

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/01 Coursework

Key messages

- Most candidates demonstrated clear intentions. This work was carefully organised to communicate achievement. Other candidates would have benefited from editing their work effectively as ideas progressed to show refinement.
- The strongest work contained detailed observation and in-depth investigation, with a range of media including photography. Other work contained an over-reliance on downloaded images from the Internet or secondary sources which undermined personal vision, limiting the individual response.
- Engaging with accessible themes enabled a well-researched journey from initial research to final outcome. Candidates who focused on interpretative concepts often found it difficult to source original first-hand starting points.

General comments

Many submissions were well presented and these candidates demonstrated a sustained body of work. Other work contained fragmented imagery from a combination of separate projects. This impacted depth and focus and prevented an informed final piece being produced.

Candidates investigated individual topics which were explored through a range of relevant materials and techniques. Most of the work was realised within the area of fine art, including candidates' own supporting photography. Other examples contained design-based work, photography and work produced in clay or other types of 3D processes.

Individual ideas were presented through a range of sources and subject matter was varied. Topics were frequently based around local places of interest, demonstrating references to cultures. This enabled candidates to engage with accessible sources. The work often explored pattern, colour and mark-making during the interpretation of the themes. Recording often included observations from family and friends. Portraiture was popular in relation to conceptual ideas. Local festivals, celebrations and dance were also included through an explosion of colour and mark making.

Successful submissions were focused, demonstrating full engagement with the chosen topics. Candidates showed clear intentions and communicated ideas which were explored with purpose to demonstrate creative approaches. Recording from first-hand observation always initiated ideas and relevant connections to contextual references informed direction. Reflection informed understanding to progress the work.

The weakest work often lacked focus and purpose, without specific direction or intention. Recording usually evolved through image exploration from secondary sources, or was disconnected and incoherent. The lack of meaningful research prevented ideas from building during development, resulting in little meaningful connection between the supporting work and the final outcome.

Higher Level

This work was sustained, with high levels of engagement and individual thought. Relevant connections were made between the candidates' observational recording and contextual investigation which effectively demonstrated the creative process. Thoughtful methods of working encouraged high levels of achievement, as did critical thinking and self-reflection.

Candidates used a variety of approaches for gathering first-hand sources to investigate in depth. Intentions were clear, enabling candidates to focus on the direction of study in detail. Initial research was meaningful and secondary-sourced images also supported ideas. Candidates recorded from different locations, used

friends and families as props in their arrangements or scenarios, and investigated from local festivals, celebrations and cultural traditions. They researched their sources in detail by altering viewpoints and exploring close up observations. This formed a strong basis for development. Meaningful annotation informed development, enabling candidates to reflect on their ideas.

The development at this level was focused, based on informative initial recording. As the work evolved, submissions often illustrated candidates' desire to try things out to discover new ideas. Reflection and reviewing at various stages of the work informed relevant decision-making. Compositions were thoughtful and related directly to the outcome.

Media exploration was inventive and thoroughly explored. Candidates were able to recognise their strengths and investigate the creative possibilities within the chosen subject matter. The selection of media demonstrated understanding of available possibilities, enabling candidates to explore and express individual ideas effectively. A high quality of photographic imagery was demonstrated with organisation of thoughtful composition arrangement, lighting and viewpoints, and complemented supporting studies in other media. The overall presentation contained a thoughtful editing of work and communicated clear candidate achievement.

Middle Level

Candidates at this level often identified an area of focus to enable a personal response. Appropriate sources were selected for investigation which some candidates explored in depth. Sometimes, the work lacked refinement in either idea development or materials rendering and as a result, submissions were sometimes unresolved. There were areas where candidates may have demonstrated potential, but weaknesses in other areas prevented them from resolving their practical issues and their understanding of the visual elements. Other submissions lacked the focus and direction required to produce a fully coherent portfolio of work.

A range of recording methods were explored. Some candidates included detailed observational recording by producing studies in a range of materials including photography. The depth of enquiry was less strong than at the higher level, but ideas were evident and demonstrated connections. Observational work provided a basis for media exploration and idea development, often in response to exploration of the works of art practitioners. Some candidates successfully explored this contextual referencing to move ideas forward, but others were less able to analyse or make critical connections to encourage an informed response. The weaker candidates at this level, over-relied on secondary-sourced images that varied in quality and relevance. Despite the strength in the media rendering, the lack of a personal response impacted on the development of ideas.

Some candidates were less able to critically analyse or reflect on their work to identify the most promising ideas. Often, the appropriate media was selected, but these candidates lacked the confidence to fully explore these materials, which limited the scope for creative experimentation. The reflection required to build on technical skills was sometimes lacking. Stronger self-analysis as the work progressed would have helped candidates to identify and build on their strengths.

