

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/01 Coursework

Key messages

- The most successful submissions contained carefully organised work that followed the natural sequence of the creative process. Some candidates would have benefited from being more selective and could have edited their work more effectively, to show their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed.
- Many candidates had thoughtfully explored an appropriate range of sources from first-hand study. This included detailed observational studies in a range of media, in addition to photography which explored the theme in depth. However, others had over relied on downloaded images, which undermined their personal vision and limited an individual response.

General comments

Submissions were well presented and many portfolios showed a thoughtful and sustained body of work. Most submissions demonstrated an intention and submissions contained a central focus and ideas developed around the theme. Topics were personal and were explored through a range of materials. Most submissions were realised within the area of fine art, which included candidates' own supporting photography. Other examples contained design-based work.

Candidates presented imaginative responses to their starting points, interpreting individual ideas from a range of sources. The subject matter was varied and each submission contained a different focus which demonstrated individual engagement. Sources were often accessible and included cultural investigations of pattern, colour, texture and movement through the exploration of festivals, celebration and dance. Ideas depicting masked faces and the portrayal of isolation were explored through portraiture and other interpretative depictions. Candidates explored their emotions of feeling trapped, suppressed or locked in through invented scenarios, put together from first-hand study.

Higher level

This work was purposeful, sustained and always informed by first-hand observation. Visual connections between the research, experimentation and the refinement of imagery were well presented to demonstrate the journey, and insightful annotation supported and informed development. Intentions were clear and ideas were focused. Intelligent connections with the works of artists were made and these informed the work within a critical context. Online gallery visits and candidate interviews with artists had been carried out to good effect. Questions focused on relevant information regarding the artists' concepts or media use, rather than on biographical details and made a strong impact on development. Candidates carried out their research in depth, with an excellent visual analysis of resources through intricate and detailed observational studies.

Candidates explored a range of materials while investigating the creative possibilities within their sources. They were able to select relevant media to demonstrate their excellent knowledge of the inherent qualities within materials. The execution was accomplished and mature. Candidates showed confidence and vigour through pencil and paint into collage, relief work, surface pattern and printing. Candidates also made good use of photography and thoughtfully considered the quality of the image in terms of composition, lighting and viewpoints, which complemented their supporting studies.

The portfolios often demonstrated the candidates' strongest work and contained appropriate and extensive recording. They highlighted an ability to try things out and discover new effects as the work evolved. Imagery was developed through continuous reflection. Analysis of other practitioners' work challenged

preconceptions and candidates critically evaluated their progress to enable the creative refinement of ideas. Individual themes inspired personal direction and each submission contained vital recording, making a positive impact on development.

Middle level

Candidates explored ideas with commitment while demonstrating engagement with their theme. The work was sustained, showing a consistent response to each Assessment Objective. Appropriate sources had been identified for investigation, and some candidates explored these in depth. The recording was purposeful and demonstrated good levels of technical skill. Some candidates explored the works of art practitioners and cultural referencing to move their ideas forward, but others were less able to analyse relevant information to inform materials handling, development or to encourage a personal response. Candidate intentions were evident, but some submissions lacked the focus and direction required to produce a fully coherent portfolio of work.

There was some competent research through a range of recording processes. Drawings, paintings, media experiments and photography demonstrated competent manipulation. However, inconsistencies in media rendering were seen in work at this level. Candidates selected appropriate media for their intention, but some lacked the confidence to take risks while investigating and this limited the scope for creativity. Others explored their materials with a real sense of purpose and were inventive in combining their media but demonstrated a lack of confidence in executing their experimental ideas in the final form.

Many candidates made good use of research to produce experimental work and manipulated their imagery through focused investigations. However, the development of ideas was varied. Some candidates were less able to use their recording to develop and manipulate new imagery. Once they had decided on an idea for their final outcome, the refinement often lacked coherence. There was evidence of bringing different aspects of their work together, but this was not explored with the same level of focus as work at the higher level. Exploring alternative layouts, colour palettes or materials would have enabled stronger compositions. Other work reflected a disconnection between the supporting work and the final outcome, and more planning would have benefited development. The final outcomes did not always reflect the strengths seen within the portfolios and did not demonstrate the candidates' strongest ideas.

Lower level

Research from original sources was often lacking at this level and candidates often relied on second-hand imagery as the starting point for exploration. The poor quality of recording negatively impacted on portfolio progression, limiting the scope for the development of meaningful ideas. There was little evidence of direction or purpose in these submissions, leading to incoherent research. Research skills were seen in some of the work and a range of imagery had been collected. Sometimes this was from direct observation from the candidates' surroundings, but candidates were not always able to direct this recording into a focused and creative journey. They were often not able to reflect critically on the progress of their recording or to decide what was relevant to the theme. Other supporting work was disconnected and unclear, with some submissions containing several projects pieced together with little coherence.

