

ART

Paper 6010/01

Drawing and/or Painting from Still Life

General comments

Both questions seemed equally popular, perhaps a few more candidates opted to work from **Question 2** which included a bowl of fruit. This question gave splendid opportunities for the display of rich colours and varied surface qualities. However, candidates had to be able to cope with the accurate construction of ellipses when dealing with the bowl. Whereas the still life, which relied on the composition made up primarily of book shapes, demanded a strong knowledge of perspective and how to construct angular forms.

The work submitted for both questions was carried out by candidates using a wide variety of media. However, by far the most preferred was watercolour or soft lead pencil. Some candidates had chosen to use pen and wash, impasto colour, colour pencils or soft pastels. Many candidates had worked on the largest paper permitted whilst others had used much smaller sizes with equal success. It sometimes seemed as if the choice of media was often the choice of the Centre as opposed to the individual candidate.

Candidates often demonstrated a total inability when it came to being able to sit objects securely on the ground level, often there appeared to jump wildly around in space and sometimes even without any context to each other! Another area of concern was where candidates were unable to adequately consider the composition as a whole, particularly in relation to the shape of the paper and the items making up the composition. All too often, little or no interest was shown with regard to the negative spaces left by the various elements resulting in lacklustre compositions and all too often backgrounds were omitted altogether

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 **A pile of books, one of which lies open in the foreground, together with a notepad, pencil and pen.**

At the top of the range, candidates addressed themselves to the full knowledge of the assessment criteria required and expressed it with all the artistic ability at their disposal. The forms of the objects had been explored with the convincing use of tones and cast shadowing. Depth had been created with the correct use of perspective. Contour and shape together with overall composition had been well planned. Lettering on the books and their spines had been conceived with care so as to follow the forms. Colours were well blended and the individual artistry of the candidate shone through.

Mid range often typified by compositions that were not adequately explored, or they were beginning to be out of relationship to each other or to their background. The perspective of the books showed a certain lack of assurance. There was often deficiency of form making, both in colour and in tone. The composition of the individual items was not thought through and often ill fitted the actual picture space. Colours could be bland and shapes could be lacking in contour.

The weakest candidates showed a minimum understanding of what composing a still life composition requires. Books, pads and pencils floated about the page without being aware of their own particular space in the whole. Unfortunately a small number of candidates could not be awarded a grade as their work did not conform to any aspects of the assessment criteria. The work could be so small, ill shaped and scruffy that there was little hope of expressing much artistic ability.

Question 2 **A glass bowl containing a variety of fruit, some of which has been peeled and sliced. Include a knife and spoon in your arrangement.**

This was a question for those who could use colour skilfully. There were so many quite beautiful watercolours seen in response to this question. The best candidates showed confidence in their expression of form; had skilfully organised the objects in space, understood the construction of the ellipses for the bowl,

had robustly composed their pictures, used rich colour combinations, paid due respect to textures and brought to the work their own style and personalities.

Candidates in the mid range produced adequate but lifeless pictures. Sometimes these responses came from candidates who did not quite understand how to produce depth in their pictures and ignored the background but at other times it was due to a lack in form and contour that was devoid of any aspect of surface quality that could be discovered in the variety of fruits.

Some candidates were not too concerned with subtleties of shape or colour and could not convincingly locate the individual shape of objects to the ground they were meant to sit on. These were elementary pictures which could only merit the lowest grade.

A small number of submissions were made up of almost unrecognisable and isolated shapes with little or no artistic substance.

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Paper 6010/02

Drawing and/or Painting from Observation

General comments

For the study of natural and man-made specimens, **Question 2**, flower heads and stems, and **Question 3**, a decorative object, were equally popular, accounting for over three quarters of all the work received. Fewer responses were seen for **Question 1**, twisted straps or belts. No responses at all were submitted for the subjects for working out of doors of **Questions 4** and **5**. Considerably fewer candidates were entered for Paper 2 this year, which resulted in less work below an acceptable standard compared with previous sessions. However, similar numbers of candidates achieved the upper levels of the mark range.

