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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 6010/01

Drawing and/or Painting from Still Life

General comments

Once again, candidates were divided almost equally between the two questions. Obviously, the one requiring man made objects appealed to those who had a full knowledge of and enjoyed using perspective and ellipses in their work and the other, requiring less angular and natural objects, to those who wished to explore the rounded and softer textures afforded by the fruits.

The large majority of the work was carried out in colour, usually in watercolour or gouache paint. Soft lead pencil and charcoal were favoured for the non-coloured pieces.

Most candidates were conversant with the Assessment Criteria as set out in the Subject Syllabus and were able to bring their work to a respectable conclusion within the bounds of their knowledge, skills and experience. In short, the Examiners are looking for a candidate's ability to express form, deal with the complexities of spacing and composing, employing contour and surface qualities as appropriate and in the harmonising colours and or tones.

It always seems that every year the best work is better than ever before, and this year was no exception. Added to the translucent qualities of well handled watercolour and rich, full bodied gouache paintwork were some exceptionally fine pencil compositions where candidates at one Centre had excelled themselves by making the most shapely of fruit groups with the utterly convincing sculpting into the third dimension. The tonal subtleties of the cross-hatched pencil work were also so successful.

Obviously there were a large number of middle ability candidates who for one reason or another would fail to convince the Examiner that they fully understood all of the Assessment Criteria or could apply it skilfully, also there were those whose artistry was abysmally incomplete and without much merit.

Most candidates were able to complete their work in the allotted time span. Indeed, it is always surprising that some candidates are able to produce so much of such good quality.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A kettle, one mug, a jar of coffee and an open packet of biscuits are seen together on a table

The most successful work in response to this question was seen when candidates had taken trouble first of all in their choice of objects and then with the grouping of them. It is so important that the composition should be well balanced and that the negative shapes should be as interesting as the group itself.

There were many excellent watercolours, gouache paintings and pencil drawings. The most rewarding work was found when candidates had taken a long hard look at the still life paintings of the well-known still life painters of the 20th Century. To this many had added their own stamp and personality. Besides being able to create the third dimension by getting the perspective, ellipses and form correct they went on to demonstrate the skilful use of their chosen medium, the varied exploration of surface qualities in such as glass against the uneven quality of the surface of a biscuit and to this they added their own particular way of creating a picture.

Of course not all were able, through lack of knowledge and experience, to subscribe in equal depth to all of the known Assessment Objectives. These were the middle achievers. They had perhaps been unable to work out the perspective of the biscuit packet or had left the biscuits and their packet all floating above the surface of the table. Some had not been able to cope with the ellipses of the coffee pot or the kettle or the jar of coffee. Lettering on the packaging would not fit or round itself to the cylinder of the jar; or, worse still, objects seemed to want to occupy the space which was already occupied by another object; or the table insisted on not being a flat surface where shadows could fall naturally and thus enhance the effect of space. Here also many candidates would be overworking their compositions and they would be losing the freshness of first sight. Some candidates in their quest to express form in pencil drawings had gone quite overboard and produced hideously cumbersome and featureless objects. In other instances colours were being applied unmixed and without tone. All of these points could cast a shadow on the award of marks.

At the very bottom end of the mark spectrum candidates were often unable to see or represent the form of objects, they showed little knowledge of how to handle their medium or to use colours and tone. Groups were scattered and objects unrelated. Objects may float in space or be presented in a confused muddle. The amount of marks that could be awarded here had to remain minimal.

Question 2

A bunch of bananas and several small fruits lie together on a striped cloth or green leaves

The answers to this question varied widely in standard. It attracted those who had ambitions to make a classic old world still life. And indeed there were some really beautiful still life watercolours and pencil drawings. The best watercolours were those that were freely painted, fresh and lively. That is not to say that candidates did not know exactly what they were up to. The best had learned their skills carefully and based their work on a sound understanding of the basic principles of their art. The best pencil drawings were also quite outstanding. Splendidly arranged groups had afforded candidates with well balanced compositions and plenty of opportunity to contrast and evolve differing textures and tones. It was particularly here where it was most noticeable that some candidates had taken note of the work of artists of a hundred years ago and eased their own work in similar directions.

The most able candidates had not only applied themselves to learning the basic skills but had brought to their work atmosphere and individuality. There were soft and sensitively felt watercolours and strongly lit and superbly contoured and boldly formed pencil drawings. Some had set themselves the added task of painting or drawing a bunch of bananas in a foreshortened way. Many had brought this off most impressively. Some had used the striped cloth most rewardingly not only to enhance folds in the material but to create depth and perspective in their pictures. A large number of works could command full or very high marks.

