

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9479/01 Coursework Assignment
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Key messages

- Successful submissions contained clear intentions and purpose with carefully organised work which communicated candidate achievement. Some candidates would have benefited from editing their work more effectively to show their ability to refine the work as it progressed.
- Stronger candidates demonstrated recording from a thoughtful selection of primary sources. Observation was detailed showing in-depth investigation using a range of media, including photography.
- Candidates who focused on interpretative topics or concepts often found it difficult to source original first-hand starting points, to demonstrate personal ideas. For others, engaging with accessible themes enabled a well-researched journey from initial research to final outcome.
- The work that contained an over-reliance of downloaded images from the Internet or secondary sources limited the candidates' individual response and undermined personal vision.
- Some candidates would have benefited from challenging their ideas through critical reflection. Investigating the works of others could have informed their direction of study and enabled development and the exploration of alternative compositions.
- Candidates who had labelled their own photography and cited other references communicated their achievement more effectively.

General comments

Many candidates carefully considered their choice of topic and this reflected a personal engagement throughout the work. Most themes provided opportunities to record from a range of accessible first-hand sources and contextual references. Some candidates visited art galleries and museums to gather research which stimulated creative responses. Useful annotation was often included which expressed intentions and indicated influences. Some candidates used friends and family as starting points for their visual stimuli, while others explored sources within their local surroundings. This enabled candidates to fully investigate their subject matter and achieve depth in the development.

A range of materials was used to explore and investigate ideas, but most candidates realised their work within the area of fine art. Photography was often included as a method of recording or development. Examples of 3D processes and printmaking were evident, with a few examples of textiles, graphic or fashion design. Portraiture and self-portraiture were popular as were ideas relating to the environment, pollution, land and seascapes. The investigation of themes in other submissions were less considered. Sometimes this reflected candidates' inability to coherently focus on a specific area of their chosen topic. This prevented the opportunity to record in depth, which limited the possibilities to build on an idea to inform the direction of work.

Most candidates made contextual references to the works of artists, and/or other cultures, which informed ideas to varying levels. The stronger work demonstrated intelligent connections which often supported development and direction of study. In other work, this referencing was not always relevant to the candidates' ideas or the topic. This lack of critical understanding prevented the work from progressing in a coherent manner.

Most submissions were appropriately presented on A2 paper or thin card, to show a coherent and sustained progression of ideas into a related final outcome. The strongest work was well organised and candidates were able to identify and present the most purposeful work to support their ideas. The careful selection of work enabled these candidates to clearly demonstrate the creative process. In contrast, the candidates who did not edit the most relevant work, included layers of excessive images, photographs and notes. This prevented coherence and a clear view of achievement.

Higher levels

These candidates demonstrated clear intentions and a consistent understanding of the assessment objectives, through intelligent exploration. Mind-maps were included which stimulated the candidates' ideas encouraging meaningful investigation. This was enhanced by the careful selection of relevant studies.

The work was inventive and reflected excellent technical competence to show accomplished media rendering. Detailed investigation of first-hand, and other sources, initiated ideas. These were explored through inventive media. Ideas were connected to contextual investigations which demonstrated effective decision making. Research was thorough and in-depth, forming a basis for development. Well considered thought processes encouraged high levels of achievement, as did critical thinking and self-reflection. Confident planning enabled candidates to review and refine their work towards their intentions.

Excellent observational skills and media experimentation naturally influenced ideas. Visual elements such as shape, form, colour and texture were explored to a high level, leading to inventive and resolved final outcomes. Candidate engagement with ideas was evident in their involvement in the setting up of still-life arrangements or directing models and organising scenarios. The use of photography was thoughtful and appropriate to intention. Images explored lighting, location and arrangement of set-up to inform ideas and the direction of the work.

Examples of design submissions indicated an excellent understanding of the design process from conception through to development, and into production. The stages were recorded and presented in a logical and clear manner, leaving no doubt as to what had been achieved through candidates' own merit.

Contextual referencing was included in most portfolios. Excellent links to relevant artists or cultures informed the work, enabling candidates to progress their own ideas through personal connections between their own work and that of the artists'. Ideas were informed and exploration with new media, techniques and processes deepened candidate understanding of the creative process. Intelligent annotation reflected candidates' ability to review and refine each stage of their work before producing the final outcome. The presentation was clear with thoughtful selection and editing of the work, communicating clear candidate achievement.

