ART AND DESIGN

| Paper 0400/01 |
| Observational/Interpretative Assignment |

General comments

Submissions seen for **Section A** were mostly straightforward observational studies. Any interpretative responses were generally only seen for **Question 2** Two wristwatches of different sizes or styles, in this section.

A variety of interpretative approaches were attempted in **Section B**, ranging from Surreal; Fantasy, Abstract, and highly sophisticated conceptual pieces, as well as personal interpretations developed from the candidate's own experience.

Overall, **Question 1** was the most popular followed by **Question 8 and Question 9. Question 4** was the least popular choice.

Work from candidates at the upper level showed a real understanding of visual research and the development of ideas; utilising primary objective drawing and their own personal photography. Supporting sheets were well organised and included evidence of experimentation with a variety of processes and media, supported by annotation to further explain thought processes. Contextual references were relevant and their influences could be clearly seen in informing the candidates' own development. Thumbnail drawings or contact photographs of different compositions and viewpoints were used before editing for the final outcome.

Mid-level submissions were inconsistent in meeting the Assessment Objectives. Many who had made genuine first hand studies failed to develop them into a coherent final composition, or a lack of experience and confidence in handing media inhibited outcomes. Other candidates relied on secondary sources for their ideas thus inhibiting success in developing a personal response.

At the lower levels, supporting work was negligible, with many secondary source photographs simply cut and paste or poorly copied for final outcomes. All too often the candidates used the first idea or image without any further development or exploration of ideas. Inevitably, the candidates who had not made adequate preparations for the examination during the preparatory period had to rely on limited sources for their final piece and were unable to develop their work into convincing results.

Drawing and painted as a media is always the most popular, although those that attempted to combine both in the same composition rarely achieved an aesthetically pleasing result. However, much more expressive works were seen when paint or drawing was integrated with collage or combined with photographic images.

Photography and video submissions continue to be popular. The quality of the photographs was often technically sound, but considering the eight weeks preparation time, it was sometimes disappointing to see only six or eight photographs submitted as supporting work. The piece submitted as the examination piece was often one of the six or eight, which had been submitted as supporting work, and simply reproduced with some slight Photoshop®, and printed out in a larger version. Some candidates had included a CD or DVD which contained exactly the same material as was included on the mounted sheets. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on the development of ideas, as well as thorough investigations into the artistic aspects of lighting, composition, filters and so on. In addition, contextual or cultural resources as well as research on well known or local photographers could be included as part of the journey. In video, the focus was mainly on presenting a 'documentary' of events, with little focus on the artistic aspects of video making. At times the written content was excessive; visual content should predominately speak for itself.

A few fashion designs were seen especially in response to **Question 7** Style Icon. Others had used textile processes to resolve their ideas.

Only a few 3D submissions were seen and these were of a very weak standard.

Whilst the majority of Centres' administration was good and complied with the syllabus instructions there were still submissions fastened using paper clips; some final pieces submitted as stretched canvasses and a few including broken mirror glass or sharp Perspex. Centres are reminded to check the Appendix in the syllabus for inappropriate materials.

There was a noticeable increase in the volume of copious and often irrelevant written material. Whilst brief notation can help in explaining a candidate's thought process and intentions, long downloaded extracts detailing the history of a subject or process, or providing biographical details of artists is not necessary. Neither is the time spent embellishing mounted sheets of studies with decorated boarders or a main title page.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1; Fruit or vegetables and garden tools placed in a setting of your choice

This was the most popular question with responses covering the whole ability range.

The question tested candidates' abilities in recording the differences between natural forms and the garden tools in structure, colour and texture as well as their imagination in finding interesting viewpoints and compositions. The most able candidates demonstrated excellent observational skills and control of media to achieve all of these qualities. Thorough research using their own drawings and photographs, experimenting with a range of fruit and vegetables and compositions was evident. Thorough exploration of the form and shapes, cutting or slicing of the vegetables and fruit; experimentation with work on different grounds or paper such as torn paper and allowing exploration of tone through blending of oil pastel and dry pigment work, were very effective. Some connection to other artists or work in this genre informed their ideas. Attention had been given to the setting of the group with arrangements being placed in a garden setting, or against old boxes or the corner of a garden shed.

Mid level submissions relied too heavily on copying photographs of their group or making studies of single objects without attention to arrangements or viewpoints. Many had demonstrated sound technical skills within their examination piece but were let down by a limited range of preparatory work.