Most work was carried out in water based paint or soft pencil, but pastel, oil pastel and crayon were often seen. Fortunately, there were only a few cases where soft pastel work had not been fixed: this can cause damage to other candidates' work and the mark sheets, so Centres are asked in future to check that the work will not smudge. A more serious problem for Examiners is the sealing of each candidate's work in plastic envelopes before despatch: these have to be removed before marking can begin and cause considerable delay, untidiness and confusion to the examining process. Centres are asked again not to continue with this unnecessary method of packing and despatch of work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *Twisted straps or belts with buckles*

Many strong studies were seen for which candidates had given full consideration to a stimulating arrangement of the specimens and the point of view adopted for observation. The most able responses communicated rhythm and vitality through a precise analysis of the edges of straps, winding their way sinuously through space. The rendering of shiny or matt leather, patterned textile or beaded surfaces was achieved with confident colour or tonal gradations and lively mark-making. The structures of metal buckles, some with very elaborate decorative features, were very precisely defined. Shadows cast by the belts on the surface of the receding table top were observed with subtlety to enhance a sense of space within and around the objects.

At mid levels of achievement such spatial relationships were usually competently established, but less precision or refinement was apparent in the rendering of the thin edges of straps or belts. Buckles, too, tended to lack precise definition in terms of their specific structures. At the lower levels of success candidates experienced difficulties when observing the twisting and turning of straps, which led to some confusion about which side or edge could be seen from the point of view of observation. In the fewer poor responses seen, generalised forms and clumsily drawn shapes failed to convey the identity of the specimens and buckles were quite unrecognisable.

Question 2 *Two different flower heads with their stems placed in a clear glass or jar*

The work received covered the full mark range with several studies achieving outstanding results. All flower specimens were well chosen for their shapes, structures and tones or colours, but the most able candidates were also concerned with making a simple arrangement interesting to observe. This was often achieved by altering the length of stems to create more interaction between the specimens and the surrounding space. The most successful studies showed a precise analysis of key structures where the foliage grew from the stems, as well as very accurate observation of the ellipses of the glass and the changes seen where the stems entered the water. Many beautiful and refined watercolour and oil pastel studies were seen, but there were also some exquisite renderings in pencil.

Work achieving the mid levels of the mark range offered a serious interest in sustaining observation. However, unless the flower heads were seen from the front, uncertainties were apparent about the directions

they were facing. Stems entering the water were usually competently rendered with subtle tone or colour, but the precise structures of ellipses at the top, base and waterline of the glasses were less well understood or defined. At the lower levels of achievement observation was less sustained. Tentative use of line with vague tonal relationships led to uncertain renderings. Ellipses on glasses were rarely attempted which affected the sense of space throughout the studies. The weakest submissions tended to be very schematic as if a remembered diagram was being reproduced rather than a study from observation. Lines were crudely drawn, tone lacked gradation and colour was applied straight from the pot, without mixing or modulation.

Question 3 *A decorative object made from wood, metal or glass*

This question, which was as popular as Q2, provided candidates with much more freedom to choose a particular object of interest. Very few examples of inappropriate objects being selected for study were seen, and an immense variety of different crafted specimens was chosen, many of them imbued with distinct cultural and ethnic origins. As the Examiners were not necessarily familiar with all the objects chosen, the real test for candidates was whether they could convey a convincing analysis of forms and structures as well as surface qualities of colour, tone and texture to render the wood, metal or glass materials. It was interesting to note that most candidates were successful in communicating this information to the extent that the objects they had observed could be reproduced from their studies.

Many lively responses of wood carvings, glass birds and animals, metal lamps and ceremonial weapons were seen, the best of which were observed from considered viewpoints and used media with expertise to render different surfaces, forms and structures. Mid level achievements often adopted a frontal point of view which led to symmetrical placing of the object on the paper when consideration of a different position and the directional light source to create cast shadows could have motivated better results. Analysis of contours and edges tended to be vague at crucial points which needed more definition in order to convey precise structures. In the less able responses ellipses of cylindrical objects or the planes of boxes tended to be unrelated to each other or the surrounding space. However, it was only in the few poorest submissions received that difficulties arose about understanding of the identity of the objects selected for observation.

Subjects for working out of doors or from a sheltered position

Question 4 *A stack of wood for fencing or building*

No submissions were received.

Question 5 *A view looking down or up a staircase or some steps*

No submissions were received.

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Paper 6010/04
Composition in Colour

General comments

About a quarter of all submissions focused on the theme for **Question 5** *Beasts of burden*. **Question 2** *Landmarks*, **Question 3** *Beneath the surface* and **Question 4** *Craftwork for sale* were equally popular with each attracting a fifth of the candidates. There were fewer responses to **Question 1** *Working out* and only a small number attempted the literary extract of **Question 6** which described building repairs to a house after a storm. Teachers might wish to note that as so few candidates have been interested in such extracts during recent years; it will be replaced by a sixth open-ended theme for future sessions.

