

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/01 Coursework

Key messages

- Successful submissions showed clear intentions, with carefully organised work which communicated achievement. Some would have benefited from effective editing to demonstrate the ability to refine the work as it progressed.
- The Assessment Objectives inform a holistic part of the creative process. Some candidates demonstrated a consistent response to each one. Other submissions would have benefited from candidates sustaining a clear focus, to enable resolved responses to these objectives.
- Successful candidates demonstrated recording from a thoughtful selection of primary sources. Themes were explored in depth through detailed observation. Other work contained an over reliance on downloaded images from the Internet or secondary sources. This undermined personal vision and limited an individual response.
- Some submissions lacked development. In this instance, candidates would have benefitted from challenging their ideas through critical reflection. Investigating the works of others to inform the direction of study could have enabled exploration of alternative ideas and compositions.
- The inclusion of photographs that demonstrated the 'making' process were often not relevant and did little to inform the recording or development of ideas.

General comments

Some portfolios were well presented onto A2 sheets. Candidates who carefully considered the layout and organisation of their portfolio effectively communicated their achievement. Intentions were clear and ideas were enhanced by relevant studies. While some candidates considered the presentation of their work, the editing in other portfolios was less thoughtful and led to confusing visual communication. In this instance, careful selection of the work would have demonstrated the creative process with more clarity. Some submissions, contained fragmented imagery from a combination of separate projects. This impacted depth and focus, and prevented an informed final piece.

The topics chosen for investigation were sometimes personal. Subjects based around local places of interest, investigation of family and friends, portraiture and local festivals were popular and accessible. These enabled first-hand recording, providing a wealth of information to explore. Most submissions were realised within the area of fine art, with the addition of printmaking, ceramics, textiles and design-based work. Candidates' own photography was often included as part of the recording or development process.

Successful submissions were focused, serious in intention and demonstrated full engagement with the themes. Investigation was initiated through first-hand study, and appropriate connections were made with art practitioners and cultural referencing. This informed the progression of meaningful ideas, with insightful annotation reflecting understanding of the creative process.

For some, the lack of clear intentions and purpose prevented a cohesive body of work. Limited meaningful investigation from first-hand study prevented a personal response. Incoherence between the imagery in the supporting work stopped ideas from building. As a result, the final outcome was often disconnected and lacked relevance to the body of the submission.

Higher Level

Portfolios at this level displayed consistent engagement, with a coherent progression of ideas. Submissions were lively and contained many appropriate visual references, explored through an exciting rendering of materials. Media exploration and image manipulation was committed. In-depth focus and clear intention enabled development of creative ideas. There appeared to be a sense of enjoyment and genuine enquiry in the exploration of the themes. Initial research was meaningful, evolving through investigation of a range of first-hand sources. Secondary-sourced research had also been effectively incorporated. Candidates were able to adapt this material with a clear vision of the ideas they wished to communicate through their work.

Relevant connections to the works of others were included. Candidates combined this research with their own observational recording to inform personal progression. This encouraged ambition and creative risk taking, inspiring further image and media development. Thoughtful compositions illustrated a range of ideas. Self-reflection encouraged appropriate decision making. While some candidates were able to execute in-depth research, others were sometimes less able to focus on the most important ideas. This affected their ability to achieve coherence and intensity, particularly during the development stage.

Media exploration was accomplished throughout each stage of the work. The ability to recognise the potential within the chosen materials was clear. Creative effects were shown through explored processes and techniques, while showing fluent understanding of the visual elements. Throughout this level, materials were used with imagination to drive ideas forward. For many, the work contained a clear and creative journey with intentions successfully resolved into a relevant final outcome.

Middle Level

In most submissions the subject matter was chosen with independence and a focus was identified. Many candidates demonstrated good ability to investigate from thoughtful and coherent first-hand sources, which were relevant to the theme. The work contained purposeful engagement in the arrangement of still-life sets, construction of scenarios, portraiture, face painting and other creative topics. Intentions were evident, as was the exploration of individual ideas, but the depth of enquiry was less strong and opportunities were missed. Ideas were apparent throughout the work, but development did not always connect to the initial recording. Some areas of the work were confusing and appeared disconnected from the main body of the work.

The works of art practitioners and cultural references made a positive impact on encouraging new directions. The most successful candidates demonstrated an ability to critically analyse, which informed decision making. However, not all candidates made the connection between these references and their own ideas to progress their development. Deeper investigation could have stretched the candidates' ability to evaluate, enabling them to recognise the potential in their own work.

Materials and techniques were successfully rendered, appropriate to intention. Media choice was chosen to show purpose with care and control, but at this level there was less risk taking. This limited the scope for creative exploration. Not all candidates identified the strengths in their research. Rather than taking risks, some relied on what they were most confident in using. The result of this was sometimes portfolios containing more vitality than the final outcome.