Entries at the lower level lacked basic drawing skills or an understanding of the spatial relationship of one object to another. The group was often placed with too much space around, making the objects less significant. Little or no consideration had gone into the setting of the group.

An interpretative approach was adopted by a few candidates. Patterns, forms, textures and structures of dissected fruit and vegetables were taken from carefully observed studies and developed into complex abstract paintings. The journey towards the final abstraction was clearly shown within the supporting studies and results fully justified marks in the upper range.

Question 2; Two wristwatches of different sizes or styles

The ability to analyse and record detail and to draw accurate ellipses was fully tested here. Rendering the reflective surfaces of the objects and making good use of the scale of the images in relation the format of the paper was a real challenge.

The most successful candidates were able to organise the watches into successful compositions, often to dramatic effect. The intricate structure of the watches and their straps was excellent. Considerable skill was shown in the construction of concentric ellipses especially where the numbers were constructed on the watch face. Shadows incorporated reflections of light from metallic parts of the watches as well as complex patterns of shadows within shadows caused by multiple light sources.

A few stunning photographic entries were seen, and many candidates used the opportunity to observe wrists and hands with all the challenges that they bring.

Mid range submissions showed problems with analysing detail, with ellipses misshaped, although there was evidence of competent handling of media to record light and shadow. Many candidates resorted to copying either their own photographs or images from catalogues.

Weaker submissions were characterised by a great deal of cut and paste imagery, particularly in their supporting studies. Evidence of drawing skills was weak and often not seen until the final examination. Compositions were very flat and any attempts at analysing details of structure were based on formulaic pattern rather than close observation.

However, there were more attempts at interpretation with this question than any other. The most obvious development was based on a Surrealist approach using Dali's melting watches. However there were also some very inventive compositions using the repeating patterns on the wristbands to make decorative motifs.

Question 3; A partially-eaten cake on a plate

This question provided the opportunity to explore a variety of surfaces and textures and tested abilities in drawing ellipses. Many were inspired by referencing the work of Wayne Thiebaud and Andy Warhol and these had informed the candidates' colour palettes.

There were some excellent renditions of the grainy texture of the cake and thick creamy texture of icing contrasting with the pearlescent, semi translucent quality of the china plate.

In weaker candidates, a lack of exploring a range of compositions was evident in their preparatory studies. Even those who had made extensive use of their own photography to capture a number of different cakes had used the same camera angle and viewpoint.

There were far fewer very weak entries.

Question 4; A figure holding a brush or broom as if sweeping the floor.

The few candidates who chose this question were generally confident in figure drawing and had made many studies from friends and family or people they had seen sweeping the floor.

Supporting work included some good personal photographs as well as studies from different viewpoints and details of hands holding a broom stick.

A few had successfully recorded the figure bent over sweeping with a smaller hand brush.

Some very convincing studies of the model were let down by very poor made up backgrounds.

Section B

Question 5; Changed landscape

This question gave candidates the opportunity to work from observations in their own environment to record changes of light, weather, seasons or the effects of urbanisation on the landscape.

At the upper level some excellent use of composition, viewpoint, colour and texture was seen, supported by strong primary sourced drawings, colour studies and personal photographs.

Research into the work of Monet's series paintings, Cezanne, Van Gogh and David Hockney had informed and led to Expressionist styles of work. The pixilation of imagery combined with Pointillist techniques resulted in some very successful abstraction of subject matter with transparent overlays of colour.

Some mid level submissions demonstrated proficient painting skills but the subject was copied from secondary photographs, sometimes of landscapes far removed from the candidate's own locality.

At the lower level, there was a lack of research and development. There were several compositions of a scene divided down the middle with one half painted as day and the other as night.

Question 6; Folding structures

Some interesting interpretations of this question were submitted by relatively few candidates, ranging from still-life approaches to abstraction and photorealism. Several candidates presented sculptural outcomes, the more ambitious of which incorporated printed imagery which was changed and distorted by the folding process. Some paper relief using the folds of a Japanese fan developing into waves inspired by Hokusia were very successful.

Umbrellas, scissors, Japanese fans and folded clothes were all used as subjects for still-life compositions. Others made observations of origami, folding flower petals, and studies of the human body in contorted poses which were developed into more abstract forms.

Weaker candidates found it difficult to come up with convincing imagery that communicated anything other than a rather literal response with unrelated embellishments added for interest.