Middle levels

Many candidates carefully considered their topic for exploration, with opportunities for personal engagement and investigation, but their intentions were less clear. Most demonstrated evidence of first-hand recording with a good ability to gather visual stimulus from a range of relevant sources.

Stronger submissions at this level contained in-depth observational recording from first-hand study, where candidates extended their investigations to produce relevant research and enabled a personal response. However, in the work of some, ideas were initiated by copying their own photographs and producing studies that did not progress beyond the existing image. This work was often followed by a reliance on second-hand source material which varied in quality and relevance. In this instance, recording from direct observation would have encouraged a personal connection with the chosen subject matter to demonstrate greater skill in the recording of form, and the existence of the subject within space.

Many candidates made good use of contextual references to support ideas and influence directions for exploration. Most made obvious connections, such as exploring the artists' colour palette or application of paint. Others were able to analyse concepts and recognise the strengths in the works of others. This enabled them to make informed decisions about their own development. Many candidates demonstrated good technical ability in their manipulation of materials whilst recording observations and exploring ideas, but this was sometimes inconsistent throughout their portfolio. While some pieces were skilful, these candidates were not always able to apply the same level of creative or technical skill to other work. The media development often lacked the analysis required to develop the candidates' rendering skills. Sometimes, the final outcome did not reflect the strengths within the supporting studies and opportunities were missed.

Most candidates were selective in the work they chose to present, demonstrating a coherent journey of ideas. The inclusion of relevant annotation reflected their ability to review their work at different stages of progression.

Lower levels

These submissions were often identifiable by limited research that restricted development and the exploration of ideas. Themes were frequently unclear and many portfolios lacked coherence and a connection between the supporting work and the final outcome.

Recording skills were sometimes apparent to show some observation from first-hand study, but there was an over reliance on the copying of images from the Internet and other secondary sources. Other submissions contained very little research with no indication of reference sources. When observational studies and the candidates' own photography were included, they were often limited in accuracy and lacked the visual information needed for development into creative ideas. Some submissions contained disconnected images, which prevented a creative journey. These portfolios did not build on an idea or demonstrate a sense of purpose. Frequently, there was little intention, direction or personal connection.

Insufficient depth in the recording prevented opportunities for media exploration and candidates were unable to develop their skills in the rendering of materials or convey meaningful ideas. Instead, they relied on materials and techniques that they were comfortable with, rather than building their confidence and trying out other possibilities. Development was often limited due to a lack of clear intentions or purposeful visual reference, and any creative journey was very brief. Many submissions were disconnected and incoherent and lacked direction.

There was little purposeful contextual referencing to inform ideas. Where artists' works were referenced, this was often unrelated to the theme with candidates unable to make strong connections between their work and that of the artists. These submissions would have benefited from contextual recording to support idea development and media use, and to encourage critical reflection on their own work and that of others.

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Paper 9479/02 Externally Set Assignment
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Key messages

- Although most submissions contained evidence of all assessment objectives there was a notable lack of observational studies in some submissions. This was most evident in lower and middle range work.
- Artist links were mostly included but their relevance to the overall submission differed according to ability.

General comments

Candidates used the questions as starting points and a range of themes were explored including both observational and interpretative responses. There was evidence of some very personal and engaged work with many candidates demonstrating commitment in their visual studies.

Submission that contained more than the required amount of work often lacked evidence of candidates' ability to communicate a creative journey through carefully edited work. Too much work and overlapping imagery sometimes meant that the journey was incoherent.

Some candidates struggled with how to develop their ideas. Although many looked to the work of other artists, they did not always understand how to apply their research to their own work and progress with their intentions.

Lots of secondary-source mood boards were used to generate ideas. This is a good starting point but an over reliance on secondary imagery had a negative impact on some candidates' ability to demonstrate personal qualities and the overall mark.

Higher levels

The work at the highest level was thoughtful and reflected thoughtful interpretations of the questions. Submissions were personal, committed and contained a good balance of both primary and secondary sources. Appropriate sources were selected with confidence and intentions were intelligent and mature. The work was focused and well organised, effectively communicating the creative process.

Media selection was purposeful and was explored with energy and an enthusiasm to try out new effects. This in turn allowed for new ideas to develop. Use of media was skilled and refined but also experimental. Candidates were not afraid to make mistakes and importantly, understood that these could often lead to new opportunities and ideas. A range of media including collage, paint and pastels were appropriately manipulated to explore surface quality, form and pattern, reflecting ideas. Photography was used effectively to express intention, whilst also demonstrating candidates' clear understanding of the visual elements and technical ability.

