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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART AND DESIGN

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

<p>Paper 9704/01 Controlled Test</p>

General comments

Approximately 60% of candidates chose the open-ended themes from **Section A**, 30% the specific starting points from **Section B** and 10% the design briefs from **Section C**. Most responses were for the Painting and Related Media area of study with far fewer submissions for Photography, Textiles, Sculpture, Ceramics and Graphics. A very wide range of achievement was apparent with almost half of the work showing competent to high levels and a third an adequate response, acceptable for an AS or A Level pass. Of the remaining work, there were many very poor responses, which showed little progress beyond GCSE or O Level.

Candidates whose coursework experiences had encouraged a confident approach to preparatory studies were inevitably more successful than those with a more limited ability to observe, record and develop sources in response to the Question Paper. There were, however, examples of committed preparatory work, which did not necessarily lead to a successful outcome during the 15 hour time limit of the examination. Often, the reason for this was that the preparatory period had been used to practice an idea to perfection and the examination time subsequently used to produce a copy, rather than a development of research and ideas. This approach limited the potential to show critical judgement or personal evaluation as the work progressed.

Many weaker responses were inhibited from developing potential ideas through a lack of interest in directly observed research. Some, for example, avoided any engagement in secondary information from personal experience, choosing instead to make copies from printed media, or even attempting to respond entirely from memory.

There were fewer problems this session with the labelling and despatch of work, although regrettably some was still received with no clear identification of candidate, component or question number. Elaborate packaging and mounting of work continued to cause problems for the Board's administrators as well as Examiners. Some Centres allowed candidates to use inappropriate collage materials such as broken glass, plaster, sand and vegetable matter which, when unpacked, had spoiled other candidates work or was simply hazardous and unmanageable. While the majority of Centres are concerned to comply with the published regulations, those that do not create confusions that inevitably affect the assessment process.

Comments on specific questions

Section A (Open-ended starting points)

Question 1

Backyard

Some very personal and successful responses were seen, involving acute observation and imagination in transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary. The best work demonstrated strong manipulation of media to convey surface qualities. Less able work usually showed uncertainties in the understanding of spatial relationships. Most Photography interpretations, though technically competent, lacked the sense of selection and organisation of visual elements compared with the best Paintings.

Question 2*Rhythm in natural forms*

This was the most popular question and encouraged a positive development of ideas following thorough analysis of forms and structures. The best work achieved an energetic feel for abstraction through imaginative use of colour and mark-making. A limited ability to observe and record in the weaker work led to generalisation of forms, repetitive rhythms and dull surface qualities.

Question 3*Companions*

Also quite a popular choice with mainly human or animal sources, which, when based on firm observation, encouraged some very personal responses. Weaker submissions were usually based on copying photographs, sometimes not even those taken by the candidates leading to literal and sentimental interpretations.

Question 4*Shelves or storage*

An interesting variety of sources from the studio or the home, showing that candidates were prepared to make the most of what was around them. In the best work exhaustive preparatory studies revealed a high level of interest in the selection and organisation of objects as well as the spaces and intervals between them. Less strong attempts focused on repetitive arrangements or were uncertain in the observation of volumetric structures and spatial relationships.

Question 5*Interwoven*

Also a popular question, but mainly chosen by less able candidates to evoke fantasy structures by combining scant observations of foliage and human anatomy. Better responses focused more on existing structures such as textiles, baskets or hairdressing, with the most interesting examples using collage materials very inventively in the preliminary developments and final pieces.

Question 6*Keeping fit*

A less popular question for Paintings but often developed effectively by Photography and Graphics specialists. Some, however, chose the theme for comic book illustration that might have been more successful if directly observed research had been employed.

Section B (Specific starting points)**Question 7**

The still life group of plotted plants and gardening tools was quite popular. Many competent and proficient studies were seen for which the observation of forms, structures and surface qualities showed a firm understanding. Most submissions, however, showed only a basic level of competence with many uncertainties apparent in the relationships of objects in space. The Examiners noted that Centres where candidates were encouraged to arrange their own group of objects by making studies from different viewpoints achieved better results than Centres where candidates studied a group arranged by the Supervisor from a single viewpoint. Such limitations of choice inevitably affected the developments of personal evaluations, as well as the level to which the Assessment Objectives were met.