Question 7; Style icon

Candidates in the mid ability range performed particularly well to this question, and results did not veer much from the inevitable and predictable derivative imagery of celebrities developed from second hand sources.

However, there were a few examples where candidates, having researched qualities seen in images of chosen celebrities, conducted their own photo shoots with friends acting out some of the iconic images they were known by.

There were attempts at referencing other aspects of the title, and items such as coke cans, perfume bottles and other iconic brands offered more opportunities for first hand study. Unfortunately copies of photographs or downloaded images which were traced and transcribed with little personal input.

Question 8; Façades

Building façades were the most common interpretation with juxtaposed building fronts in a range of architectural styles being presented in the form of a street scene.

The best work demonstrated an understanding and ability to render surface textures created by age and weathering and of surfaces being changed by strong sunlight and shadow.

Weaker submissions concentrated on flat two-dimensional interpretations, mainly decorated with patterns and colours totally unrelated to the buildings' shapes.

Other submissions had developed more psychological interpretations of false facial expressions with the use of masks - partially hiding the face, or to convey political ideas through the notion of repression with blindfolds and the like. Self portraits were used as excellent starting points from which to develop into strong emotive and expressive compositions. Distortion was achieved through digital manipulation and there was one outstanding example of many tiny photographic images of building façades which were then pixilated onto a self portrait.

Question 9; Playing

This was the most popular question from **Section B**, with submissions from across the whole ability range.

Chess pieces, draughts, cards and other board games were popular choices. These were recorded from different angles and explored in paint from initial photographic research. These were generally very successful especially when influences on Surrealism had informed their development.

Other successful submissions demonstrated an awareness of the possibilities involved in recording the movement of figures participating in a sport or play activity. Very successful Futurist interpretations were seen which used free flowing brush strokes to record the movement of skateboarders or surfers.

At the mid level, some good observational studies of toys, which explored different scales and hands playing musical instruments, were seen. Others had focused on the play activities of animals, especially cats. Research was good but outcomes were less expressive and generally copies from one or more research photographs.

Lower level work lacked an understanding of composition and the relationship of objects in space. Chess pieces and cards were randomly scattered across the page. There were many copies of footballers poorly copied from a single photograph, or in some cases traced.

Question 10; Digital dreams

This question was very open ended and unfortunately the majority of submissions were more reliant on secondary sources from magazine illustrations or downloaded images.

However, the very best work demonstrated highly imaginative and individual approaches often linked to research from digital cameras. Others investigated a more perceptual and mathematical approach. Binary codes were often incorporated into compositions, and the fusion of observed imagery with mathematical patterns and distortions produced work of some maturity.

Mid to lower level submissions featured studies of robots, cyborgs and human heads metamorphosing to machines. The lack of research from first hand experience resulted in derivative imagery which showed a weak grasp of the formal elements of the subject, especially proportion, structure and tone.

Some candidates' work appeared to be unrelated to the topic, e.g. a study of peacocks.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02

Design Assignment

General

Examiners saw a range of work submitted by candidates across all levels of ability. There were many examples of responses which showed an understanding of the assessment criteria, where candidates had conducted first hand personal research, developed a personal and original idea and produced a successful final piece, demonstrating control and skill with the chosen media.

The best submissions not only understood the need for preparatory research but were also able to focus this research carefully, so that it had clear relevance to the eventual theme that was chosen. There is a big difference between a haphazard collection of photographs from books and magazines and a first-hand researched set of images that guide the development of the personal response.

Insufficient or poorly conceived research inevitably handicaps a candidate from the outset. It is extremely unlikely that work which scores poorly for Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 will develop into a final piece of a very high quality. A good range of ideas and images at the beginning really does provide a firm launch pad for the rest of the process.

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

Overall the most popular question, with around 22% of the responses was **Question 4(a)** which was the costume design to the theme 'Jazz in the Jungle'. **Question 3**, was nearly as popular and this asked for a repeat pattern to the theme of tools or screws, nuts and bolts. **Question 2(a)**, the book cover design, was also popular with around 20%. **Question 4(b)**, the poster design, was answered by around 17% and **Question 1**; the logo design was attempted by about 14%. The other three questions all had smaller numbers responding.

Once again, examiners reported that it appeared as if some candidates had added pieces of existing coursework to the Supporting Studies instead of producing unique work solely in response to the question paper.

Some Centres encourage their candidates to practice the final design prior to the formal eight hour examination. Whilst some planning is clearly a good thing, candidates can lose the freshness and energy of their work if they are forced to the same design twice or more before they even step into the examination room.

