

ART & DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Coursework

Key messages

- Where photography is included, candidates should label this work to clearly distinguish between their own photographs and those images that are taken from secondary sources, such as downloaded from the internet or from books.
- Although the internet can be a valuable source for researching information, overreliance can undermine the personal vision of the candidate and the individuality of their work. The strongest work used a combination of recording approaches, including from direct observation.
- The development within some of the supporting work would have benefited from more focus. It was sometimes unclear how work seen in the portfolio had informed the final outcome.
- Some candidates would have benefited from referring to the work of other artists in more depth to inform different approaches to manipulating their own images and the development of ideas.

General comments

The coursework submitted was generally personal and candidates developed individual ideas from a variety of starting points. Most candidates chose painting and related media to realise their outcomes, but there were also a few photography, graphic design and 3D submissions.

Preparation, organisation of work and the appropriate use of media overall was good and most candidates presented coursework on A2 sheets securely fastened and properly labelled. Some candidates may have benefited from editing their research to show better refinement and evaluation of their work as it progressed to a final outcome.

Many candidates demonstrated the ability to successfully develop ideas from initial observational studies leading to resolved final outcomes. Where candidates struggled to develop original ideas they may have benefited from more research into the work of relevant artists to inspire different approaches to their supporting studies.

Stronger submissions demonstrated methods of recording from traditional media, such as drawing or painting, as well as from digital processes, such as photography and use of the internet.

Where final outcomes were larger than A2 in size, or were three-dimensional and fragile, many centres submitted good quality photographs showing a clear and thorough representation of the work.

Higher levels

Stronger candidates displayed ideas and issues that were well thought through, and explored highly topical, sensitive and personal themes. These submissions included evidence of creative development within the portfolio work that directly led to the final outcome.

At this level candidates had researched relevant artists and this was used extremely well to inform and enhance the candidates' ideas. Candidates used a variety of approaches to gathering initial images, looking to explore and investigate the theme in depth. For example, recording from different locations or viewpoints, using different scales, and changing conditions or times of the day. These candidates used a range of media and approaches, such as quick sketches and own photography as well as more detailed observational studies.

Stronger candidates were also open to exploring and experimenting with a variety of considered and appropriate techniques and processes, including printmaking, a range of painting medium and techniques, pastels, 3D materials and mixed media. This was often as a result of using information gained through artist research which helped to inform the selection of media and techniques.

Candidates were able to successfully review and reflect on their work to make informed decisions on which ideas to develop and how to refine techniques and compositions before producing the final outcome.

Middle levels

At this level the quality and depth of the portfolio work varied greatly. For many candidates, research was purposeful and was recorded from a range of relevant sources. Appropriate visits to exhibitions, museums or from exploring the possibilities within the local environment often provided good starting points for research. Recording was made through photography, drawings, paintings or mixed media experiments. However, some candidates were unable to maintain the depth of investigation and quality of observation as they developed their ideas. At times the final outcome lacked refinement or it was not the result of a development of ideas and media exploration, but was instead a repeat of an initial study.

At this level some candidates were less able to critically analyse their work to identify the most promising ideas. Sometimes the chosen media translated less effectively into a different scale, or the image and media were not successfully organised into a resolved composition. If the evaluation had been stronger, candidates would have been more able to communicate the ideas and intentions seen in the portfolio.

Lower levels

At the lower mark range, candidates were limited in their ideas and research and often relied heavily on the internet for their inspiration. This could have been improved by more evidence of working from first-hand observations. Such observation would have allowed these candidates to develop a better understanding of their chosen theme and could have allowed for more exciting and thoughtful responses. Exploring the texture, pattern or colour of an object, for example, could have led to some more extensive media experiments, which could have informed the development of the outcome. Candidates could have referred to their research into other artists and designers to inform their own work and to inspire media experiments and design ideas.

Technical skills at this level were often limited and candidates were less able to explore alternative ideas. Images were organised with little understanding of the visual elements, such as tone, colour and form, and candidates often did not try out different compositions. These candidates would have benefited from more in-depth investigation of the theme by gathering more images from a range of sources, including direct observation, at the initial stages. More self-evaluation would have helped to inform media use and planning for the final outcomes.

ART & DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Externally Set Assignment

Key messages

- Candidates should be encouraged to make observational studies from first-hand sources where possible. An overreliance on secondary sources limited some candidates' personal response.
- There was good use of the candidates' own photography to investigate a topic during the initial stages of the creative process, but this should not be used in isolation. Candidates should also make detailed observational studies using a range of media to explore their starting point in depth.
- Candidates would have benefited from carefully selecting and editing their preparatory studies to show depth, focus and coherent investigation. The avoidance of overlapped imagery would also benefit the presentation of intentions.
- Where photographs are included, candidates should label them to clearly distinguish between their own photographs and those images taken from secondary sources, such as the internet or books.
- The assessment objectives are not discreet units and should be seen as a holistic part of the creative process. Some candidates had labelled the pages of their supporting portfolio with a specific assessment objective, for example 'page 1 as Assessment Objective 1', for their recording. This can be useful to enable candidates to reflect on their work to see where they have met the assessment criteria, but it does not accurately capture how the creative process is rewarded.

