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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

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

Over half of the candidates chose questions from **Section A**, the open-ended starting points, for which the most popular themes were **Question 2, Relaxation, Question 3, Magnification, and Question 6, The old and the new**. Although another third of the candidates chose questions from **Section B**, the specific starting points, a very large number of these entries were for **Question 7**, the still life arrangement of fruits. Less than 10% of the candidates chose questions from **Section C**, the specific design briefs. Most submissions were for the Painting and Related Media area of study, but Printmaking, Photography, Graphic Design, Textiles, Fashion Design and Three Dimensional work in clay or plaster were also received in substantial quantities.

While at least two thirds of the candidates achieved very competent to high levels of success, over 20% of the entries were of an excellent standard, worthy of the highest levels of the mark range, and several truly outstanding responses were seen. In the best work preliminary research from direct observation was followed by a variety of explorations of ideas and experimentation with media and processes. Personal evaluations, therefore, developed as the work progressed in a controlled and sequential manner. This clearly enhanced confidence to undertake the examination work which continued to grow further within the 15 hour time limit.

At mid levels of achievement the attempts to develop ideas were often based on insufficient research and investigation. This limited the potential for experimentation with composition, media and processes. Compositional ideas needed further exploration, particularly in terms of the relationships of visual elements and the selection and control of line, shape, form, space, colour, tone and surface qualities. Without such developments, single ideas became repetitive or over-rehearsed, leading to a loss of vitality and interest in the examination piece. A number of less able responses were received; these were poorly informed by sparse research which then inhibited potential developments and evaluations. Candidates who blatantly copied existing images from secondary sources did not meet many of the Assessment Objectives either evenly or to a satisfactory level.

The majority of work was well labelled and sensibly mounted before despatch. However, it is also important for the label to state which question a candidate has answered. Problems arose when the examination work was not firmly attached to the front of the preparatory sheets. Sometimes media such as oil paints or acrylics had been given insufficient drying time before despatch; this resulted in different candidate's work becoming stuck together and subsequent damage when it had to be separated. The practice of wrapping every sheet in tissue paper or placing it in transparent envelopes also adds to the risk of damage to the work when such coverings have to be removed. To ensure that work does not stick together a thin layer of talcum powder and a single piece of paper to separate the sheets is recommended.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Open-ended starting points

Question 1

Foreshortened

The theme was mainly interpreted in terms of the human figure seen from unusual angles or tall buildings seen from below. Some good personal photography informed research of the built environment, enabling candidates to develop dynamic compositions with striking contrasts of light and shade. Many candidates, benefiting from a regular experience of figure drawing for coursework, excelled with strong analysis of anatomical structures and forms. Some of the less successful approaches offered conventional street scenes created with laborious perspective but failed to understand the concept of foreshortening.

Question 2*Relaxation*

A popular choice in this section and the fourth most chosen question of the whole paper. Figure drawing specialists also tended to interpret this theme, rather than **Question 9** in **Section B**, mainly for reclining poses, sleeping, reading or sunbathing. Domestic animals were also focused on, but with more reliance on photographic recording than directly observed study and this often led to a flatness and a generalisation of forms at the mid levels of achievement. Some Graphic Design specialists also chose the theme to develop competent work for design briefs for CD covers or book jackets about relaxation techniques. Some Photography submissions, however, were little more than snapshots of people lying around and lacked any development or selection and organisation of a compositional idea.

Question 3*Magnification*

The third most undertaken question of the whole paper which informed a variety of areas of study from Photography to Textiles as well as the development of abstract solutions for Paintings. Thorough research led to a variety of possibilities in the best work seen. Experimentation with mixed media encouraged a strong selection of forms rendered with contrasting light and shade as well as pattern exploiting a selective and controlled use of colour. Less successful work used the question to mask off parts of studies but offered little development of magnification. Weaker attempts often confused the theme with distortion, offering no more investigation than the application of a computer program manipulation to a secondary source image.