Good teaching during the preparatory period must involve some initial help and advice but it was apparent that some Centres over direct their candidates. Clearly there were some Centres were candidates were afforded little or no choice when it came to the question attempted. There were also some Centres where the responses by all candidates were following a rigid formula that removes the ability of the candidate to create a truly personal and individual response.

Notes, annotations and some written information can be very useful to the candidate in helping them form their ideas, and to the Examiner in helping understand the thinking of the candidate. However, there are an increasing number of submissions seen with large amounts of text downloaded, often with not very relevant biographical information about an artist or designer.

The higher scoring candidates usually research professional artists and designers and this helps them develop their own original ideas. Not enough candidates look at professional poster design, book cover design or modern graphic design. A more critical eye over fashion design, costume and theatre design would also help. This is not to say that research into Fine Art is not appropriate. For instance, there were some very good responses to the Time Travel question which had developed from research into Surrealism.

Traditional culture, both national and regional can also prompt some exciting responses. There were some good costume designs which had been developed from studies on traditional and historical costumes.

A range of media were used by the candidates but water based inks, paints and colour pencils tended to dominate. Many candidates demonstrated a high skill level with the materials, suggesting good teaching techniques in many Centres.

Digital work, both involving original photography and the manipulation of images continues to grow in significance. There were some very good examples of hand drawn and painted images being manipulated digitally and then featuring in the final presentation.

However, it is not necessary to hand render a final design that was entirely created on the computer. The digital image can be a sufficient response, provided that it is original, answers the question and meets the criteria of the assessment objectives.

Whilst the majority of Centres send in well labelled and attractively presented submissions there are a number that are inadequately labelled, with the work not always secured properly and with the final exam piece at the bottom of the submission and not at the top. It would be appreciated by the Examiners if teaching staff could adhere to the regulations regarding presenting and packaging the work.

A piece of string tying the work together loosely in the top left hand corner is the best way of securing the work together. Mounting work on thick card is unnecessary, not only does it make the work more difficult to handle but it also more expensive to send.

If digital files can be easily printed out and if the electronic nature of the submission is not crucial to the finished piece then it is much quicker and easier for the Examiners to look at a hard copy. However, it may well be that the candidate has produced an animation, a video or a changing set of digital images and a disc or memory stick may be more appropriate.

Comments upon Specific Questions

Question 1

This asked candidates to design a logo for a kitchen utensils company. The logo should then be shown on a shop front and a sales assistant's apron. There were opportunities here to research kitchen equipment, kitchen design, shop façades and uniforms and overalls.

Many candidates simply did not research the subject matter at first hand. The weaker candidates tended to find their imagery in electronic catalogues or clip art. There should not have been any difficulty in finding first hand material. A candidate who borrows imagery rather than produces their own whilst is unlikely to develop a personal and creative outcome.

Weaker candidates often did not develop and experiment with their initial ideas. The Examiners saw a great deal of repetition of simple, basic logos with perhaps different colour or tonal schemes.

The lettering in both the logo design and the shop front was not considered by many of the candidates. Easy solutions were grabbed from the first example found on the web and then often poorly hand drawn. Not all the weaker candidates showed the logo on a shop front or an apron as asked by the question.

Some candidates failed to appreciate that the logo was for a kitchen utensils company and not a restaurant.

Stronger candidates conducted more original research in both kitchens and in the streets. This research was then recorded by a camera or hand drawn which was the further enhanced with research into professional designers, which then added to the quality of the candidate's own thinking.

Good work showed an understanding of scale, pattern, colour and form, a careful consideration of typefaces and some knowledge of successful logos.

Some final presentations were very strong with good work submitted in water based media or markers, or produced digitally. Stronger candidates provided convincing images of shop fronts and aprons. These had obviously been based on first hand research and were all the stronger for it.

Question 2(a)

This question asked candidates to design a book cover on the theme of Time Travel. Weaker candidates did not address the specific problems of book cover design. The need to provide an attractive and eye catching image which gives some clue to the content of the book, the use of lettering, the placement of the title and the author's name and the front, spine and back format of the design. The very weakest presented a picture with a science fiction theme that had no direct connection to book cover design.

The question was popular with mid range candidates who provided some imaginative ideas involving clocks, timers, spirals, cars, trains, tunnels and staircases. Often this work was held back by the lack of first hand, personal research.