Question 8

The still life question involving several different items of footwear was the most popular choice in this section. Candidates whose preparatory studies showed an extensive experimentation with the arrangement of objects developed the most interesting compositional ideas. The best work showed a strong understanding of concavity and convexity, the voids and solids of forms, combined with a lively use of media to render surface textures and, sometimes, patterns. Weaker approaches often lacked ambition by observing one or two items separately, thus avoiding the problems as well as the stimulation of the question.

Question 9

Although the pose for the figure study, with the model seated in a high position, was challenging, the question tended to attract the most able candidates. An ability to convey foreshortening through precise observation of contours and an advanced understanding of underlying anatomical structures were usually apparent. Some of the very best submissions also incorporated dramatic lighting to enhance spatial effects and integrate the figure with the surrounding space.

Question 10

The environmental question, specified as an entrance hall, lobby or vestibule, attracted many Photography specialists, some of whom exploited qualities of light falling on wall and floor surfaces very effectively. The best Paintings were also atmospheric and a few included figures to add context and spatial depth. Several poor responses presented symmetrical compositions constructed by an eliminating understanding of perspective.

Question 11

The extract from Rohinton Mistry's novel, *A Fine Balance*, did not attract many responses, but those seen made good use of specific sources for research by developing richly evocative Paintings. Weaker work, as with **Questions 4** and **8**, focused on only a few items for unambitious still life groups, poorly arranged and showing only a basic understanding of forms and spatial relationships.

Section C (Specific design briefs)**Question 12**

The poster design for a National Aquarium, Zoo or Game Park was the most popular choice in this section. Although computer processes were used well to integrate text and image in the better work seen, much depended on good preliminary research for the development of selective imagery and letterforms. Less able candidates using the computer rarely progressed beyond the functional facilities to download and combine information for their designs. There were also some good examples of handcrafted posters that fully exploited optical effects of fish or animal markings, tonal and colour contrasts. The weakest work struggled to organise poor illustrations with inadequately studies lettering.

Question 13

There were fewer responses to the repeat pattern question with hardly any competent submissions seen. While most candidates made some observations of toys for the wrapping paper and carrier bag for a Toy Shop, their abilities to develop effective patterns revealed a lack of experience of appropriate techniques. Images were consequently repeated literally with little awareness of figure-ground relationships, positive-negative reversals or effective choice of colours.

Question 14

Even fewer candidates attempted the costume design question, but good preliminary research of technological and mechanical sources led to some inventive designs for the futuristic film or stage production. Some candidates, however, might have achieved higher levels if their designs had included research into the possible use of materials.

Question 15

Slightly more candidates responded to the packaging design question with most achieving a good level of technical expertise through the use of computer processes. Even the best examples, though, lacked the necessary impact of colour and tonal contrast to attract a consumer.

Paper 9704/02

Coursework A

General comments

The presentation of submissions

Most Centres had done as requested in that they had submitted the work for Component 2, Coursework A separately from Component 3, Coursework B. They had produced clearly labelled packets identifying the Components and the work inside was clearly marked with the Centre number and the candidates name and number. It is also most desirable that the work of each candidate is stapled or laced together in some way. However, quite a few adopted the practice of submitting both Components in one package and some did not even distinguish clearly between the two Components. Indeed some of the work was not labelled at all making identification almost impossible. Most Centres take great care in the mounting and presentation of the candidate's work but others are inclined to send in all of a candidate's output without selection. In these cases it is possible for weaker and irrelevant work to cloud the accurate moderation of the whole. For example, references to the work of historical or contemporary practitioners could often dominate the sheets of preliminary work in the form of numerous photocopies, many being quite irrelevant to the investigation of a subject or that they had aided in any way to the development of experiment and ideas. Much more irritating and counter-productive was when sheets were dominated in the form of a scrapbook of secondary sources such as magazine images or cuttings from tourist brochures.

Most Centres had taken on board the need for selecting the required percentage of entries to send for moderation when their numbers of entries exceeded 10, but some would still send the lot even when those entered amounted to over 20. This is unnecessary and costly. The packaging from some Centres is still quite excessive which adds immeasurably to the weight and bulk of parcels and folders.

Centres' assessments

Most internal assessments were generous and some were quite unrealistic which required heavy adjustments downwards. Many, however, were sincere and concerned to reward the candidates who had made genuine endeavour and shown commitment. Perceptions of achievements therefore tended to be more accurate when made for Personal Qualities and Manipulative Skills but much less demanding in the areas of Aesthetic Qualities and Critical Judgements. Mostly, the order of merit was accurately predicted, but sometimes an individual candidate's ability had not been recognised and there were other instances where weaker candidates had been positioned with much more able ones. These in all fairness had to be repositioned by the Moderators.