Some submissions demonstrated a coherent development of ideas through effective editing. In other work, there was a lack of connection between the portfolio and final outcome. Areas of the work were incoherent and self-reflection could have refined ideas into an informed response.

Lower Level

Work at this level did not contain sufficient research from original sources. Candidates relied very heavily on second-hand imagery as the starting point for their work. Consequently, candidates did not produce a personal response. These candidates were less able to reflect critically on the progress of their recording or identify what was relevant to the theme. There was also little evidence of direction or purpose, and this frequently led to incoherent research and disconnected images. This weak recording impacted on the progression of the work and prevented scope for development of relevant ideas. These candidates would have benefitted from gathering relevant research from a range of sources, including recording from direct observation. In-depth investigation during the initial stages of the work could have provided greater scope for development.

This lack of depth in the recording prevented the opportunity for relevant media exploration. Technical skills at this level were often limited and most candidates lacked sensitivity and refined control. Sometimes a range of materials were explored, but without meaning. Candidates were unable to recognise their strengths or to reflect on their work to refine ideas. There was also less ability in exploring alternative ideas for different

compositions. Ideas did not build and images were organised with little understanding of the visual elements such as tone, colour and form.

There was some evidence of references to the works of other artists, but often this did little to inform the work. Candidates were unable to make relevant connections to coherently inform ideas. Investigating relevant contextual references could have helped candidates to select appropriate subject matter relating to their topic, while informing media use and idea development in their work. Greater planning using thumbnail sketches of possible compositions could have helped candidates to produce a thoughtful final outcome that connected to the portfolio. Submissions frequently lacked the journey from initial idea to final conclusion.

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Paper 9479/02 Externally Set Assignment
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Key message

- Candidates should be given guidance on how to use their artist research to inform their own development of ideas and media use.

General comments

Painting and related media was the most common area of study and most submissions included photography. While many candidates developed meaningful ideas from first-hand recording, in some cases there was too much reliance on secondary sources and this limited a personal response.

Higher Level

Stronger candidates demonstrated a focused and thoughtful interpretation of their chosen question. Submissions were personal, committed and contained a good balance of both primary and secondary sources. Candidates working at this level recorded from a range of appropriate and meaningful sources investigating their chosen question in depth. The supporting work was focused and well organised, effectively demonstrating the creative process. This led to fully resolved final outcomes that reflected the ideas and media skills demonstrated in the supporting studies.

Media use was purposeful, demonstrating an excellent ability to fully explore the chosen media. Candidates were able to refine their technical skills through extensive media studies, often informed by their artist research. Many made good use of their own photography to capture elements such as pattern, tone, composition and shadows. Some also made excellent use of light to explore alternative effects using photography and used these studies to inspire and inform successive ideas.

Middle Level

In the middle range of submissions, many candidates had explored first-hand sources but also tended to use secondary sources and copying from photographs as a way of generating visual material. An over-reliance on copying from photographs often restricted candidates' ability to develop a deeper understanding of the visual elements, especially tone and form.

Some evidence was seen of research into artists and cultures but often, at this level, candidates were less able to make personal connections with this work to help them develop ideas and inform creative decisions regarding their own work.

A good range of media and techniques was explored, but manipulative skills were less confident and refined at this level. Candidates were less able to use self-analysis to recognise their strengths and at times the final outcomes did not reflect the media skills seen in the supporting works.

Where annotation was included, it tended to be more descriptive and biographical than analytical. The journey through the submission was less coherent than at the higher mark range. For example, in some cases strong ideas that had been explored in the supporting studies were not developed into the final outcome. More careful planning of composition and self-analysis before the timed test would have benefited these candidates.

Lower Level

The work at this level demonstrated a reliance on secondary sources for recording or sometimes no sources were used at all, which prevented a personal and informed response. There was often a lack of focus

throughout the supporting studies and research was inconsistent. This prevented ideas from building into a developed body of work and the final outcome produced in the timed test sometimes did not relate to the supporting studies.

At times the manipulation of materials demonstrates technical skill in some submissions, but a lack of focus and analysis meant that these candidates were not able to build on their strengths. The final outcome was often unconnected to the work in the supporting studies and lacked refinement or planning. Where artist research was included it often did not relate to the candidates' own work and was not used to inform their development of ideas.

Greater engagement in their chosen question would have benefited the work of these candidates and encouraged detailed first-hand research. This could have enabled them to build on the development of coherent ideas into an informed final outcome.

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Paper 9479/03 Personal Investigation

Key messages

Submissions that focused on local arts and crafts often lacked depth of analysis. Candidates were unable to make effective links between their cultural heritage and the development of personal responses.

Many candidates had carried out first-hand research through visits to galleries, museums and workshops. Unfortunately, most of the gallery visits were incidental and not related to the candidates' ideas and development of practical work.