The very best candidates usually drew and photographed from directly from life. Fine Art provided a background to the development of creative ideas. Digital manipulation offered an opportunity to create some dreamlike imagery. Good work showed some understanding of the nature and purpose of book cover design. In these instances, the title, the author's name, details of the book, a bar code and a price all added to the professional qualities of the work.

There was some evidence of intelligent use of images from the film and television industries.

Question 2(b)

Candidates were asked to develop their own design brief based on a statement. Perhaps the breadth of the idea frightened many candidates from attempting the task but there opportunities to create illustrative designs, produce some calligraphy, design a cover, poster or an advert or equally something else. Research could have centred on figures, people, situations or places both historical and modern. Portraits of family members or friends both young and old could have provided a way into this.

Very few candidates actually identified a specific design brief. There were a few examples of fashion design and illustration work which were well researched and carefully presented. Some candidates used photography to good effect and then developed a digital response. Some stronger candidates carefully considered the lettering, not only the choice of type but placement and scale as well.

Less successful work tended to have insufficient primary or even secondary research. There was very little evidence of traditional calligraphy skills and not a great deal of evidence of the consideration of different fonts.

Question 3

The candidates were asked to generate a repeat pattern from studies of two or more tools or items such as screws, nuts and bolts. There were many opportunities here for research into tools and other objects. The tools could have been traditional or modern. The original studies could have been conducted within in a context, such as a workshop or the objects could have been studied in isolation. It was important that some understanding of the concept of repeat patterns was demonstrated.

This question produced a high volume of observational studies. The majority of candidates found the subject matter very accessible. Some worked from catalogues and websites but most would have appeared to have had objects in front of them. Some drawings were rather simplistic line studies that concentrated on shape. Others were more detailed with an understanding of form and texture.

To progress from an individual image of a tool to a pattern many used tracing paper or digital software. The developmental work often offered several different possibilities to the final choice of design. Good teaching meant that some candidates understood repeat grids, mirror repeats, half drops and the need for balance between positive and negative shapes. Some less successful candidates were let down by an inability to repeat the pattern properly. Some found that over time the tracing paper would not provide the sharpness of line required.

In some Centres, the quality of work was good or very good but sometimes a little too formulaic in its construction. A balance between good teaching techniques and the possibility of allowing the candidate to inject a little more personality into the work should be considered.

The choice of media was usually appropriate although some candidates tried to hand colour detailed patterns with pastels, usually with little success. The question increasingly attracts some digital responses

and these can be very well researched and developed. Some candidates seem to think that it is necessary to revert to a hand rendered image for the final piece which is not the case.

Question 4(a)

The themes of jazz and the jungle suggested research in the areas of plants, foliage, animals, musical instruments and figure studies of figures and dancers. The task here was to design a costume, mask or headdress for music and dance production.

The question attracted candidates across the mark range. Some candidates produced strong examples of fashion drawing with some understanding of the human figure. A number of candidates actually made costumes, headdresses and masks which were then well documented with photographs. In some cases items were actually sent in with the design sheets. Feathers, beads, recycled materials were sometimes added to the garments and masks.

The best results showed some reference to professional fashion design or perhaps, traditional costume and demonstrated an understanding of constructing a garment. A few candidates researched the theatre and dance but perhaps not enough did. The highest marks reflected a candidate's engagement with the subject and an experimental attitude to media and techniques.

Some candidates had little understanding of figure or fashion drawing, and did not carry out any contextual research and borrowed their final idea from some found source rather than trying to generate something more personal and individual.

It appeared that very few Centres teach discrete fashion illustration skills.

Many candidates had not explored the reality of the jungle. There were designs involving animals, plants and people who had little or nothing to do with a jungle. Popular cinema provided some short cut solutions for a number of candidates.

Question 4(b)

This asked candidates to design a poster for the production mentioned in the previous question. The opportunities for first hand research were the same as **Question 4(a)**.

Some quite successful final outcomes were let down by insufficient primary and secondary research. A few candidates made some good first hand studies of musical instruments, though these were not always instruments associated with jazz. In the best examples these research drawings were then developed into convincing and colourful designs. Some creative thinking saw musical instruments, plants and animals overlap and interact to create bright lively work.

The graphic design of the 1920s and the jazz era influenced some candidates and in the best cases the work was personal yet clearly placed within an existing design context. The subject matter encouraged bright colour and an experimental handling of media. The expressionist artists of the first half of the twentieth century were also referred to by several candidates.

