

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/01 Coursework

Key messages

- Many submissions demonstrated a clear and focused intention which led to thoughtful ideas developed around the theme.
- The most successful presentations contained carefully organised work that followed the sequence of the creative process to successfully communicate ideas. Some candidates would have benefited from selecting and editing their work more effectively which would have better shown their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed.
- The Assessment Objectives are not separate units. Each one informs a holistic part of the creative process. Many portfolios demonstrated a consistency in response to each Assessment Objective.
- Many candidates had thoughtfully explored an appropriate range of sources from first-hand study. This included detailed observational studies executed in a range of media, in addition to photography, which explored the theme in depth. Candidates should be encouraged to continue investigating in this way. However, others had over relied on secondary-sourced images, which undermined their personal vision and limited an individual response.
- Those candidates who had clearly labelled their own photography and the work of others, made the communication of their achievement more effective.

General comments

The standard of presentation was good and most candidates submitted their coursework portfolio on A2 sheets. Some submissions exceeded the recommended maximum size. Centres wishing to submit three dimensional pieces should take good quality photographs of this work and mount the photographs on the sheets and not submit the actual pieces for assessment.

Many candidates demonstrated effective understanding of the Assessment Objectives in a thoughtful and sustained body of work. Topics provided scope for investigation from a range of sources and candidates recorded from direct observation through painting, drawing, mixed media and colour work. Many submissions were designed to extend over many weeks to enable full engagement with the theme. Other work demonstrated a broad subject, resulting in a confused and chaotic portfolio without clear direction. Most candidates completed their work within the area of Fine Art, including their own photography.

Responses to the topics were creative. Imaginative exploration resulted in inventive outcomes. Mind-maps initiated and directed ideas, with the most effective examples providing purposeful reference points. Others were less thoughtful and did little to inform the work. There was a lot of exploration of ideas related to the environment, landscapes or natural disasters, whilst urban scenes, pollution and natural forms provided candidates with the opportunity to photograph and make direct observational studies within their local surroundings. Some candidates selected themes that were based around themselves. Figure work and self-portraits were popular and included imagery to reflect emotion, isolation, mask wearing and anxiety. The use of visual stimuli within their own locality or using friends and family as sources of information enabled candidates to revisit their subject several times to achieve the depth of development.

Successful submissions were serious and demonstrated clear intentions, encouraging a creative journey from start to finish. First-hand study lead to investigation through drawing, painting, photography and a range of other fine art, design and 3D media, where effective visual analysis informed the development of ideas. Appropriate and intelligent connections with the works of others stimulated personal ideas and reflected a thorough understanding of the creative process.

A particular weakness in some submissions was the inability to successfully select imagery for the final composition. There was a tendency to include many images from the supporting portfolio and combine them

into a single outcome. The result of this was the integration of many disparate images that did not visually relate.

Higher Level

These portfolios were personal and reflected independence to demonstrate focus and self-motivation. Submissions were purposeful and research was thorough. The recording was always derived from first-hand sources, thoughtfully selected to express intentions and used intelligently as starting points for development. Candidates at this level continuously referenced relevant research material to drive their work forward.

Themes were fully investigated through direct observation demonstrating an accomplished rendering of media and techniques. In many cases a high degree of invention was evident, where candidates explored the possibilities of integrating combinations of materials, to inform development. Exciting submissions were produced by the most confident candidates which demonstrated an excellent understanding of visual language. Thoughtful and skilful photography was also used to research, which added to the originality and depth of the work.

Commitment to the development process was extensive in these submissions to reflect personal ideas. Self-evaluation of the work as it progressed was evident, as was the ability to use critical thinking to refine ideas and reflect on achievement. Thoughtful references to the works of others and cultural inspiration contributed to creative development. Connections were clear and impacted on the creative direction of the portfolio.

Examples of graphics, fashion and textile work demonstrated excellent understanding of the principles of design. Examples of garment and costume design, book design, posters, digital illustration and commercial advertising were seen. First-hand observation including drawing and photography, were explored to form effective ideas. Connections made to existing designs and the works of others were included to inform personal development.

Portfolios reflected a clear journey through the creative process to the final conclusion. Planning for the outcome was thorough with confidence leading to risk-taking and the freedom of exploration. This developed into strong outcomes with a high degree of imaginative skills. Effective portfolios indicated clarity of thought and reflected a coherent flow of ideas.

Middle Level

These submissions also demonstrated personal engagement, where candidates produced creative responses to a range of interesting and appropriate sources. In some portfolios the research was purposeful and committed, but the depth of investigation of the works of others sometimes varied. Much of the work was exciting, showing a high level of involvement in the exploration of materials. However, while the work was individual, sometimes the creative process was less coherent and intentions were unclear.