Artist research informed the direction of the work and candidates working at this level were able to interpret ideas, use of media and meaning of the work of others to inform their own work. This led to some creative risk taking in terms of combining media. Visual imagery was independent and strong, with the supporting annotation showing relevant critical understanding and self-reflection as the work progressed. Initial images and ideas from the recording stage along with artist referencing, were creatively manipulated and inventive.

The layout of the work was well considered and communicated the creative process in a fluent manner. Candidates were able to edit their work and show their development in a clear and exciting format.

Middle levels

Work seen at this level showed the ability to make coherent and individual responses. Candidates gathered a range of primary and secondary imagery to inform their ideas. Many candidates included their own photography as first-hand source material and often made skilful drawings from these. However, these candidates would have found it beneficial to include more recording from direct observation studies rather than copying photographs, as this would have helped to inform ideas and develop their understanding of visual language. In other examples, observational studies were carried out using a range of media and candidates attempted to view or show their subjects from different angles and consider the context in which they were made.

A good range of materials and techniques were explored but manipulative skills were less confident and refined at this level. More effective evaluation of the work as it progressed may have led to more focused media exploration with clearer intention.

Many candidates were able to make personal links between their work and that of others but this often focused on the use of media, colour or use of motifs in the work. This could be developed further through the analysis of imagery and concepts. This deeper analysis may have led to more ambitious outcomes in some cases.

Where annotation was included, it tended to be more descriptive and biographical than analytical. Submissions were well presented and work demonstrated a clear engagement with the process but some candidates did not always know how to take their work further. Some outcomes appeared unresolved with candidates putting all their ideas into the final piece without sufficient planning. These candidates would have benefitted from better planning in advance along with studies of relevant artists to inform their ideas.

Lower levels

Submissions seen at the lower level relied heavily on found imagery to develop ideas and were limited by the lack of source material to fully explore a personal response.

At this level the submissions were inconsistent across the assessment objectives. Some candidates showed a satisfactory ability in their selection and handling of media but supporting studies demonstrated limited development in relation to the final piece. There was often a lack of clear intentions and the focus on a theme was not apparent. Consequently, research was inconsistent which prevented ideas from building into a developed body of work.

Investigating the works of other artists with more intention could have benefited the work of some candidates, enabling purpose and direction. This could have encouraged the selection of relevant and personal research and influenced idea development. Where artist research was included, it was often unrelated to the candidates' own work and did not fully inform their development of ideas.

The handling and application of media was often limited, as candidates had not fully explored how to use it. In many cases at this level, colour was applied to fill in between the lines. However, there were some examples of candidates attempting to be more expressive and use the brush mark to suggest mood and tone. Further experimentation, referring to the work of other artists may have led to more sensitive and confident use of media, combining different ways of working.

Greater engagement in their topics would have benefited the work of these candidates and encouraged detailed first-hand research. This could have helped them to develop their ideas into informed final outcomes.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9479/03 Personal Investigation

Key messages

- Most of the submissions were well presented.
- Some submissions contained work in excess of the guidelines and some included lots of sheets with very little on them. A few submissions were presented on a single sheet. It was clear that the requirements of the syllabus had not always been fully understood.

General comments

The majority of work was figurative in nature. The most successful topics chosen were those that were well defined and relatively narrow in scope, compared to very broad topics which were less successful. A few submissions focused on areas of design and architecture.

Most submissions adhered to the guidelines regarding word count and number of pages. However, some work submitted had little written content or was purely visual. These examples appeared more like coursework rather than a personal investigation. This limited their potential to achieve higher marks due to the lack of analysis of relevant artists' work and a lack in evaluation of personal achievement.

Many candidates had visited galleries and local artists in person which enriched the personal responses made. Reference to the work of many local artists was included within the investigations. Candidates recognised a connection between their work and that of others, often due to shared cultural experiences.

Candidates need to be mindful when attaching items to their submissions. Natural items such as leaves and petals tend to disintegrate. Candidates should not include pieces of glass, brittle plastic or ceramic pieces attached to the work .. Where candidates produce such pieces the work should be photographed and the photographs should be mounted on A2 paper. Where larger works and 3D pieces were produced, they were photographed well by candidates. Where candidates had used photography as a basis for their research, some would have benefited from annotation to distinguish between their own work and the images of others.

Some candidates' research relied on biographical detail and factual information but contained no analysis. Some had clearly cut and pasted information directly from the websites they were using. There was a lack of primary sources seen at the lower level.