Question 4*Ritual*

Many interesting interpretations were seen from the specific contexts of religious ceremonies to everyday actions, such as washing and brushing teeth. Dance rituals were particularly well exploited by the more able candidates, resulting in exploration of movement and rhythmic patterns, often developed towards abstraction. At mid levels of achievement masks were a common source, but research was rarely sustained enough to offer a higher potential for design, sculptural or compositional development.

Question 5*Fast food*

Surprisingly, this theme was a less popular choice in this section but several submissions showed the development of striking ideas beyond the banal, some of which exploited the graphics and letterforms of packaging and neon advertising signs. Some very competent still life studies were seen at mid levels of achievement and many Graphic Design specialists also chose the question to develop briefs for posters, menus and packaging.

Question 6*The old and the new*

This was by far the most popular theme in this section and the second most undertaken question of the whole paper. The most usual interpretation focused on carefully selected objects for still life arrangements. Many of these achieved excellent levels of analysis of forms in relationship to space and the use of tone and colour to render surface qualities of different materials such as metal, glass, cloth, plastic and paper. Contrasts of shining newness with decay was also applied to natural forms, buildings and the human form, particularly portraiture. Although the work received covered a wide range of ability, most submissions achieved competent to high levels with few very poor attempts seen, mainly because nearly all research was firmly based on direct observation.

Section B – Specific starting points**Question 7**

Over a fifth of all candidates chose this still life group of different fruits arranged in a bowl with others, peeled and sliced, placed on a plate with a knife. The work covered the full mark range with several outstanding, many excellent and a large number of very good and competent submissions. The best work followed exhaustive preliminary investigations for which compositional organisation had been explored in terms of viewpoints, forms and structures, directional lighting, cast shadows, subtle hues of gradated colour and surface textures. At mid levels of achievement structures, such as ellipses on bowls and plates, and cast shadows tended to become unrelated to the forms of fruits and the surrounding space. Less able work struggled with the ellipses of the bowl in relation to the table top and found difficulty in placing the knife on the same plane as the plate; some ability to use media was apparent in the rendering of surface qualities of the fruits but this was usually achieved at the expense of form and structure.

Question 8

There were far fewer responses to the alternative still life theme of packing in progress for a journey. The more able candidates planned their compositions well by carefully selecting appropriate items to make interesting arrangements. Some of the best work, for example, developed a more individual interpretation by including items of personal interest. The most effective arrangements involved the surrounding space by placing suitcases on tables with other items on chairs and the floor. In the less able attempts the objects tended to be piled together in a heap and many problems were apparent in projecting the open suitcase within space.

Question 9

The figure study pose of the model, seated at a small table in front of a bookshelf, reading or writing possibly attracted less candidates because at least four questions from **Section A** appealed more to those who wished to interpret the human form. However, the suggested pose was undertaken by a number of very able candidates and several outstanding submissions, worthy of the top 10% of the mark range, were seen. Analysis of forms, structures and directional light sources including cast shadows was highly accomplished. Compositions were thoroughly planned in terms of relating the model to the surrounding space and the book shelves in the background. Only a few less successful studies were seen, many of which were based on a photographic record of the model, resulting in flat forms, vague structures and very generalised tones and colours in imitation of such mediocre information.

Question 10

Less candidates chose the environmental question of a view of a road junction, but several excellent responses were seen. Similar to other questions, the development of an interesting compositional idea depended on thorough research of information. One notable submission was developed from sustained observation from a window overlooking a junction; a remarkable record of movement and change of traffic and pedestrians led to an outstanding examination piece. At mid levels of achievement telegraph and electricity poles were effectively observed to inform interesting compositional ideas. Some very poor attempts were seen for which the focus was on road signs as flat surface pattern with very little understanding of how to create surrounding space.

Question 11

The literary extract, describing a work shed, from William Trevor's 'The Story of Lucy Gault' attracted only a handful of responses. A few strong ideas grew from research of carpenters at work in specifically studied workshops. There were also some poor still life interpretations of three or four tools.