Areas of study

More than half of the work seen came under the heading of Painting and Related Media. There were, however, smaller numbers of candidates who submitted work under the headings of Photography, Textiles, Graphics and 3D Studies. Sometimes, Centres did not seem to be well organised in sending in clear, photographic records of work of 3D work, which could not be easily transported.

Comments on the work submitted for Coursework A

Many Centres are still not quite clear about the different emphasis placed on the two Coursework Components. Component 2, Coursework A should place more importance on the aspects of investigation and development and less on the resolution of the final piece.

In the area of Painting and the use of Mixed Media, there were various approaches in respect of investigation but the best work presented was when there was a firmly directed focus on a particular source. These could be on man made or natural objects, environments or on human figures. Often work based on vague themes came to little because of the lack of serious research. Candidates would tackle their subjects with little or no knowledge gleaned from investigation. Mostly candidates were interested in the experiment and use of their chosen media but regarded finish and technique to be of more importance than developing it as a means of visual communication.

Besides the usual still life and observational work presented, it is interesting to comment on the range of work submitted under the heading of Painting and Mixed Media. There were dramatic pencil drawings, abstract painting combined with lino printing, seascapes and beach scenes with figures, seascapes, landscapes with metal bridges, busy street scenes and portrait character studies.

The most successful candidates were those who explored their ideas through the composition of visual elements. Less strong work was when candidates had failed to arrange their ideas through the manipulations of such elements as space, line, form, contour, shape, colour, surface and tone as it affected their own particular needs.

Some Graphic Design candidates provided fine examples of designs developed through careful investigation and manipulated development. This was to be seen particularly when there was strong personal input and the creative use of computer processes. Unfortunate choice of subject matter sometimes made it difficult for candidates to show of their skills adequately.

There were not many examples of successful developmental approaches in respect of Textile Designing. Fashion designs often were made to evolve without the benefit of much experiment and tryout. There were a few well presented fashion designs and sometimes with practical development. At best these were most distinctive and particularly when candidates had taken the trouble to study and understand the complexities of figure drawing. Much of the weak work was little more than poor copies from magazines.

There were not many examples of 3D work. Sometimes the work was not clearly portrayed in the photographs sent in order to confirm its appearance, instead of the actual pieces of work. This is a permitted form of presentation but it is important that the visual aspects are adequately covered. There were a few imaginative and conceptual pieces of sculpture. Also some bold and forceful heads of African tribesmen sculpted in papier-mâché. Some of the paper sculpture was a little flimsy both in concept and in execution.

Subjects chosen for photography included musicians. Here the work was well evolved with experimental viewpoints and tonal overlays. Action photography involved the use of shutter speeds in pictures of athletes and walkers. Some pictures were just well composed but otherwise rather dull without much theme or subject focus. Some carefully composed and successfully lit portrait photography did provide interesting theme work. Weaker submissions were little more than colour or black and white snapshots sometimes with little or no aesthetic value.

In all sections of this Component, it is expected that there should be the exploration of a variety of possibilities from which ongoing evaluations and judgements will enhance development towards the final statements.

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

See comments for Paper 9704/02.

Comments on the work submitted for Coursework B

Many of the courses run in Centres had produced some excellent submissions. Candidates had responded with commitment and resolve and their final pieces of work were taken to a high degree of success. These candidates showed that they had benefitted from their introduction and understanding of the development of ideas such as they had practiced in their Component 2. Here they had been equipped with the necessary knowledge and critical understanding which they could add and develop together with their own personalities and imaginations. The middle grades of success were characterised by limited or poor research and the very weakest work in that it was little more than the copying of secondary source imagery showing little personal knowledge or skill.

As with Component 2, most candidates had offered study in the form of Painting and Related Media. Many of the best pieces were portrait studies of considerable note, lively figure drawings which included one outstanding study of a newly born baby boy, the old favourites of busy street scenes obviously the products of a locality which were rich in colour, spacious and evocative in atmosphere. There were scenes in order where candidates had shown mindfulness of the work of The Impressionists. Intimate room interiors displayed confident drawn perspective and landscapes were steeped in strong sunlight. Not all work was good because sometimes candidates had skipped the research and developmental stages or had not learnt the basic skills of their art, but nearly all were personal. It is always rewarding to look at study that has been motivated by local culture.