Candidates are reminded that the investigation should support the development of their own ideas and artwork. Some candidates did not make any personal, practical responses of their own in relation to their research or comparative studies.

Most submissions concluded with a final piece, but stronger submissions included a written conclusion that reviewed the candidates' achievements in relation to their aims.

Higher levels

At this level, candidates showed full engagement with their chosen topics or themes. The work was imaginative and highly individual with intelligent choice of starting points. Candidates combined first-hand experience and direct observational studies with secondary sources to develop perceptive and intelligent insights effectively. This was evident in both the written elements and in the development of creative responses.

There was evidence of on-going research. Effective links were made between research into the work of others and the development of personal ideas. These examples were clear, and informed the direction of the practical journey.

The exploration of materials and processes at this level was excellent. Examples of sensitive and incredibly detailed paintings were submitted alongside original and technically advanced photography. Sculpture, design and fashion were seen with evidence of equally high technical ability and creative flair. The exploration of media was informed by the candidates' critical study and the momentum of the investigation was maintained through continuous evaluation and reflection.

The use of language was intelligent and demonstrated a clear understanding of the candidates' aims as well as the ability to analyse the chosen topic or theme. Where candidates had interviewed artists, either by email or in person, the quality of the questions elicited insightful replies from the artists, leading to informed observations and responses. Both written and practical work were cohesive and there was a consistent momentum in the journey of the investigations from initial ideas through to the conclusion. Candidates at this level integrated their critical and practical skills and this helped them develop ideas into a mature resolution.

Most submissions resulted in a refined outcome. Work was presented in context, either through the means of installation or placement within an exhibition space. The strongest submissions included a written conclusion that reflected the achievement of the investigation.

Middle levels

The mid-range submissions demonstrated research and recording from first-hand sources, but the choice of topic and associated artist research was less well considered. Secondary sources of imagery were more evident at this level.

Some candidates had clearly visited museums and galleries, or conducted online interviews with artists, but the information gained from these was less well directed. The quality of questions asked did not always allow for useful information to be gained. Information presented about the artist or art movement was often descriptive or relied on biographical detail. Candidates would have benefitted from taking a more analytical approach and applying this knowledge to develop their own opinions and creative work.

In many submissions, observations were interpreted through a skilful manipulation of materials, showing direct influence from their artist references. The connections made between the work of the chosen artist and candidates' own work was often seen in the exploration of media. Strengths were most apparent through practical investigation, rather than the depth of written analysis. A deeper understanding of the artists' intentions and motivations may have encouraged the development of candidates' unique visual language as opposed to being limited by appropriating someone else's.

Some interesting and individual ideas were seen at this level, but many submissions lacked coherence and were difficult to follow. The written content was often descriptive of the processes used by the candidates with little analysis or evaluation. Other submissions contained only visual material with little annotation and no analytical research.

In some cases, it was difficult to discern a journey and this had a detrimental effect on the project as a whole. However, most submissions at the mid-level showed that work had developed through the study of other artists or cultural material and demonstrated good integration between the practical and written work. Candidates developed their visual language to effectively communicate concepts and demonstrated a competent level of personal and independent study. Candidates working at the top of this category were able to reflect critically on their aims and achievements.

Lower levels

Submissions at the lower levels of assessment contained little evidence of research from primary sources. Few candidates at this level had visited galleries or studios to gain insights into other artists' work.

Images of work by others and related research material were pasted onto sheets with little coherence or idea of a topic or theme. Stronger candidates had identified a theme but the research connected to it was minimal.

Media exploration was often the strongest element seen in submissions at this level, but the lack of focus and direction prevented a realisation of candidates' full potential. Submissions at this level reflected a basic

ability to communicate through visual forms due to the lack of analysis of others' work and personal understanding of research material.

There was insufficient depth and scope in the work to enable a resolved or informed presentation. Further consideration of their aims, intentions and time available may have enabled these candidates to produce relevant and focused visual and practical studies.

Some submissions contained no written work at all, while others contained a minimal amount of descriptive annotation which did not impact on the development of individual ideas. The lack of visual research at the beginning of the project restricted the development of original ideas.

Often biographies of the selected artists were included rather than a focused investigation into the techniques used or context of the work. Written analysis was limited and frequently below the required word count.

Candidates working at this level were less able to reflect on the purpose of their work and to decide which ideas to take forward in order to progress with the investigation.