General comments

The submissions were generally well presented, but some submissions far exceeded the required number of preparatory sheets as stated in the syllabus. Candidates would have benefited from editing their work to meet the requirements. Successful submissions demonstrated work that had followed the natural sequence of the creative process, where ideas had been enhanced by careful selection of studies for presentation.

Many candidates demonstrated a thoughtful and sustained body of work and used their chosen question to stimulate a creative journey. Appropriate investigations of the works of other practitioners or cultures made a positive impact on the progression of work and encouraged creative and individual responses. Research from first-hand observation was essential to demonstrate a personal response.

The question inspired a range of approaches. As well as observational work, some candidates took a more abstract or interpretative approach. For example, the responses to **Question 2: A plant against a patterned background**, often inspired detailed observational work through the sensitive rendering of materials. However, candidates also chose to consider the abstraction of the subject and explored colour relationships as well as abstract shapes, spaces and patterns between the leaves and the background. In responses to **Question 4: In conversation**, in addition to the literal observations, there were interpretative responses which included conversations through technology, sign language and symbolism.

Many candidates explored their starting points through drawing and painting materials and other media, such as print-making, collage and textiles. Candidates' own photography was also often included as part of the recording process. New media such as graphics tablets and software for digital painting were also seen, particularly in relation to design responses. This was often used as a process for exploring ideas, creating interesting effects, and sometimes combined with drawing and painting materials.

Higher levels

Stronger candidates demonstrated good recording from direct observation with candidates demonstrating excellent personal involvement in the investigation of their chosen question. Candidates thoughtfully explored a variety of ways to gather meaningful recording. Candidates were able to revisit their research and ideas to supplement their recording with further stimulus to develop the work. Candidate engagement with a variety of lively media was seen in the range of presented studies. This was seen in the responses to **Question 1: Celebration**, where work was often energetic with layers of collage, paint and pastel work and lively mark-making which expressed the topic with vigour.

Themes were explored in excellent depth and intentions were clear. Appropriate artist referencing influenced ideas, development and experimentation with media. Personal evaluations and critical analysis were apparent and relevant annotations informed exploration. Candidates thoughtfully selected appropriate materials to best express the characteristics of their starting point, which was explored to excellent levels. Paints, inks, pastels, pencils, mixed media and photography were rendered to express observations of surface quality, pattern, form and structure. Ideas had been refined as the work progressed.

The high level work was thorough and a considered response to each assessment objective was seen in submissions. Candidates worked to their strengths to explore a range of individual ideas and approaches.

Middle levels

Many candidates presented individual responses and explored their starting points with personal engagement. Recording from direct observation was purposeful. This was apparent in responses to all questions, but **Question 3: Outside my window**, illustrated many observations of situations which included outside a house window, and also views from trains, shops, high rise offices to show different angles, viewpoints and scenarios. This provided many possibilities for further exploration and attempts were made to investigate the subject in depth. However, some work lacked focus and intention which impacted on the level of observation and the coherence of the work.

Most candidates demonstrated their recording skills and ideas through a range of materials. Good technical skills were presented and candidates demonstrated their ability to select appropriate media to produce individual results. However, some candidates were less confident and used a limited range of materials. This limited the investigation of their topic and the scope for development.

Development in the work at this level varied. Many submissions demonstrated how investigations into works of other practitioners and cultures had influenced ideas to inform approach, composition and media choice. Other work contained repeated images of singular forms in different media, rather than using the recording to show alternative ideas and compositions. Final outcomes often developed through informed preparatory work, but the choice of scale and media had not always been sufficiently practiced or considered. Consequently, some submissions lost the detail and effects seen in the earlier works. Candidates were not always able to critically assess their own work to develop to their strengths.

Lower levels

Submissions at this level often contained few, or sometimes no evidence of observation made from first-hand sources. Mobile phones were often used as a tool to gather images, but these were not always appropriate. While this is an immediate and accessible way to gather recording, the scope for candidates to demonstrate some skills in understanding composition, lighting effects and researching relevance sources is limited. These images were often either of poor quality, incoherent or repetitive, or not always carefully edited. The lack of meaningful studies from direct observation led to many candidates relying on secondary-sourced or downloaded imagery from the internet, which prevented a personal response.

Submissions sometimes lacked the scope to form a range of ideas because of a lack of purposeful recording. Often development was narrow. Any investigations of artist referencing were either limited or unrelated and did not inform development. Many candidates at this level did not have the confidence or the technical ability to explore a range of media with refinement and the rendering of materials was often weak.

Submissions often lacked the scope to show a meaningful exploration of the topic with coherence and a clear direction. Instead of progressing through a development of ideas, the final outcome often remained disconnected to the preparatory work. The final outcome was often a copy of an earlier study or photograph. Much of the work at this level lacked appropriate personal engagement and made little progress from initial thoughts.