Centres are leaving candidates with the responsibility of taking their own photographs. When images, taken with cheaper equipment are enlarged and printed onto poor quality paper much detail is lost. Likewise when flash has been used this flattens form and loses colour and texture.

Centres' orders of merit were mostly accurate. Any recommended changes to these were to alter a few candidates who had all been given the same mark, especially when different teaching groups, or submissions from different areas of study had been included in the sample. As usual the accuracy of teachers' application of the Assessment Criteria varied enormously. The only sound advice is to make use of the syllabus guidelines, and to make repeated references to the CD Rom 'IGCSE Standards in Art and Design'.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

By far the largest submission comes from this area of entry and approaches vary enormously. It is a real pleasure to see really good, thoroughly taught and learnt painting skills where the emphasis has been placed on gaining an understanding of using tone, texture, line and colour to represent the world around them and their perception of it by investigating their chosen subject from first hand observation. Most Centres are basing such courses around still life subject matter, or work from the human figure (especially self portraits). A few had included a design based project to give breadth to the course and to encourage a different approach. There were also some very successful entries from candidates who had been encouraged to use the work of other artists and cultures as starting points. They had all developed their own ideas, often combining pattern and texture discovered within their research.

Techniques were also very varied. There were many straightforward paintings, some on an ambitious scale, some designed and executed as murals. Each stage had been well documented with photographs and there was enough evidence within the folder of real studies to support the high ability levels of these entries. However, one Centre did submit all their candidates' work as digital copies. Some real drawing or painting is required to enable a fair assessment to be made.

A few Centres are not identifying the final outcomes clearly. It is useful to know which of the works in the submission is regarded as the main piece. Others are not producing enough preparatory work to really demonstrate competence in areas of the assessment criteria related to investigation and development. Although sometimes this may be more to do with how the teaching is organised, for instance with work being done directly from still life. Never the less, it is necessary for this component to give every opportunity for experimentation and exploration of different media, different techniques, and developing a personal response to the language of painting and drawing.

Some very weak work was submitted consisting of a few scrappy sketches, or laborious and poorly copied work from secondary 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

Submissions were seen from sculpture, ceramics, wood carving, basketry, and architectural model making. The most thorough submissions were accompanied by workbooks, which provided plenty of evidence to assist the moderation. Work books included photographs of preparatory work, sketches, plans, development and notes about techniques being used. Some also used photography to show the work in progress.

Many of the best submissions had referred to relevant work of other artists. Particular works were drawn and used as starting points for the candidates' own ideas, sometimes in the form of little maquettes made in clay. In particular were examples of Picasso's ceramic sculpture, Gauguin's woodcarving and some local artists.

The standard of the architectural models has improved this year. The scale is smaller which has made the structures far stronger. One was designed to come apart revealing the interior of the building. Interior designs and experimentation with layouts was seen in the workbook. However not enough research had been undertaken from primary sources i.e. modern local buildings to enable these entries to access the very high mark range. Mathematical plans were often the initial starting point but unfortunately the aesthetic aspect of architecture was neglected.

Some extremely weak entries were received consisting of plaster casts of found objects, badly painted. There was no aesthetic creativity of the candidates' own making. These plaster objects had been badly photographed and accompanied by extensive written documentation on the history of sculpture and the candidate's ideas behind their work. Much of this was unrelated and meaningless.

Graphic Design

Very few entries were received for this area this year; the majority all came from one Centre who taught graphics to their entire group. The work was very similar in content and heavily based on computer generated material, downloaded imagery from secondary sources, with little real individual exploration or experimentation. The best had achieved high levels of manipulative skills but mostly results were safe and predictable.

Other design work seen had a very limited understanding of design aesthetics. Folders contained stronger abilities in recording skills through drawing, and this would have been their better option.

Photography

Very few submissions (although photography was seen in other areas of study), where, on the whole, it had been used as a means of research more successfully.

One Centre had a very large entry and all of their candidates had covered this subject in a traditional manner, using black and white techniques which had all been developed and printed by the candidates.

There are too many submissions where the entire work which has been commercially processed and this should be discouraged by Centres.

Some Centres are submitting work on CD. Whilst this is acceptable the individual images must be carefully selected and some indication of which of these represent the final outcomes from the project should be included. In one Centre each candidate had submitted over 30 images on the CD, none of which was identifiable as the final image. This makes the moderation process very difficult especially as all the images were very similar.

Fashion and Textile Design

Fashion design submissions were generally of a high standard, both in design development and in the technical quality of those entries that had been made into garments. In many instances photographs of candidates wearing their designs provided evidence of the form and the fit of the garment.

Those candidates working with textile processes were less successful. However there was some very competent batik work where excellent understanding of craft skills had been equally well supported with design development based around some careful observational studies of fish. Some very experimental and original screen printing and silk painting was also seen at this high level. Again thorough research from first hand study of peacock feathers had developed into designs incorporating, print, collage stitching and appliquéd.

Unfortunately the majority of entries were quite basic in the level of skills and in the originality and personal qualities of the work. Among them were weaving using fairly coarse techniques with little evidence of any personal development, and some tie dye which looked very much like a one off lesson done as an introduction to the process. A few batiks were submitted at this level which were not designed at all, but were an initial exploration of some of the methods employed using brushed wax and two colours.