Less successful work was usually let down by poor research, a failure to consider the role of a poster and not enough consideration of the lettering. In several cases the posters were hardly legible.

Question 5

The question asked for a circular mural design for a museum which celebrated 100 years of aviation. The candidates were asked to show how the design would look in situ.

The candidates could have researched flight, even if a museum or airport was not readily available, good models of planes would have made for a fair alternative. Similarly, museums or other public buildings would have offered suitable opportunities for direct study.

Very few of the designs addressed the circular nature of the question. Many produced a conventional rectangle and simply left it at that. A few tried to draw the design in correct perspective and one or two created a strip design and gave instructions on how to view this in a circular way.

Two candidates from one Centre had visited a smaller airfield and drew and took photos of planes, a few had gone to transport museums but many relied on secondary sources. Lettering was rarely considered as an integral, important part of the design.

Question 6

This question asked for a kinetic sculpture to stand in a courtyard of a science and technology college. The candidates were asked to show this would appear from two different viewpoints.

This theme could have generated research into scientific and technical apparatus, college buildings and existing public sculptures.

There were very few submissions for this question. Those that did offer work generally did not understand the word kinetic. There was very little evidence of movement, actual or visual.

There was very little research into modern sculpture and few studies of public buildings. However, one candidate did drop their sculpture design into a public space with the aid of Photoshop®.

Some characteristics of good work;

- The candidate has fully understood and researched the question
- The submission begins with firsthand experience and observation
- The theme is fully explored and has been developed during eight week preparatory period
- Media and materials are used with control and a sense of experimentation
- The candidates are familiar with the elements of the visual language
- The time spent in the exam room is fully used
- The candidate reflects on their own work during the entire process

ART AND DESIGN

> **Paper 0400/03**
>
> **Critical and Historical Assignment**

The number of candidates choosing this component increases each session and it is good to see that teachers are increasingly aware of the opportunities that this component provides, particularly as an introduction to the future demands of an A level Personal Study.

General comments

More than half of all the work assessed achieved the upper levels of the mark range and among these were a number of excellent or outstanding submissions. However, around 10% of the submissions offered a less-than-adequate response. Teachers are reminded that assistance and advice is available from the Teacher Support Site (http://teachers.cie.org.uk/login/login_form), where a discussion group led by a Principal Examiner, in addition Centres are reminded that they can submit an Outline Proposal Form (OPF) prior to the start of the assignment.

It was noted that where no OPF had been submitted, the work tended to be weaker. Candidates should be encouraged to focus on their intentions and outline their intentions and sources for first-hand study before they start to plan and organise their work. Evidence suggests that those Centres who make full use of this service achieve better outcomes than those who do not.

Clearly the majority of candidates had received very effective advice and support from their teachers. Candidates appeared motivated in relation to their main interests, which led to the identification of accessible sources for first-hand investigation. The use of local sources had encouraged a focus on the work of particular practitioners or specific sites as well as the potential for comparisons with international or mainstream examples from books or the Internet. Further guidance from teachers had led to productive gathering of information, thorough selection and organisation of visual and written material and the structure, sequence and presentation of the submissions. Advice to focus on a selection of examples encouraged personal analyses, comparisons and evaluations, sometimes relating back to candidates' own classroom experiences as well as a growing awareness of cultural and/or historical contexts.

Many candidates were therefore able to offer a very good balance between personal classroom interests, first-hand investigations from galleries, exhibitions, practitioners' studios, and sites, and other examples from secondary sources. In the less successful submissions, however, such a balance was not apparent as there was a predominant focus on the candidate's own work without any reference to historical or contemporary practice, or a complete focus on information from secondary sources without any first-hand investigation or relationship to classroom experiences.

Comments on various levels of achievement

Higher Levels

Many outstanding submissions were seen which met all of the Assessment Objectives to the highest levels. Such achievements were exceptionally well sustained, coherently structured and elegantly presented. They were also focused and clearly personal in their practical and written analyses and evaluations.

An encouraging number of candidates also produced excellent submissions which showed considerable enthusiasm for carefully chosen topics which were strongly motivated by direct experience of the selected work of artists, designers, sculptors, photographers, craft workers or architects, in relation to their main classroom interests. A very stimulating range of local practitioners' work and architectural sites were focused on to inform analyses, comparisons and critical understanding.