Section C – Specific design briefs**Question 12**

The logo design brief was the most popular choice in this section. However, very few submissions achieved the upper levels of the mark range and most design developments were only just adequate for an AS/A Level standard. The theme concerned a club for vintage car owners named 'WINGS'. Sparse research on cars and letterforms from the Internet seemed to satisfy most candidates who then developed little more before using computer programs again to finalise their designs for a membership card or a newsletter. Only a few were ambitious enough to develop ideas for a banner for the club's annual rally. Those who did achieve a competent level showed some awareness of how to enhance and integrate letterforms with an image by considering border shapes, light and dark linear emphasis and selected tone and colour. Some very poor work was seen for which the logos sprang from nowhere with lettering that was hardly considered beyond preliminary doodles. Such candidates had clearly not benefited from an adequate course in graphic design techniques before undertaking a controlled test at this level.

Question 13

The design for a festoon or a garland to be placed above interior doors or windows attracted only a few candidates. All work, however, showed a thorough research of flowering plants to inform a selective use of tone and colour for designs of competent to high levels of achievement.

Question 14

The costume brief for human chess pieces was undertaken by a substantial number of candidates. At the upper end of the ability range several submissions offered excellent design sheets, overflowing with visual ideas and experimentation with media and materials. Accomplished figure drawing informed lively presentation of sculptural forms for chess piece costumes. One outstanding candidate also produced miniature manikins presented with clear photographic recording. A number of much weaker attempts were seen for which the development of ideas lacked an interest in the relationships of visual elements. Although some thought was apparent in solving the design problem in terms of the construction of costumes, such candidates were unaware of how experimentation with media and different materials could enliven the presentation of their ideas.

Question 15

Only a few responses were received for the packaging design brief for a protective helmet, using the trade name 'HEADSURE'. Candidates who achieved a competent level of success had engaged in some preliminary observation of cycling or sports' protective helmets before choosing appropriate lettering to integrate with selected information. However, designs were rarely developed in relation to the three dimensional form of a package and tended to be conceived in terms of a single side only. Consequently no designs were seen which worked on the packaging as a whole. Some very poor attempts were seen which made use of basic Internet images of helmets without developing any appropriate letterforms or considering their placing on a package.

Paper 9704/02

Coursework

General comments

Some work seen for this session was of the highest calibre where Centres' understanding of the syllabus requirements for this component had been well understood. They had structured their courses to encourage candidates to choose themes which could be thoroughly researched through a range of processes and techniques, and which could be developed largely from direct observation of first hand sources.

However, the majority of submissions were rather mediocre, where secondary source material was very common. Too many candidates relied heavily on this approach as a final idea with little or no personal development. Some candidates, clearly skilled technically, produced safe; competent copied work rather than being encouraged to experiment and to develop their own personal ideas.

For this component, referencing the work of other artists/designers is a useful way to encourage investigations into use of media and working methods – also into ways of approaching a variety of subject matter. However, a series of copies of other works, or long and detailed biographical notes does little to inform personal exploration or development.

There was often a misunderstanding of what is meant by experimenting with media, too often candidates produced an image of the same subject but in varying media such as watercolour, pastel and ink, instead of experimenting with different effects that can be created with media and mixing media.

The quality and the relevance of supporting work varied enormously. Where sheets were selected containing evidence of source material, experiments with media by the use of trial samples, exploration of ideas, and some documentation of historical, contemporary, or cultural influences, then candidates' individual levels of ability could be measured against all of the Assessment Objectives.

In all too many cases Centres had paid little attention to this and had included much work which was of little relevance to the coursework project. This could possibly be a misunderstanding by some teachers of showing development by including earlier work to show how much candidates had progressed from the start of their course to the finish.

Teachers' assessments were very varied. Most had placed their candidates in the right order of merit but felt that they had to use the full mark range. In all but a few cases the best was marked too generously and the weakest too harshly. Weaker Centres tended to over mark in the domains of Personal Qualities and Knowledge and Critical Understanding; especially where work was highly derivative and where there was little reference to the work of others or of any reference to cultural issues.