Lower Level

Purposeful recording was often not in evidence and a lack of intention led to incoherent research. The recording was often limited and contained an over reliance on secondary sources or disconnected imagery. Sometimes the origination of imagery was vague. Where a range of research was collected, it often lacked connection or reason, resulting in disjointed ideas. Insufficient motivation to fully explore the different facets of a theme towards an end goal impacted on the scope for any meaningful development. Some candidates made use of the camera on their phone to record poor quality images. Any other investigation of first-hand sources derived from the candidates' surroundings and lacked the depth of observation, detail or refinement. These candidates were less able to reflect critically on the progress of their recording or discern what was relevant to the theme.

The ability to manipulate materials, techniques and processes was inconsistent. Some candidates lacked sensitivity and refined control, while others competently demonstrated their rendering skills through recording from sources unrelated to the theme. A range of materials was sometimes explored in the supporting work but this often lacked purpose. These candidates were unable to reflect on their work to refine ideas. Development was not often the result of an investigated body of research, but from singular disconnected

images. The lack of coherent initial research and purposeful materials handling prevented these candidates from sustaining their portfolios through meaningful development.

References made to the works of others were seen in some portfolios, but this did little to inform recording or idea development. These candidates were unable to make relevant connections to drive their work forward. Often, the research from contextual sources was irrelevant to the theme did not inspire the candidates' own ideas. Portfolios at this level lacked a clear journey from initial idea to final conclusion, with the outcome frequently not evolving from a progression of ideas.

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Paper 9479/02 Externally Set Assignment
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General comments

The range of stimuli for this component allowed plentiful opportunity for candidates to explore and develop their own interpretations.

The majority of submissions showed evidence of a range of relevant research. Unfortunately, there was much reliance on secondary sources. These were selected as initial starting points for recording and research across the levels, and frequently prevented an informed personal response. Sometimes it was unclear where an image originated. Referencing the sources used for investigation and labelling the candidates primary studies and own photography would have enabled a more accurate communication of achievement.

When there was clear evidence of the use of primary sources of research, candidates were able to develop individual and personal outcomes.

Other supporting sheets were used in experimenting with materials and processes and manipulating images to develop ideas. Many candidates had used contextual references and benefitted from studying the subject matter and techniques of a wide range of artists to influence their own work.

Final examination outcomes were rarely as strong as work seen in preparatory sheets. A common feature was a lack of planning for final compositions, with many candidates simply repeating an earlier study. More time could have been spent on considering alternative compositions by producing a number of thumbnail sketches.

The presentation of the work was of a good standard and supporting sheets were generally well organised on A2 sheets and presented with care. The final outcomes were mostly coherent and related to the preparatory work.

Higher Level

Higher level candidates demonstrated in-depth research focusing largely on first-hand sources recorded with skill, using their own sketches and photography. These candidates had always made connections with the works of relevant artists who inspired the direction and journey of their own work.

The topics were interpreted in a mature and individual manner which led to purposeful and well explored ideas. Some of the candidate imagery and compositions reflected an essence of their locality and environment. Images created from initial recording were manipulated into alternative compositions and developed.

The rendering of media at this level was accomplished and candidates reflected their creativity through sophisticated application. This thoughtful selection of materials reflected their chosen subject matter to its best advantage. A range of fine art media were each excellently combined to simulate movement, surface quality, form, expression, colour and mark-making, and represented dynamic figurative and abstracted imagery. The potential within the supporting work was often realised to great effect and reflected in a refined final outcome.

Middle level

At this level candidates often demonstrated a satisfactory or competent process of working and a clear journey through their research to a final outcome. However, the depth in which topics were investigated was less detailed and informed than those candidates at the higher level.

Many candidates at this level failed to fully explore the potential within their subject and would have benefitted from more in-depth research during the initial stages of investigation.

Generally, a range of appropriate media was seen but the manipulation skills contained inconsistencies. Sometimes the scale in the translation from smaller supporting work to a larger outcome presented challenges.

It was often the lack of focused planning and refinement of skills which prevented progression to a higher level.

Lower Level

The work at this level lacked clear intention and was not always relevant to the topic. 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. In other submissions it was not clear where the sources had originated.

Some candidates referenced the works of others, but there was a lack of understanding in the connections made which prevented them from coherently informing their own ideas.

At times, there was evidence of personal engagement, but this was not sustained. Whilst some candidates had explored a range of materials in their supporting work, their ability to refine their technical skills was limited. These candidates were only able to exercise limited critical judgement in order to refine and develop their work.

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Paper 9479/03 Personal Investigation

Key messages

- Many candidates relied heavily on secondary sources to support the investigation. This limited the personal and creative aspect of the work and in some cases the level of skill explored.
- Candidates would benefit from further application of critical analysis and evaluation of their own achievements. This would lead to a stronger and more effective conclusion in their written responses.

General comments

The Personal Investigation should be an involved study looking at a theme or subject within art and design that seeks to develop the creative practice of the candidate through written and visual research and exploration. It is important that the creative work is connected to the theme or question and shows clear investigation and development through experimentation and conceptual, contextual understanding.