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Thorough planning of layout and presentation led to a variety of inventive formats with sensitive mounting on distinctive papers to create a variety of visually exciting juxtapositions of text and image. Both in handwritten examples and those produced through computer processes, a concern for the sequence and integration of selected visual and written material, making use of notations, headings and sub-headings, offered a refined clarity of communication.

Mid Levels

The majority of submissions showed a competent level of research, organisation and presentation. There was some evidence of personal commitment, interest and enthusiasm, leading to articulate written descriptions of works, but less concern to engage in practical analyses or comparisons. In some cases, lengthy interviews with practitioners were recorded verbatim but with little or no analysis or comment.

Computer processes were used well to organise and integrate visual and written material, usually within conventional A4 size formats. Some handwritten submissions at this level were quite difficult to read because of the combinations of various media – for example, silver ink on coloured textured paper or writing on plastic sheets laid over illustrations.

There were no doubts that first-hand familiarity with the works focused on had motivated a personal interest in the investigation, but there was also a tendency to place more emphasis on works of international renown which were only accessible from books or the Internet. Better results were apparent when these examples were compared with the research from local sources

Lower Levels

The submissions which did not meet the Assessment Objectives evenly enough to achieve more than an adequate response invariably showed a heavy reliance on secondary information from books or the Internet.

Sources for first-hand investigation were either uncertain or patchy - for example, a few photographs of the candidate meeting an artist or designer were offered as evidence of visits to studios or workshops, but there were no further comments or focus on any particular works. Surveys of media and processes often lacked personal analysis or even simple references to the contexts, styles, themes or aesthetic qualities of any particular works. Such approaches offered very few attempts to make comparisons or critical judgements.

References to classroom experiences were sparse or difficult to find, and very little consideration had been given to the structure, sequence and presentation of the material. Conversely, some submissions were concerned wholly or mostly with analyses of the candidate's own classroom work, with little or no reference to the work of others. A small number of submissions concerned themselves with entirely inappropriate topics – for instance: *'Tourism', 'Poverty'* or *'Ice Cream'* – with no references to any works of art or design.

Some submissions included no more than two or three illustrations which were poorly reproduced and which were given uncertain or inaccurate notations. Covers, titles, introductions and bibliographies were often neglected, as if the submission were the product of last-minute compilations rather than a planned project in relation to specific intentions (which, in most cases, were unknown as an OPF had not been submitted). Some assignments were bolstered with irrelevant scrap-book cuttings, interviews and questionnaires, unselected biographies, chronological lists and regurgitated technical manuals which led nowhere in terms of informing personal evaluations. So much more could have been achieved, especially in relation to classroom achievements.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04

Coursework Assignment

General comments

Most candidates followed a Painting and Related Media course of study. Textile and Photography work were also quite popular areas of study. The vast majority of candidates demonstrated that throughout their course of study they had been taught to use a variety of approaches and a range of media. Many demonstrated a secure grasp of basic drawing techniques.

The very best submissions were from candidates who had fully engaged with their chosen subject in a project that had been designed to extend over many weeks. Themes or topics were carefully selected to provide opportunities to collect a range of visual information from first hand observation and experience through drawing, colour studies and the candidate's own photography. The use of visual stimuli within their own locality, or using friends and family as sources of information enabled candidates to revisit the subject a number of times and to make records under different lighting or changes of weather. This provided a range of visual information from which the processes of exploration and development could begin. As ideas were generated they were supplemented with additional information from secondary sources. There was evidence of research being conducted into the work of other artists or cultures and it was clear that this informed the candidate's own development. Ideas were explored using a range of media and processes. The use of digital manipulation proved very successful in combining or distorting images and colours. There was evidence of planning for the final outcome with a number of design alternatives, or different compositions explored on a small scale or through thumbnail digital prints. This resulted in finished pieces which were often ambitious in scale and demonstrated sustained effort over a period of time. Such entries were mature both in concept and execution and reflected highly individual personal qualities.

Less successful work usually demonstrated a proficient level of technical ability but sometimes a lack of adequate research limited the range of visual material that these candidates could use in developing their ideas. In other cases insufficient time had been given to exploring and experimenting with materials and processes. On occasions the reverse applied and there was evidence of extensive research and exploration, but the final outcomes were lacking in basic drawing skills or design experience. The weakest work was often highly derivative. Research was usually confined to cutting and pasting images from magazines, catalogues or downloading from the Internet. Generally an image was selected and copied, or in some cases traced, for the final piece. The amount of work submitted was usually thin in quantity, suggesting that the project had comprised only a few hours work.