Those candidates who referenced the works of others were unable to make relevant connections to coherently inform their own ideas. Others who attempted to replicate the artists' methods of material rendering demonstrated stronger technical skills than when representing their own imagery. This showed an ability to visually analyse and apply the formal elements, but these candidates were less confident in developing their personal responses through the use of media.

Candidates explored a range of materials in the supporting work but the ability to refine technical skills was limited. There was little skilful exploration of texture, pattern, form and colour, and further development opportunities with media were missed. These candidates were unable to recognise their strengths or the ability to reflect on their work to refine ideas. Annotation tended to be biographical and did not add any value to the progression of ideas. Much of the work lacked the appropriate engagement and made little progress from initial thoughts. The final outcome often remained disconnected to the supporting work, rather than evolving from a progression of ideas.

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Paper 9479/02 Externally Set Assignment
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Key messages

- Many candidates used a combination of recording approaches, including from direct observation and stronger submissions did not reply only on the Internet.
- Candidates should label their own photography to clearly distinguish them from images that are taken from secondary sources, such as those downloaded from the Internet or from books.
- Candidates working at the higher levels were able to select and edit their work effectively to demonstrate their journey and to show how their initial investigations in response to their chosen question had led to their outcome produced in the timed test.
- The stronger submissions included research of other artists or cultures to inform the candidates' own development.

General comments

Overall the work submitted was of a good standard and many submissions covered all of the assessment objectives in their content. Submissions were mainly in painting and related media with a few photography and 3D submissions seen. Responses to the questions were often imaginative and thoughtful.

Some candidates demonstrated their ability to develop ideas from initial observational studies leading to a resolved final outcome produced in the timed test. Where candidates struggled to develop original ideas they may have benefited from more research into the work of relevant artists to inspire different approaches to their supporting studies.

Most candidates presented their work on A2 sheets, correctly labelled. Where work was produced that was larger than A2 or 3D, it had been photographed, often to a good standard, and was presented on the A2 sheets showing a clear and thorough representation of the work. Some candidates submitted sketchbooks along with A2 sheets of coursework plus their final outcome. All work, including any from sketchbooks, should be selected and presented on the A2 sheets.

Higher levels

Candidates working at the higher levels were able to select and edit their work effectively to clearly demonstrate their journey and to show how their initial investigations in response to their chosen question had led to their outcome produced in the timed test. Links between research into a chosen artist and the candidates' own artwork was often thoughtful, easy to follow and the work communicated a clear progression of ideas.

These candidates were able to make informed and imaginative links as they gathered relevant source material to fully explore their starting point. They recorded from a wide range of sources that included direct observation. Although there was excellent use of photography, candidates at this level also drew and painted from direct observation. This in-depth and thorough investigation at the start of the research meant that candidates had a range of images to start developing ideas from in terms of technique and image manipulation.

Artist research was used effectively to inspire and inform this development. Within the supporting studies there was evidence of reflection and self-analysis that meant candidates were aware of their strengths and

also their limitations. As a result of this thoughtful self-analysis, the outcome produced in the timed test was often resolved and successfully reflected the skills seen within the supporting studies.

Middle levels

These candidates demonstrated good personal involvement with their chosen question and presented some individual submissions. Candidates explored the starting point in some detail and demonstrated good levels of technical skill in a range of media but there was often less evidence of considered development and reviewing of the work. Development of ideas was often the least successful part of the submission and some candidates struggled to manipulate the research that they had collected into refined compositions. Some final outcome did not reflect the strengths seen within the supporting studies. Referring to the work of other artists may have helped these candidates to resolve issues such as composition planning, ways to explore and experiment with media or trying alternative ways to manipulate their initial images.

The quality and depth of the supporting studies varied and while in some cases candidates had recorded from a range of relevant sources including secondary and first-hand, at other times candidates relied completely on the use of photography. These candidates would have benefited from combining their own photography with looking directly at the object, person or place as they drew or painted their observation studies.

Lower levels

At this level there was some evidence of strength in the recording through skilful media use, but this was not always appropriate to the question. For example, some candidates recorded from unrelated sources, showing little connection for development, while others relied heavily on copying second-hand images. The lack of meaningful recording meant that work contained little scope for the development of coherent ideas. Many of these submissions would have benefited from in-depth investigation of the chosen question during the initial stages. Recording from a range of relevant sources from direct observation, appropriate to the question, would have enabled development and the ability to produce an informed final outcome.

Technical skills at this level were often of a limited standard. Candidates were less able to recognise their strengths or show an ability to reflect on their work and attempt to refine or improve their technical skill through sustained investigation and exploration of different ways to use a range of media. Referring to the work of other artists would have helped to give ideas on alternative approaches to media use for some candidates. Final outcomes produced in the timed test did not always relate to the work explored in the supporting studies and candidates would have benefited from making composition plans before the timed test.