Whilst most Centres take great care over the presentation and organisation of their submissions, there are still those who fail to realise the importance of this, completely ignoring the syllabus guidelines. Quite a few Centres are submitting the work of both components in one package, and some did not even distinguish clearly between the two components.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

The majority of entries were from this area and a wide variety of approaches were seen. The best work was from Centres who had encouraged avenues of research based on one particular source or theme, and from which candidates could explore from direct observation or first hand experience. These submissions contained experiments with a variety of media: drawing techniques, collage, resist techniques, printmaking, and photography. Ideas had been developed from initial drawings, and they had not been afraid to experiment (some successful, some were not), but a progression could be seen. Colour had been used in an inventive and imaginative way. The use of digital photography is being increasingly used as a means of gathering information and is particularly useful in considering compositional arrangements or investigating different viewpoints and angles.

Mid range work was still very experimental, but candidates tended to regard finish and technique to be of more importance than a series of sheets of visual investigation.

Weaker entries largely consisted of "finished" pictures completed as class exercises, and some which were obviously copied from other photographs or illustrations.

3D design and sculpture

There appeared to be more entries in this area this year, but results were generally disappointing. Materials used ranged from fired clay, wire, card, papier mache, and plaster.

Most candidates had not experimented sufficiently in different media and were unsure of their strengths and weaknesses.

In only a few cases were themes sufficiently explored through observational studies using drawing, painting or photography. This lack of observational analysis limited most candidates' range of information from which they could develop work into 3D forms. This resulted in an emphasis on finished work which were copies of photographs of animals, birds, fish, etc. lacking in any real understanding of shape or form.

There were a few pieces of ceramic modelling submitted unfired and very fragile. Although accompanied by photographs these were of such poor quality they gave little additional information.

Graphic design

Submissions for this area were very varied in both content and levels of competence.

There was some excellent illustration work produced. Images were well researched, and through experimentation suitable media had been selected which was both sensitive and relevant to the subject matter.

Printmaking techniques had been used to generate images. These had been scanned and digitally manipulated into designs for greeting cards. Original sources could be traced from candidates' own drawings and photographs.

Mid range and weak work lacked research, experimentation, or exploration. There were many examples of logos produced from nowhere, without references or any development. At this level IT was seldom used in an original creative way, resorting to an over reliance upon secondary imagery.

Photography

The best entries showed a very good understanding of this medium and had achieved a very high standard both technically and aesthetically. Candidates had selected suitable themes to explore through the camera. Supporting work showed a variety of processing experiments. Final prints demonstrated they had understood the importance of light sources and prints were clear, clean and sharp.

There were some successful submissions using photomontage techniques combined with drawing and over printed images.

Weaker work showed a lack of skills or care in developing and printing. There was little consideration of basic composition and design. Subject matter seemed rather arbitrary with little exploration of themes and the result often resembled a collection of photo snapshots.

Textile and fashion design

There were only a few entries for this area. Some of the most successful had combined a range of techniques into intricate repeat patterns, using stencil and screen printed images on batik or tie dye backgrounds.

Less successful entries, whilst understanding the technicalities of the craft, were lacking in care or understanding of design development.

Sometimes images of animals or plants had simply been copied from weak secondary sources, with no personal input or development.

Paper 9704/03

Coursework

General comments

Entries for this component varied enormously, and generally reflected the quality of the teaching and in the way courses were structured to allow candidates to produce evidence which meets all of the Assessment Objectives.

There was some outstanding work which demonstrated that a sound structure had been imposed during earlier studies for Component 2, giving candidates a range of skills and the confidence to explore ideas in greater depth and to sustain these through to accomplished finished outcomes.

Where links between the Personal Study were relevant and firmly established, the influence on looking at the work of other artist/designers had a positive effect upon submissions for this component, both in the technical handling of chosen media and in the choice of themes to explore.

Many Centres still fail to understand the differences between the two components, encouraging submissions consisting of a number of finished pieces (many the result of class exercises). There was little or no in depth research which led up to any final resolved piece. In some cases work done during early stages of a course featured as supporting work for this component.