There were less entries for Paper 4 this session but the numbers of candidates achieving the upper levels of the mark range remained consistent with previous years, whereas there were far fewer submissions which fell below a satisfactory level of response. Most compositions were carried out in water colours or acrylic paints. Some candidates were also very successful in combining paper collage elements with their paintings. However, Centres that encouraged candidates to mix sand and even glass with water based paints should be aware that such materials rarely remain attached to the paper and, consequently, cause damage to other candidates' work. Soft pastels and oil pastels were also used well, but work in crayon was usually too superficially applied which led to very vague colour and tone relationships. Some Centres continued to seal each candidate's submission in plastic envelopes, despite repeated requests not to pack the work in this way.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Working out

The theme was mainly interpreted in two ways, either fitness exercises or people engaged in their occupations in the street or countryside. Very few high level responses were seen as the control of the forms, structures and movements of the human body depended on a sufficient experience and practice figure drawing skills. Most interpretations of fitness exercises were based on attempts to copy poor quality secondary information of anatomy and muscle structures. Some submissions achieved more success by placing runners in a landscape setting, but weight lifting, for example, was often depicted in isolation from any particular surroundings. Compositions of men or women working outside were more adventurous or were based on personal experiences of such activities; this encouraged ambitious intentions and led to some relatively successful outcomes.

Question 2

Landmarks

Many impressive renderings of distinctive buildings or particular landscape features were seen. The best responses showed a considered compositional placing or point of view and used colour and media with expertise to convey a sense of atmosphere in the surrounding space. Mid level paintings were generally well drawn in terms of perspective and recessions, making good use of the decorative features or textured surfaces of buildings. Less interesting submissions invariably offered a symmetrical composition, as if the information was taken from a picture postcard. The weaker attempts struggled to give any feeling of solidity to buildings which were usually shown isolated in space or in no particular setting. Landscape renderings also lacked any distinctive feature or consisted of unrelated surface textures applied to formulas for land, foliage, sky and water.

Question 3*Beneath the surface*

Many imaginative pictorial ideas were seen in the context of underwater creatures or diving activity, the best of which were enlivened with rhythmical compositions and evocative light and colour. Interesting interpretations were also seen depicting root systems and animal or insect burrows under the ground. Others created effective images based on anatomical diagrams or deconstructed biological models. A few more sophisticated ideas sought to convey feelings hidden beneath the facades of social conventions. Some candidates focused on burial, achieving depth and gravity with depictions of skeletal remains, but less successful interpretations tended to rely on secondary sources for rather literal illustrations of a lone mourner at a graveside. Most mid level responses of underwater scenes and achieved some compositional organisation with the placing of marine life, plants and rocks. The weaker underwater attempts, however, consisted of horizontal parallel lines with repetitive fish shapes scattered between them.

Question 4*Craftwork for sale*

Several excellent interpretations were received which offered rich compositions of figures placed among decorative pots, hanging textiles and ethnic carvings. Some ambitious settings depicted extensive craft markets seen against particular areas of a town or city. Mid level responses often focused on stacks of items partially obscuring a shopkeeper or customer which resulted in simple but effective outcomes, but these usually lacked the richness of pattern, colour and atmosphere of the better paintings. Less successful approaches either went no further than a still life depiction of a few items which lacked any human context, or figures, stalls and crafts were spread very widely apart within the picture space at the expense of any compositional unity or coherence. The weakest attempts offered little more than one or two poorly drawn pots which hovered in isolation in the middle of the paper.

Question 5*Beasts of burden*

This was the most popular theme and also attracted a large proportion of the most able candidates. Working elephants, camels, oxen, mules and donkeys were all frequently depicted carrying heavy loads or harnessed to carts. Interestingly many candidates chose to develop their ideas in the human context, showing compassion for those whose daily task involves transporting goods without the benefit of mechanical or even animal assistance. Many lively compositions were seen, some focusing close-up on animals or people and, others set in rugged landscapes which enhanced the strain of carrying the burdens. The majority of candidates clearly responded to the theme from personal experience and a familiarity with the activity in the context of their own surroundings as the settings of paintings were nearly always conveyed in terms of specific rural or urban environments. There were fewer less successful responses to this theme and even these had a sense of real life and were only limited by poor drawing skills.

Question 6*Literary passage describing a builder repairing a house after a storm*

Although there were so few submissions, two interpretations achieved excellent results, one with a viewpoint from ground level looking up at the builder at the top of the ladder, the other seen from above looking down at the damaged roof and debris on the ground. Several other responses were more limited in terms of rendering building structures, but achieved some success in conveying the sense of chaos evoked by the extract.

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Paper 6010/06
Craft B Coursework

General comments

Too few responses to this paper to make appropriate general comments.