In the work of the middle standard candidates it was easily apparent that all of the Assessment Criteria had not been taken on board with a similar degree of accuracy and determination. The first thing was that some candidates had a poor viewpoint of the arrangement of objects or that the objects had not been arranged to the best advantage in the first place. Secondly the lighting could be poor or perhaps it was that these candidates knew very little about making the form of objects. Although weak in these aspects of the art many could and did respond fully to well chosen colours and subtle tones. Overall the work in this area was not very adventurous, over cautious and in some instances aesthetically very dull.

At the lower end of the scale, it was painfully obvious where some candidates did not understand or had not learned very much about this type of picture making. In fact, there did seem to be a larger percentage of quite unskilled work this year. This sort of work was typified by an insensitive approach to shapes and contours. Often the objects could be surrounded by a hard outline and the object had been filled in with flat colour or tone with no regard for all roundness or surface texture. Objects often found themselves out of relationship one with the other, vying with one another to occupy the same area of space. They did not rest easily on the table surface and could jump about above, sometimes in a quite isolated fashion. So often little attention had been given to the placement on the page and work could be up one corner or unhappily to one side. Colours could be crudely used without experiment or mixing. Sometimes they were used quite flatly and at other times in a messy and uncontrolled manner. Pencil drawings could be vague and sketchy.

Paper 6010/02

Drawing and/or Painting from Observation

General comments

Questions 1, 2 and 3, the study from natural or man-made objects, attracted an equal number of responses. As usual, very few candidates chose the subjects for working out-of-doors of **Questions 4 and 5**.

A very high level of expertise was seen in the use of watercolours and soft pencil, but pastel and charcoal were also used well in many submissions. The Examiners were grateful that all work likely to smudge had been properly sprayed with a fixative. However, some problems were caused because some Centres wrapped and firmly taped each candidate's work in tissue paper or plastic envelopes. This practice is unnecessary and results in damage to the work when the wrapping has to be removed before marking can begin.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

A handheld electrically powered tool for woodwork, metalwork or domestic use

This question was very successful, as candidates were able to choose from an interesting variety of specimens. The most advanced works showed a strong consideration of the point of view for observation, fully exploiting the arrangement of electrical wires and plugs to enhance spatial effects surrounding the main body of appliances. Precise analysis of structures, such as the fixings of attachments, switches and screws in the casement was apparent. A highly accomplished application of tone and colour was evident in the rendering of forms in relation to space, giving the studies unity through the observation of metal and plastic materials. At the mid-levels of achievement the overall form of objects had been completely rendered, but some uncertainties were apparent in the focus on intricate structures which were either defined vaguely or unrelated to the main body. In the less able, work forms and structures tended to very generalised through poor observation of shape and contour, and the application of tone or colour was disconnected from observation of the object affected by a particular source of light.

Question 2

Two bulbs, tubes or rhizomes, which may or may not be sprouting stems and roots

For this question also, an interesting variety of specimens were studied. The best responses resulted from a concern to observe the items from a stimulating viewpoint, or develop the potential for structural analysis by cutting cross sections into one of them. Strong observation of contour combined with precise definition of structural points, where stems and roots sprouted, and a subtle use of tone or colour to render forms in relation to a light source, distinguished the most able responses. Less able studies tended to bunch the two items together or study both from similar angles, thus limiting the potential to enliven the sense of space within and surround the specimens. However, at this level, tone and colour were usually applied effectively to render forms and give an overall unity to the studies. At the lower end of achievement, poorly defined shapes lacked any sense of form or structure and any awareness of spatial qualities was difficult to discern.

Question 3

An opened packet, can or jar of snacks, fruit, vegetables, pickles or preserves, with some of the contents on a plate

This question encouraged candidates to think carefully about the choice of items for the study. Consequently, the best responses showed a very personal sense of deliberation in focusing on particular packaging, cans or jars with distinctively designed labels. Tone and colour were used with expertise to render light falling on or reflected off shiny surfaces. Forms and structures were consciously related to spatial awareness within and surrounding the chosen objects. At the mid-levels of achievement, although the relationship of items in space showed a competent understanding, the rendering of structures such as the ellipses on cans, jars or plates were often vague. Sometimes, however, at this level the graphics on packets, cans or jars were well observed in relation to forms and contours. Less able responses tended to separate the plate from the packet, can or jar, revealing difficulties in the rendering of elliptical structures to create the necessary sense of volumes in space.

Question 4

Part of a building seen from above or below

Several successful studies were seen, for which candidates had chosen a stimulating viewpoint. Weaker work was flat and repetitive, showing a poor ability to organise spatial recession.

Question 5

A place where roads, paths or tracks meet

This question was chosen by only a few candidates, who nevertheless, offered interesting personal views of particular countryside locations.