There was a competent ability to record from direct observation which led to original and imaginative ideas. A range of materials and techniques had been explored, but often the manipulation of media was less confident or refined. These candidates sometimes lacked the skills to successfully convey their ideas, which sometimes prevented the achievement of higher marks. Other work contained a greater reliance on the use of secondary sources to inform ideas, and while these could be intelligently selected and appropriate, a personal response to the topic was restricted. Other candidates copied from photographs which demonstrated little understanding of structure or space.

A thoughtful selection of artist references proved relevant to the work of the stronger candidates which clearly made an impact on the direction of their work. However, weaker candidates were unable to recognise the potential in their artist research in order to move their work forward. A competent ability to select and control media while making transcriptions of artists' examples was apparent, but these candidates were unable to apply this to inform their own studies.

Idea exploration lacked the depth of the higher level work. Development tended to be repetitive with the supporting sheets containing several versions of the same idea, lacking the critical analysis required to expand on ideas. A more consistent response to the Assessment Objectives would have enabled an insightful connection between initial studies and later developments. Some candidates seemed unaware of their own strengths, and while the exploration and development of an idea was effective, the final outcome was sometimes not as strong. Many portfolios at this level would have benefitted from more careful selection of work to prevent repetition and to enhance development.

Lower Level

The work at this level tended to lack coherence both in content and in presentation, which was due to the absence of a clear theme or intention. There was a lack of commitment to the work resulting in submissions containing little evidence of sustained research or purposeful experiments with media. First-hand recording was often absent, and instead, a heavy reliance on images taken from the internet was often seen. Candidates tended to copy, trace, or photocopy these images in order to draw or paint over them in an attempt to disguise their weaker technical skills. The lack of meaningful first-hand research and exploration of sources meant that these candidates had little subject matter to enable the development of a personal response to their theme.

Some candidates referred to the works of other art practitioners but were less able to make connections to their own work to inform and support the development of ideas. Other candidates would have benefitted from looking at the work of other art practitioners to gain a better understanding of visual language, especially the use of colour and composition. Such enquiry would have given perspective to their subject, to form a deeper understanding of the imagery they were creating, in the initial stages of the work.

The lack of visual stimulus made an impact on the overall submission, with candidates having insufficient knowledge or references on which to develop their ideas. The stronger work demonstrated an attempt to develop a theme. However, the work often lacked continuity or any sense of a journey of discovery, and many of these candidates would have benefited from further considering the focus of their research material in relation to their subject. Frequently, the lack of critical analysis and self-evaluation of ideas in the supporting work resulted in outcomes that were unresolved.

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Paper 9479/02 Externally Set Assignment
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Key messages

- Recording of visual material should be relevant to the chosen question, but observations should be made from a variety of sources using a range of media in addition to the candidates' own photography. Candidates should be encouraged to research from their own locality or experience. An over reliance on images from secondary sources should be avoided as this limits individuality.
- Notation can provide a useful reference for candidates but should provide evidence of some degree of critical analysis of their work in progress. Candidates should avoid simply stating the obvious such as "This is a study of my house", or "I like the colours of this picture".
- Evidence of planning for the examination such as sketches exploring alternative compositions or colour ways would help candidates realise their intentions with confidence.
- Care should go into the organisation and presentation of all material, editing where there is too much. The submission should clearly show how the initial research material has been explored through experiments with media and process. Images should be combined and manipulated and ideas developed through to a personal and coherent examination response.
- Work larger than A2 in size should be submitted through good quality photographs.
- Candidates should not submit work on heavy board or stretched canvas.

General comments

Responses were seen for all starting points. The majority of candidates produced painting or drawing compositions as their final outcomes, with a few large-scale works submitted as photographs. A few candidates used the questions as starting points for design briefs, developing posters and a range of graphic outcomes. There were some competent and confident photography submissions. There were only a few fashion/textile and 3D submissions.

The questions were very often approached in an obvious, literal way. However, in some cases outcomes were a little obscure, while others were highly original and contained excellent critical analysis throughout.

Most submissions contained evidence of supporting material. The most successful submissions demonstrated carefully edited work presenting a clear journey from initial recording of relevant ideas and observations, exploration of media and processes, through to the development and planning of final outcomes. Visual studies were supported by insightful notation demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. Less successful candidates often attempted to include too much material, with studies that overlapped which were difficult to read. There were often written notes explaining ideas and processes, or long biographical details of chosen artists with little critical evaluation. Some preparatory work did not relate in any way to the final outcome and appeared to be a series of earlier classwork exercises.

Although candidates can work larger than A2, this work needs to be submitted as good quality photographs detailing size and close-ups of areas to indicate some idea of texture. In some cases, entire submissions were entered photographically. It is advisable to include some hand-drawn or hand-painted observational studies and experimentation to demonstrate the quality of candidates' abilities.