There were a few contributions that fell in the 3D Study area. Ceramics candidates had produced hand thrown pottery which on the whole did not show a lot of skill or development. There was modelling which resembled Egyptian artifacts. Here ideas seemed a little immature for A Level study. Certainly development was limited. In the field of Sculpture there was one outstanding contribution of a series of large scale works, cobwebby in structure and impressive in restrained colour and emotional content.

Some of the weakest work seen was in the area of Textiles which often floundered because of poor research as well as in the control of techniques and processes. Batik and Tie Dye work could be exciting in experiment but disappointingly muddled in the final outcome. Poor quality of drawing often marred fashion design. Some extraordinary and imaginative made up garments were seen but most were flimsy and badly made. Often the fashion work was heavily derived from magazine sources.

Mostly, the Photography was disappointing as it seemed that work had not progressed much beyond superficial technical control which resulted in a dull selection of images and a poor sense of personal direction. On the other hand, some noteworthy portrait studies were seen and a few candidates had produced some imaginatively experimental study but it seemed to lack focus in development towards an end product.

In Graphics, candidates in many instances seem to have at last, learnt control over their computers and use them rather than be dictated by them. Many showed great confidence in the ability to manipulate texts and personal imagery which led to the finished art work of a highly professional standard. However, at the lower end of the scale there was much weaker graphic work with candidates still struggling with the basic elements of design organisation and the refinement of images in relationship to letter forms.

Paper 9704/04

Related Study

General comments

In the second year of this Component for the June session, the Examiners noted an improvement in the numbers of candidates achieving competent to high levels for their investigations. Teachers had generally made good use of the proposal forms both to seek advice from the Board's Examiners and to encourage their candidates to focus their intentions on selected works seen through first hand observation.

While the organisation of studies varied considerably from a sequence of visual responses to word-processed A4 file presentations, only the better submissions referred to the relationship of the investigation to coursework experience. The purpose of the Component is to encourage effective evaluation of coursework itself as well as existing examples of historical or contemporary practice. However, because the Component is assessed separately from the moderation of coursework marks, candidates needed to communicate more clearly how their critical judgement and personal evaluations were affected by the relationship of their studies to their coursework. Candidates who made references to their own work, often by including photographs of it, were noticeably more able to demonstrate a personal involvement which met the Assessment Objectives to a high level.

Comments on different levels of achievement

The most successful studies were clearly informed by first hand experience of local practitioners and with the support of relevant comparisons made with mainstream example only accessible through reproductions or the internet. Such investigations were sustained, demonstrating enthusiasm and personal involvement. The works focused on were analysed for their use of visual language, materials and themes. Whatever the methods of presentation, text and image were thoughtfully integrated with clear notations of illustrations. Visual material was also varied, consisting of a range of practical responses, such as drawings, paintings, designs, diagrams and photographs as well as reproductions. The cultural contexts of works was discussed in relation to style or theme, enabling candidates to communicate knowledge and critical judgements in terms of personal evaluations.

At the mid-levels of achievement candidates often presented their findings clearly, but tended to rely on description of works and cataloguing of information rather than aiming for depth of analysis. Practical responses were rare or, if included, consisted of copying works in their entirety, rather than focusing on specific aspects such as the use of composition, design, visual language or media, processes and materials. Written material, though usually articulate, tended to express opinions in terms of likes and dislikes with little further explanation especially in relation to personal experience from coursework. Although the organisation of studies at this level was generally coherent, particularly when computer processing was used for lay out, there was less concern to employ visual elements to create an exciting or imaginative visual presentation to meet the specific Art and Design Assessment Objectives.

A lack of structure and organisation characterised most studies at the lower levels of achievement. Biographies, transcripts of interviews without comment, regurgitated historical information and poor photocopies for illustrations were interspersed with each other without relationship. Sparse research recorded from personal experience. Reliance on such patchy information meant there was little to analyse or comment upon. Certain kinds of studies on craft processes amounted to little more than technical manuals and other studies of architecture or the built environment simply catalogued examples unselectively, as if producing a tourist brochure.

A few very poor submissions fell well below the level of maturity expected for A Level. Some of these amounted to no more than general statements written on a few sides of paper. Others consisted of scrapbooks of unrelated material with no discernible reason for their inclusion or contained many sheets of text simply photocopied from books. Regrettably, there were still some Centres who have not understood the purpose of this Component as an investigation into existing works of Art and Design. Such Centres need to refer to the syllabus and standards booklets or seek further advice from the Board.