There were some extremely weak submissions containing work of poorly copied images from internet sources. Sketchbooks, when submitted, were more like scrapbooks or a few pages of unrelated drawings.

Teachers' assessments were a little more realistic for this component. Since there should be a clear relationship between this component and the choice of subject studied for Component 4, Centres' marks within the Assessment Domains of Personal Qualities and Knowledge and Critical Understanding were generally much more relevant and accurate.

Where reductions were made it was generally at the very top end of the mark range. At this level submissions should show a level of consistency in all the Assessment Domains. In many cases submissions were highly competent in Manipulative Skills but lacked enough evidence of substantial research and development. Similarly some candidates had produced excellent investigations and collected lots of visual research, but their final pieces were lacking in Aesthetic Understanding.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

Still life themes dominated entries, although the built environment and landscape studies were also a popular choice. Many had used the figure as a starting point for investigations. Good use had been made of the work of others in researching portraiture and painterly techniques. Some of the more mature submissions were exploring subjects and issues of a very personal nature or were developing abstract themes. These were still based upon extensive research from first hand sources and candidates' own personal experiences.

The outcome of some of the best research resulted in some excellent large scale canvases demonstrating a competence in the ability to construct complex compositions and execute these with a proficiency in the use of media.

Mid level work was also ambitious in intent but levels of understanding in some or all of the Assessment Domains meant that intentions were not always carried through successfully. Some submissions at this level had highly competent manipulative skills but much of what had been discovered within their research and experimental sheets was not carried through into the final piece.

There were some very weak entries where too much emphasis had been placed upon making finished pieces without exploring anything in depth. Sources for study at this level were largely derivative and lacking in a personal engagement with the subject.

3D design and sculpture

Some of the most innovative and mature work came from this area of study and results were justly rewarded with maximum marks.

Ideas had been researched in depth and chosen subjects explored using a range of techniques to gather visual information. The work of others had inspired experiments in working with materials to develop ideas into 3D forms. Final outcomes had used a range of techniques to arrive at some very refined images which showed a full understanding of 3D form, space and scale. The siting and lighting of their finished work had also been considered and fully resolved.

Weaker candidates appeared to have been rightly discouraged from using this area as a means of entry.

Graphics

Submissions were very varied. There was evidence of some sensitive illustration work with a competent use of media and drawing skills. Package design seemed to be popular, particularly with the better able candidates.

Results here were generally very distinctive and successful, being well informed through development based upon first hand study showing excellent drawing and design development skills.

Where computer generated work was submitted manipulative skills were highly competent with some very "slick" and highly finished results. However, there was little evidence of a personal engagement with an over reliance upon the use of second hand imagery.

Photography

There were only a few entries, mostly of a competent to a very good standard. Most had some source material and the best had produced some thorough investigations of chosen themes using a camera in a very creative way, showing a variety of angles, and viewpoints. Light and shadow had been explored to create and heighten mood and atmosphere.

Exceptional entries had fully understood the power of the camera to explore photo documentary themes of current social and political issues surrounding their own environments. There was some interesting digital photograph submitted in which the candidate had projected images onto the human figure and recorded and manipulated these.

Textile and fashion design

Only a very few candidates had carried any interest shown in Component 2 through to this component. Some block printing, batik and woven work was seen. The most successful were those linked to personal studies which involved visits to local craft studios and work shops. There was one excellent submission developing weaving skills through to woven blinds, but most other submissions were more involved with technical approaches and had not paid enough consideration to initial research or of refining and developing design ideas, therefore limiting the access to all areas of assessment.

Paper 9704/04

Related Study

General comments

The studies received continued to show an overall improvement, with more candidates achieving the upper levels of the mark range. The majority of teachers have a clear understanding of this component and aim to encourage individual diversity of investigation as well as focused, selective and well organised presentation. There were still a number of less successful approaches of a borderline standard and quite a few which were inadequate for an Advanced Level submission. The reasons, which are varied, are addressed below, but some Centres are evidently still unsure of how to approach the component. Teachers should have no inhibitions about contacting CIE for advice; they would also find the CD-ROM, AS/A Level Art and Design Standards which is available for purchase, very helpful for all components of the examination.