Higher Level

A wide range of resources and materials were used from pencil, paint, pen, pastel and collage to digital, photography, sculptural and fashion applications. There were some outstanding tuning and highly proficient examples of use of media and colour seen. Candidates showed excellent ability to combine and layer mediums: watercolour, pastel, gouache, acrylic, oil, stitching, found materials and collage. Candidates explored and experimented, took risks and consequently were able to produce highly original work showing

passion and engagement. They were able to explore complex ideas and concepts alongside developed and confident technical skill.

These candidates were able to make individual and mature connections between their ideas and the work of others. They were able to use critical thinking and visual analysis to support the progress of ideas and approaches to take. There was evidence of their ability to use reflection to progress in their work and to identify further research materials or visual references to build on what they had achieved and take it further through engaged investigations.

There was planning for their final work with alternative compositions explored and analysed. This enabled these candidates to approach their examination work with the confidence to fully realise their intentions. Starting points had been fully developed into compositions that were both imaginative and personal.

Photography included at this level showed further development of ideas in terms of setting up scenarios with attention to lighting and arrangement.

Middle levels

Most submissions fell into middle levels of achievement. Candidates often demonstrated a satisfactory level of working and showed a clear journey through their research to the final outcome. However, the depth in which they investigated their topics was less detailed and informed than those candidates at the higher level. Few of these candidates fully explored their chosen subject matter and some candidates would have benefited from more in-depth research during the initial stages of investigation. Some outcomes appeared confused with candidates opting to input all their ideas into the final piece without sufficient planning.

A range of appropriate media was used but the manipulation skills was inconsistent. Sometimes the scale in translation from smaller supporting work to a larger outcome presented challenges where the successful qualities of the smaller studies were not reflected in the outcome. It would have benefited candidates to have considered their selection of materials and to have experimented with different scales before attempting their outcome. It was often the lack of focused planning and refinement of skills which prevented progression to the higher level.

Sometimes the statement of intent was not made clear. Often there was too little annotation or none, making it very hard to follow ideas. However, in some cases there was very detailed annotation but these were at times very lengthy and some were copied from the internet. This needed to be refined to essential information.

Contextual referencing was often seen at this level, where relevant connections had helped to further ideas and had stimulated new ways of observing a subject to achieve an individual response. In others, this research was often not in-depth and usually led to literal connections in the candidates' own work, such as colour use.

Lower levels

There were many submissions that were one sheet of limited preparatory work and a final outcome. Preparatory work was often limited in terms of number of references, the quality of the response, the limited use of media and lack of focus. Assessment Objectives were not addressed evenly. At best an adequate or satisfactory standard was achieved, but often candidates demonstrated limited or basic abilities.

Many candidates relied on the use of secondary sources and where there was evidence of recording from direct observation it was usually confined to a few photographs of poor quality, often unrelated to the chosen question.

Some candidates covered their sheets with writing but not only was this difficult to read, it did not explain or connect to the work. Evidence of researching the work of other artists or cultures was either limited, unrelated or not included. Sometimes there were long biographical notes about the artists which did little to inform any practical exploration or development of the candidates' ideas.

There were many photographic submissions at this level where only a small number of photographs were included. It was impossible to know whether these few images were selected from many more, or if they were the only ones taken.

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/03 Personal Investigation

Key messages

- Most candidates had combined hand written and word-processed text as a way of organising and distinguishing between the research undertaken and the reflective, observational elements of the investigation. It is important that where candidates use their own hand writing that this is legible, ensuring that letter forms are clear and that the colour ink can be read easily especially if on black paper or over an image.
- This component requires candidates to make reference to others work and to record their ideas through drawing, photography and found images. It is therefore imperative that images are clearly labelled and sources are acknowledged as it can difficult to distinguish between the candidate's own photography and those that are taken from secondary sources.
- Some submissions contained numerous pages often repetitive and superfluous, these scripts would have benefitted from further editing to make the overall presentation more cohesive, considered and the journey clearer. In contrast, some submissions contained a single sheet demonstrating a misunderstanding of the requirements of the component.
- There was a heavy reliance on secondary imagery, where possible candidates should use a combination of direct observation through hand drawn studies and own photography to inform their ideas. Often work is limited through the sole reliance on found images.