Organisation and presentation of submissions was generally of a very good standard. The best studies had been carefully selected, arranged and mounted on sheets to provide a logical sequence of how a candidate had arrived at their final outcome. When written notes were used these were short, relevant and gave an indication of a candidate's thought processes. There was some evidence of a lack of care and attention to presentation. A number of individual studies were not glued down very well and came apart during moderation. In others too much work was included and it is better practice to select the best quality pieces. Some candidates wrote copious notes detailing the historical background of the subject, documenting a technical process, or providing a biography of a chosen artist which was unnecessary. Others spent too much time including heavily embellished title pages, mind-maps, or border decorations around each of the mounted sheets. These take candidates some considerable time but add little to the quality of the final submission.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

Entries for this area were diverse, both in subject matter and processes. Still life was a popular choice as was work based on exploring aspects of 'The Self Portrait'. Most work was figurative, although some candidates had attempted (with varying degrees of success) more abstract approaches. Some were

influenced by other artistic styles, most notably Surrealism, Cubism, Impressionism and Pop Art. Painting processes dominated. Many had combined paint with drawn images but this was rarely successful in terms of Aesthetic Qualities. Much more successful were combinations of photography and painting, or studies where photographs had been collaged into compositions and overdrawn or worked into with paint. Photography was extensively used as a means of visual research and of exploring different arrangements or viewpoints in still life subjects. It was also useful in providing interesting combinations of images when scanned and digitally manipulated. Less successful submissions might have been improved if the range and thoroughness of first-hand research and exploration had been more extensive. Weaker submissions generally contained insufficient material from which to explore and develop ideas, and the resulting final outcomes were little more than skilful copies from one source. Some of the weakest work consisted of only a few sketches or laborious, but poorly executed, copies from secondary sources.

Photography

The most effective submissions were characterised by evidence of extensive research with the camera, documented with many thumbnail contact prints showing a variety of viewpoints, camera angles and scenes under different lighting conditions. Digital enhancement or image manipulation was relevant in the development of the candidates' intentions. Final outcomes demonstrated an excellent Aesthetic awareness as well as high levels of technical control. Less successful entries were generally technically competent but were lacking in terms of research and exploration through digital manipulation. In these pieces the final results appeared simply as a series of snap shots. A few narrative DVDs were submitted which were not supported by storyboards or sufficient research. Although the physical handling of the camera and the use of some digital devices was technically competent, the relationship between form and content exposed any weakness in preparation and thorough investigation of potential ideas.

Textile Design

The best submissions seen were Fashion and Textile Design. Ideas were developed into final garments some included in the portfolio, others submitted by good quality photographs. There was evidence of first hand research with detailed drawings and candidates' own photography from natural forms, flowers, shellfish, and architectural features. Candidates demonstrated skills in design development and fashion illustration as well as skills in pattern cutting and sewing. Some successful batik, tie-dye and stencil printing processes were carried through to ambitious final outcomes. Again these submissions demonstrated in depth research from primary sources and with many referencing local cultural artefacts. Weaker work, while demonstrating competent craft skills, might have been improved by the inclusion of more evidence of first hand research or more thorough exploration of ideas or processes.

Graphic Design

The best submissions demonstrated an excellent range of research and exploration with candidates using both their own photography as well as drawings. Alternative design solutions were explored before producing final ideas as logos, letterheads and advertising material. There were some examples of candidates taking a formulaic approach and their outcomes were therefore lacking in Personal Qualities. Others had produced designs using computer generated imagery, and drawing was unfortunately restricted to transcriptions of their own digital work. Some very high quality illustration work was seen. Candidates had applied this approach to book covers and CD/DVD covers. The work was informed by a strong creative sensibility and understanding of formal design elements.

3D Studies

Work in this area included ceramics and sculpture. There were some ambitious clay modelled sculptures which had been cast and set in fibreglass. Other successful submissions had creatively exploited the properties of materials used with some unexpected results emerging from a range of experiments. In some cases approaches from other areas were used to compliment 3D work, such as the inclusion of good quality graphic design work to advertise an exhibition of the candidates' own ceramics. Weaker submissions often demonstrated good craft skills but were lacking in aesthetic qualities. This was largely a result of the candidate focusing on the construction process rather than on initial research or exploring a range of ideas and processes. In such cases the supporting material was largely confined to photographs of the work in progress rather than evidence of research, exploration and development.