One of the key factors that encourages a successful outcome occurs at the initial stages when teachers introduce the aims of the component to their candidates. This concerns candidates' motivations and interests which need to spring from a central focus of their current coursework. Once this has been evaluated the existing works of practitioners or specific sites, which are accessible for first hand investigation, can be identified. Other mainstream sources from books or the Internet can also be selected for comparisons. This enables candidates to establish their intentions and complete the Outline Proposal Form (OPF) of which several examples are shown in the syllabus. It is highly beneficial to both teachers and candidates if the OPF is then submitted to CIE for Examiners' advice.

Of course, candidates will then need further advice from their teachers about how to fulfill their intentions. There were, for example, many poor studies for which perfectly viable proposals had been approved, but which fell far short of presenting a sustained investigation relevant to intentions. The worst outcome, which sometimes occurs, is that a candidate simply does not do the work or attempts to patch together several pages downloaded from the Internet at the last minute. To avoid such disasters, teachers need to monitor the progress of the investigation by making sure that candidates accumulate enough relevant research to allow their studies to develop well ahead of the final submission date.

Once the research has been conducted candidates then need to focus on selection, organisation and presentation. This concerns visual material, such as drawings, diagrams, paintings photographic records and reproductions as well as written material, quotations, headings, sub-headings, notations and the introduction, conclusion and bibliography. It is important to note also that the study needs to incorporate references to and photographic records of the candidate's own coursework in order to establish how the investigation is related to it. This might be included as part of the introduction or the conclusion or such references could occur throughout. Whether or not computer processes are used for the final production of the study, candidates need to allow themselves enough time to refine, improve and clarify the overall presentation, including the cover.

Comments on different levels of achievement

The best studies which were sustained with confidence, independence and enthusiasm, communicated a strong sense of involvement. Focused analysis from both primary and secondary sources was used selectively to inform personal evaluations of cultural contexts, stylistic influences, the organisation of visual elements and the use of materials and processes. Thorough planning of the layout of a variety of visual materials integrated with text, headings and notations resulted in lively visual presentations, often exploiting the double page spreads of an A3 sized format. Critical judgements, arising from the enquiry, were firmly linked to relevant coursework experiences.

At the mid levels of achievement a commitment to sustain the investigation and focus on specific examples of work was apparent. Candidates, however, tended to lack the understanding and confidence to analyse the compositions and structures of works for their formal visual elements, offering instead descriptions of what was depicted. Practical studies also tended towards copying the whole of a work rather than a selective analysis of a particular aspect of the composition or structure, such as form, space, line, colour, pattern or texture. Critical judgements were communicated in terms of personal preferences which were unsupported by comparisons or references to coursework experiences. Computer processes were generally used very competently to integrate written and visual material, but presentation was invariably confined to an A4 format which restricted the flexibility of layout and the inclusion of a variety of supporting illustrations. Sometimes hand written presentations were rather rough and ready with areas of illegibility. On the other hand, computer processed text printed onto transparent sheets also led to obscured rather than enhanced communication.

A lack of direction, structure or focus was common in the studies achieving the lower levels of the mark range. There was a noticeable tendency to include material which was irrelevant to the analysis of specific works. For example, lengthy biographies, general art history, chronological lists, questionnaires of the public and interviews with practitioners were frequently used to bolster the contents. This approach contributed very little to a candidate's understanding of Art and Design issues because the lack of references to the qualities of particular works did not encourage personal evaluations or critical judgements. A poor concern for the presentation of the material was also apparent. No identification or notation was given to illustrations which were often placed in an unrelated sequence separate from the text which referred to them; some illustrative material consisted of poor quality photocopies added at the end of the study, with no attempt to integrate image with text. Some studies offered little more than technical manuals, travel brochures or catalogues of works without comments.