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Paper 9479/03 Personal Investigation

Key messages

- The Personal Investigation should combine written analysis (between 1000–1500 words) and practical work that the candidate has produced an integrated and coherent response to an aspect of art and design, photography or craft.
- Where photography is included candidates should label this work so that it is clear which are the candidates' own images and photographs, and which are from secondary sources such as downloads from the Internet.
- Candidates should not include work from Component 1 – Coursework as part of their Personal Investigation.

General comments

Most submissions were in the area of Painting and Related Studies. Candidates had usually carried out primary research or direct observational studies to inform their own ideas in relation to an identified theme or subject and in response to their chosen artists. Within the majority of the portfolios the intention was clear and candidates demonstrated the ability to communicate their ideas generated from their artist research through their practical work.

In some submissions there was strong evidence that candidates were highly committed to their investigation demonstrating engagement and independence. There was a willingness to explore and try out new techniques and processes from the research they had undertaken and to incorporate it in their own practical work.

In most cases the presentation of the work showed thought and consideration to the overall aesthetic and followed the development of the work in a chronological manner. This made the portfolios easy to follow and presented a coherent journey. The most successful submissions integrated the written element of the study with the practical work to present a coherent and in-depth investigation into an aspect of art and design of their choice.

Comments on specific questions

Higher Level

Submissions at this level demonstrated thoughtful exploration of the subject or theme using a wide range of reference material including looking at and referring to other disciplines outside of the visual arts. Candidates were able to make sophisticated and mature connections between contextual information to develop personal lines of enquiry.

Candidates working at this level were able to carry out in-depth analysis of the work of others using the formal elements. They were able to combine this with an understanding of the underlying concepts within the work. These candidates applied their understanding to the development of their own ideas and experimentation through continuous reflection and evaluation.

Some candidates were able to conduct online or face-to-face interviews. There was evidence of considered questioning which focused on inspiration, media and technical approaches and this enriched the development and refinement of practical responses.

Using a range of research material, both visual and contextual, led to informed personal observations and interpretation of work. Candidates demonstrated the ability to make intelligent and unique references to support their work and understanding of the theme.

Candidates working at this level showed excellent skill and control with materials. They demonstrated knowledge of media by combining different processes to communicate ideas effectively.

The presentation of the written analysis and the practical work was highly effective. The written analysis on the A2 sheets placed between visual material supported the candidates' level of understanding, as they were able to make clear links between gathered information and their own observations.

Work at this higher level demonstrated candidates' ability to fully realise intentions with confidence allowing the work to evolve in response to the candidates' chosen aspect of art and design. This was evident both in the development of visual language and also in the written analysis.

Submissions at this level clearly demonstrated the candidates' ability to edit their work to present a coherent and cohesive investigation showing an excellent level of engagement and independence.

Middle level

In general, submissions at this level were inventive in their ideas and ways of using media to explore their chosen area of art and design.

Some candidates at this level had gathered a lot of information on the work of others but had not applied it to the development of their ideas. They were unable to make relevant connections to take their ideas forward.

Some submissions at this level included in-depth analysis into the chosen aspect of art and design and this was evident in the written work where the candidates were able to communicate using relevant subject specific language.

Some investigations focused on a technique or local craft. These candidates carried out methodical research into the different forms of their chosen art or craft, making good use of their local resources. Stronger candidates selected a particular aspect of their craft to explore and analyse. Candidates used the information to develop personal ideas as well as to develop technical skill and aesthetic understanding.

Some candidates at this level focused on an issue related to their experience or immediate environment. This provided a lot of contextual research material into the issue and relevant imagery. Some of the submissions focused more on the issue rather than the development and refinement of visual and practical responses.

Candidates used comparative techniques to analyse selected works focusing on the use of colour and materials. Further analysis into the impact of the use of materials in communicating intended ideas may have led to more focused practical investigations and understanding.

Some examples at this level included imagery created by others to develop a number of different compositions in response to their theme. Most candidates working at this level demonstrated a competent ability and skill with media and processes. However, there was a tendency to use all this experience and knowledge within one composition. The refinement of ideas and personal responses would have benefitted from continuous evaluation and clearer intentions.

Lower level

At this level many candidates chose to explore a local craft which provided a great opportunity to carry out primary research involving an interview, a site visit and often a workshop. Some used the investigation as an opportunity to develop a new skill.

Some candidates did not produce any practical work in response to their investigation of an aspect of art and design photography or craft, and only submitted written work. The research carried out was factual and informative but candidates were not able to take inspiration from this to develop their own work, for example to explore colour, media use or subject matter.

In other submissions, candidates created their own work, experimenting with media and gathering images in response to a theme, but did not research a relevant artist or crafts person to the extent required for this component. These portfolios demonstrated a good understanding of the materials and processes involved but the candidates were not able to use specialist language and vocabulary effectively to communicate ideas and demonstrate their contextual understanding.

A few submissions at this level were disjointed. The written analysis did not develop a line of enquiry and made little or no connection to the practical work carried out by the candidate or the work of others. There was less evidence of candidates being able to integrate the practical and written elements of the investigation.