There was evidence of first-hand experience in regard to local crafts. In some cases, candidates used the opportunity to develop an understanding of the processes and materials involved by making their own examples. Some candidates made good use of gallery visits and contact with local artists, visiting their studios and carrying out interviews online.

Many of the craft-based submissions focused on the process, techniques and materials rather than using the information to develop their own work in response to a theme or subject.

Stronger candidates looked at a range of material and sources and made strong connections between their work and that of others, using their research to develop their ideas and to support more ambitious exploration. At the lower end, candidates did not make clear links with their research either visually or through written notes and some submissions had very little written annotation.

The most successful candidates had integrated the written element with the practical work to present a coherent and in-depth investigation.

All work submitted was presented on A2 sheets or smaller. Larger or 3D works were photographed.

Higher

Candidates at this level demonstrated commitment to the development of their creative responses and built a body of work that explored their theme with maturity, purpose and intention. Submissions included a range of recording with candidates effectively combining direct observational drawing, own photography and found imagery to stimulate ideas and inform experimentation.

The quality of the visual stimulus influenced the development of the work. Candidates were able to carry out focused studies and took effective photographs showing an excellent understanding of the formal elements and the contextual field that they were working in.

Candidates used a range of media with sensitivity and control, demonstrating an understanding of the inherent qualities of materials and processes to communicate ideas. They were able to combine media with confidence and discovered different ways to explore their ideas.

Work at this level showed evidence of thorough and relevant research. Strong links were made with other relevant sources, for example another artist from a different time or culture that explored a similar theme, or artefacts of historical and cultural relevance. Candidates were able to analyse the work in context and applied their wide-ranging reference material to develop informed personal responses.

At this level candidates were able to use their reference material to inform their work not just in relation to media use, but also in relation to developing concepts and making connections between display and context in the presentation of the work. They demonstrated an excellent understanding of how to apply research and analysis. This was evident in the choices of reference material they used and how they articulated their ideas in written form. Their written analysis was reflected in the creative and practical work, developing clear lines of enquiry.

Candidates at this level demonstrated independence of thought and excellent engagement with their chosen area of art and design and showed a clear journey through the considered presentation and effective integration of written and visual material.

Middle

Candidates working at this level explored their chosen area of art and design with energy and enthusiasm, but their intentions were less clear.

There was evidence of a competent ability to gather research from a range of appropriate sources. Many candidates working at this level included research into at least two artists and often a visit to a gallery, museum or studio to view work first hand.

Recorded observations included detailed studies and written work which showed an ability to make appropriate links to different sources.

The media use at this level was developed through a range of materials and processes, but in some examples, this lacked in-depth exploration. Further analysis of the work of others and the selection of more challenging examples may have led to confidence in combining media to communicate ideas.

Some candidates pursued the application of media without thought to the inherent characteristics and how this may or may not have been appropriate for the ideas they were exploring. Better evaluation and critical analysis would have supported candidates in selecting more relevant media.

These candidates often demonstrated an obvious link between their own work and their artist research. Although the research was relevant and candidates were able to use this to inform their own development, this could have been developed further through deeper analysis of the work taking into consideration the concepts being explored. However, the research did inform their use of composition, colour and subject matter. Deeper research and analysis may have led to more personal, individual responses and less derivative outcomes.

The presentation of written and practical work was thoughtful and where written work was presented separately as an essay it was clearly presented with a title, introduction, conclusion and included visuals of the artist work within the body of text.

Low

Much of the work seen at this level showed very little evidence of first-hand experience or primary observation. Many submissions contained a series of related or unrelated images, many without a clear theme or purpose.

At this level 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 accompanied by print outs of the artist's work.

Recording was limited through the use of primary and secondary sources and photographs or found imagery was often of a poor quality. Candidates did not record their observations using a range of media or source material. This limited the generation of ideas and exploration of imagery and media.

There was little evidence of development as the work appeared disconnected and candidates often did not refer to the work of other artists to support underlying concepts or material exploration.

The research was often descriptive or contained biographical information. Where candidates had been in direct contact with their chosen artist, the questions asked focused on background detail as opposed to in-depth understanding of concepts, recurring imagery and the selection of media to communicate ideas.

Some candidates had taken the opportunity to visit local craft people and whilst they developed skills within this specialism and gained a practical understanding of the media, the written aspect focused on the materials and processes. They were not able to use this information and experience to generate personal responses through further visual, cultural and contextual research.

The written responses used very little technical vocabulary and often candidates showed limited understanding of the formal elements when responding to the work of others. In many cases candidates described the process of making the work rather than analysing or evaluating their achievements. Further analysis would have supported their development alongside research into others.

The body of creative work demonstrated little or no understanding of the visual elements and candidates were unable to refine their work effectively.

Candidates working at this level would have benefitted from selecting a clear focus, theme or subject, better reference material and from carrying out direct observational studies through drawing and photography rather than relying on secondary sources.

Written and practical work was often unbalanced and not thoughtfully integrated. Limited research into the choice of art and design meant that candidates working at this level were not able to make connections or links with their practical work and there was limited evidence of engagement or personal and coherent responses.