General comments

- Most candidates had chosen a theme which greatly interested them and selected appropriate Artists that supported the development of their investigation. Most candidates produced a body of work in response to their theme, chosen Artist or Craft which reflected their exploration of the subject.
- Most submissions contained evidence of all four assessment objectives but there was a significant number that did not. Assessment Objective 1 and Assessment Objective 3 were areas in which some scripts would have benefitted from more in-depth research and personal engagement to support the overall development of the investigation.
- The work was generally well presented mostly in the form of sheets of card clipped or tied together. However, there were many submissions that exceeded the size limit of A2 and several candidates had submitted work mounted on heavy board.
- There was evidence of first-hand observations both in the gathering of visual stimulus and in recording information about the work of others. Candidates had visited Artists, exhibitions, or museums. Where this was not possible candidates had made contact with Artists via email, telephone or Instagram. In some examples this was highly beneficial but in others the questions asked could have been more considered to better inform the investigation.
- Submissions explored a breadth of disciplines within Art and Design through their chosen themes. Candidates investigated painting, fashion, design, architecture, installation, digital media, sculpture, with some submissions exploring conceptual art.
- There were examples of effective use of photography to present fragile or over-sized work. The strongest examples showed the work from various angles and used close-ups to demonstrate details and surface quality.

Comments on specific questions

Higher

The strongest submissions demonstrated a clear intention and a confident ability to carry out research using both primary and secondary source material. Candidates used direct observational drawing as well as

photographs and notes to record ideas, observations and research to create an individual response to their chosen theme.

Candidates working at this level showed a high level of skill with a range of media relating to the conceptual aspect of their work. Candidates were bold in their experimentation and were confident to take risks using prior experience of making Artist's studies as a reference point. At this level candidates were producing work in many forms not just painting and drawing but developing work through book forms, kinetic sculpture, video and performance art.

Where possible candidates had engaged directly with their chosen artists, either by visiting them or viewing their work in galleries or conducting interviews with the use of social media. The discussions were pertinent to the candidate's intentions and provided valuable insight and guidance.

The research undertaken was intense and led to the creative exploration of ideas. As the work evolved, these ideas informed further recording, which enabled greater depth and scope for development. The use of language was mature and candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of their aims as well as analysis of their chosen topic.

The integration of the practical exploration and the written analysis clearly communicated the candidate's intentions through the careful placement of text and image. The presentation was well organised and the outcomes were the result of a well-researched and developed investigation.

Middle

At this level the candidate's responses were often unique and intelligent but let down by the lack of recording and making in-depth reference to the work of others. Whilst the ideas were expressive, imaginative and confident, the candidate's ability to refine their ideas into coherent responses was less effective.

Some candidates chose conceptual themes that were difficult to explore through first-hand research, this was evident in relation to gathering visual stimulus to support the development of personal ideas but also in making reference to and analysing the work of others.

There was evidence of confident use of materials and candidates were innovative in their exploration of media and outcomes produced.

There was a mixed approach to the written element, some produced essays attached to the project or divided the writing into sections spread throughout the investigation. This was usually coherent and relevant to the chosen topic however candidates would have benefitted from improved integration of their written analysis to make stronger connections with their practical responses.

It was more common to see a reliance on reproducing examples of Artists' work as opposed to candidates using visual analysis to produce their own imagery. Although the candidates practical work did demonstrate a link to the Artist's work, it was often not fully explored with the responses being fairly derivative. Often the analysis of the work was superficial, a deeper understanding of the artist's intentions and motivations may have liberated the candidates and encouraged them to develop their own unique visual language.

Presentation at this level varied, in some cases there was a clear but limited journey with candidates working towards a final piece rather than producing a body of work and others exploring their subject in a broad and expressive manner but the journey was difficult to discern.

Low

Work seen at the lower levels suffered from a lack of direction and vague intentions, candidates were often unable to select an area of their topic to explore in depth and with purpose. This prevented some candidates from making an informed or coherent response. The weakest examples had clearly not benefitted from the amount of time allotted to this component.

There was evidence that some scripts had not understood the requirement of the component, some submissions presented a series of unrelated projects or separated the investigation into two unrelated sections of contextual research and practical work. Some submissions did not contain any analysis of work by an Artist and therefore was presented more like coursework.

At this level the control and manipulation of media was limited, there was little evidence of exploration and experimentation using a range of materials. Candidates that had fairly ambitious ideas were unable to realise their intentions effectively.

The written aspect of the investigation was often purely biographical, descriptive or seemed to be directly taken from the research source (often the internet with blue hyperlinks left visible) there was little analysis of technique or ideas. Factual and biographical detail took precedence over personal or critical analysis. In most cases candidates made superficial connections between their ideas and the work of their chosen Artist.

Some scripts focused on the theoretical aspect of the work of others and their subject but were unable to use this effectively to develop their own personal and practical responses.

The strongest scripts benefitted from a clear, identified theme. Some of the stronger submissions demonstrated an interest and enthusiasm for the chosen topic, but lacked evidence of personal observations, practical and informed responses. Candidates were unable to develop work effectively due to the lack of recording and limited sources.

At this level, the communication of ideas would have benefited from a more organised and logical compilation of work to show their journey. A clearer more structured approach to the investigation would have helped candidates organise their thoughts and responses.