Most submissions were well-presented. However, there were some consisting of more than 8 sheets (16 if using both sides) which is the requirement as outlined in the syllabus. Occasionally sketch-books were submitted alongside the A2 sheets. Some submissions included multiple flaps and oversized loose work attached to the A2 sheets which made it difficult to view the work in a logical manner.

General comments

- The written work was wide ranging in quality. Some submissions were limited to basic observations of the artwork and the written element was purely descriptive.
- Some investigations contained no reference to the work of other artists or cultural material to inform the practical work.
- It was good to see a variety of themes. This indicated that the individual candidates were being supported in their exploration, rather than a formulaic approach being taken.
- There were some submissions that demonstrated a competent level of skill with media but there was no connection to the research carried out into the work of other artists. These candidates had not learnt from their investigations, and had not used their research and analysis to refine their ideas or challenge their usual way of working.
- Candidates had been encouraged to be ambitious in their work and many submissions explored a number of ideas through different media and different presentation techniques.

Higher levels

Submissions that achieved marks in the confident and excellent mark range included a first-hand experience of artworks and primary sources. At this level there was clear evidence of interconnectivity between the development of ideas, research and the observations made in relation to the concept being explored. Candidates were able to make strong connections between the imagery explored and made independent observations through deep analysis and engagement with the research material. The selection of artists to refer to and other contextual material that supported the development of the work demonstrated a mature understanding of the aims of the personal investigation.

Candidates worked from both primary and secondary sources to develop their practical explorations making considered direct observational studies through drawing and photography. The high quality of the recording had a direct impact on the quality of the refined outcomes produced. The work demonstrated an effective use of media, making clear connections between the characteristics of various materials and their impact on communicating ideas.

Personal work was developed through research and critical review of explorations and this showed a deep understanding of the context of the work. Practical responses were ambitious and demonstrated the ability to

explore concepts through the use of visual elements and the application of media. The written content was effectively integrated with the visual and practical explorations. The discussion of the theme was articulate and the structure of the investigation reflected an organised approach. Candidates working at this level used art terminology with fluency and confidence, applying this to the analysis of the work of others and in the critical reflections of their own achievements. The investigations showed originality and critical engagement in the development of a coherent body of work.

Submissions were well presented, and clear to follow. They contained a number of refined outcomes alongside experimental explorations with reference to research material. Work was clearly labelled and all sources were clearly identified. The investigations culminated in a written conclusion that demonstrated critical awareness of achievement.

Middle levels

Candidates at this level explored some exciting, independently selected ideas and themes. These candidates demonstrated engagement and commitment to investigating their ideas. However, there was a lack of critical understanding of the material being referred to. Candidates working at this level produced a range of observational studies to inform the development of their work but would have benefitted from further direct observational drawing. Many candidates had gathered a range of research material in relation to the work of other artists but were not able to develop their observations effectively to inform personal responses. Candidates were able to make effective copies of the work of others but were less able to interpret the material to explore their own ideas.

Work demonstrated a competent level of skill with media and processes but in many submissions, this was not in direct response to what they had observed in the work of other artists. Candidates did not have the contextual or critical understanding to develop responses informed by their research. The written aspect of the investigation was integrated with the practical and visual explorations. At this level, the direction of discussion and the links made between the research and the ideas being explored were not always clear. Candidates were able to use relevant language to discuss the work of others but could have shown more critical awareness in their observations.

Many investigations ended with a final outcome and a written conclusion. The written element relied too heavily on describing what had been carried out rather than critically evaluating the body of work. The final outcome could have been explored further through varying interpretations of composition and application of visual language.

Lower levels

At the lower level there were fewer connections made between the research carried out and the candidates' personal and creative responses. Many at this level lacked an understanding of the purpose of the personal investigation. Candidates carried out research into the work of others but did not produce any practical work of their own. Some made no attempt to carry out transcriptions of the work they were referring to. Some submissions generated personal creative responses in relation to an identified theme but did not refer to the work of other artists or cultural and contextual references to support the development. The recording was informed by a limited range of sources and studies lacked depth, purpose and meaning. Many of these candidates would have benefitted from using more visual reference material and from using different media to capture the qualities of what they were observing. Reference to other artists' work was often limited to a single source and candidates only referred to one image by their chosen artist or artists. Media use was at a limited level with only a basic understanding of visual language. Where media use was satisfactory, a lack of research and context prevented candidates from producing an informed and personal practical response.

The written discussions of the investigations relied heavily on descriptive or biographical detail and this restricted the development of personal ideas. There was some use of art terminology but this was limited by the lack of examples and depth of discussion.

Many of the studies included a gallery visit or first-hand experience. However, at this level the work observed had no connection to the themes being explored and had no influence on subsequent work or ideas.

Some candidates at this level carried out and presented the written content separately to the practical explorations. This meant that the ideas being explored and discussed were not integrated effectively. Candidates were not able to make clear connections between what they had observed and what they intended to explore.