<p>Paper 6010/04</p> <p>Composition in Colour</p>

General comments

Questions 1, 3 and 5 were the most popular, with less response for **Questions 2 and 4** and very few for **Question 6**. Over a third of submissions were of a high level of achievement and some of these were outstanding. However, there were more very poor attempts compared with previous years for the June session. Clearly, candidates who made the best use of the one week of preparatory time, to research and develop their ideas, built up the necessary confidence to realise their best potential. The weaker responses were noticeably lacking in imagination, visual references or the ability to communicate through pictorial organisation.

Almost all of the high level work was carried out in watercolours and acrylics, but some strong work using soft pastel and oil pastel was also seen. As in previous years some Centres were only able to provide candidates with pencil crayon, which usually led to weaker results through the lack of colour modulation and intensity. No examples were seen this year of the use of inappropriate dark paper and the Examiners were pleased that all the pastel work had been sprayed with fixative. However, the practice of taping each candidate's work in tissue paper or cellophane caused problems as considerable time had to be spent removing this wrapping, sometimes resulting in damage to scripts.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Selling by the roadside

This was the most popular question accessible to all levels of ability. The best responses invariably made use of the viewer's involvement in the scene by offering a close-up or a side view. This led to strong dynamic compositions juxtaposing produce against vendors through the use of dramatic angles and rhythms. Fruits, vegetables, ice-creams, confectioneries and all types of fast food were exploited for their rich varieties of shape and colours as were many characterful depictions of traders and customers. At the mid-levels of achievement selling points tended to be seen in isolation from surroundings and figures were less integrated with the scene or spread out very wildly within the picture space. However, work at this level often showed a sensitive observation of figures or the display of goods for sale. In the weaker work, depictions were nearly always from a frontal point of view with everything placed on horizontal parallel lines.

Question 2

An uncomfortable journey

Some excellent work was seen, clearly based on personal experiences. The most common interpretation depicted treks across difficult terrain with figures overloaded with luggage and children. Some very imaginative ideas for journeys by boat and train were also seen. Most candidates choosing this theme were able to communicate their ideas competently and only a few less successful attempts with poorly drawn figures and settings were received.

Question 3*Drying in the sun*

Also a very popular choice which inspired some of the most beautiful paintings. While laundry hanging out to dry was the most usual interpretation, fruit and vegetables preservation was also often depicted. The best work placed sensitivity studied learning, stretching and bending figures in richly atmospheric settings to evoke heat and evaporation. As with **Question 1**, mid-level attempts tended to disperse figures and buildings rather widely within the pictorial space, thus losing some sense of unity. There were, however, many very weak responses to the theme, some of which were little more than cartoons.

Question 4*Keeping children*

The best work was firmly based on personal experience with references to particular places such as markets with caged birds, a family farm or a backyard at home. Most responses, however, were of the mid to lower levels of ability. The weakest work clearly lacked any research, showing poorly formed birds and figures in very simplistic settings.

Question 5*A strange experience*

Many candidates attempted this theme, usually entirely from imagination as most ideas related to dream imagery. The most successful were based on studies of particular sources which had been developed towards more abstract expressions of unsettling ideas such as fear of catastrophe or visitations from the spirit world. There were also some impressive realist interpretations of drug and alcohol abuse. In such works strong rhythms and atmospheric tone or colour predominated. Less strong attempts suffered from the same problems of disconnected dispersal of elements with the picture space already referred to for other questions. There were far less poor responses for the theme but in these cases it was usually impossible to understand what was being depicted.

Question 6*Extract from 'The Voyage of the Challenges'*

Very few attempts were received, some of which reached a high level by evoking the drama of the event. Most candidates depicted rather calm seascapes, showing a literal rather than imaginative interpretation of the extract.

Paper 6010/06

Craft B – Coursework

General comments

There was quite a dramatic reduction in the number of candidates taking this Paper. This was a great pity because it is sad to see the possible tailing off of many regional traditional crafts. This year there were only submissions under the headings of Ceramics and Fabric Printing.

Comments on specific questions**Fabric printing**

The fabric printing consisted of screen printed designs on previously tie dyed material. The work had been well prepared beforehand with designs derived from natural sources and well developed in workbook sketches. The workbooks also contained samples of experimental tie dye and printed material. The tie dye background provided an interesting textured bed on which were printed a repeated pattern motif. The printing had been executed with careful control and craftsmanship and in well chosen and pleasingly limited colour combinations.

Ceramics

The ceramics arrived in a sorry state as the work had not been fired and had been smashed in transit. Photographs of the pieces had been thoughtfully included so that the marking of the work was possible. The pots had been made by thrown and thumb pressed methods. Shapes were simple and they had been embellished with incised decoration. On the whole the pieces could have shown a bit more ambition.