



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
June 2011**

**Art and Design (Three-  
Dimensional Design)**

**ARTE4**

**(Specification 2200)**

**Unit 4: Externally Set Assignment**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **GCE Art and Design General**

*For information specific to Three-Dimensional Design go to page 5.*

### **General**

Familiarity with the examination resulted in more appropriately structured courses this year. The different demands of each unit were, in the main, been better managed. Students continued to explore a wide range of starting points, responding to diverse ideas and themes. Both traditional and contemporary methods and approaches were seen. Increasingly, in the latter parts of courses, students developed their own ideas. Many have engaged in issues-based work. The influence of photography, across a range of endorsements, had an impact on the nature of practice.

The response of students to critical/contextual materials had a significant influence on the work produced. Materials from books, magazines, the Internet and galleries were widely used. On occasions, visits to artists' and designers' studios and workshops proved to be productive. Unfortunately, some students found it difficult to move beyond the work of artists, designers and craftspeople and failed to make meaningful connections with their own work. In the most successful examples, students demonstrated that they had learnt from the work of others and at the same time successfully developed their own visual language.

Technical skills and awareness of the nature of particular materials continued to be a key aspect of the most accomplished work. Often the development of skills was a central consideration during the AS year enabling students to develop independently and with confidence at A2. The work of some students was really exciting and displayed an impressive level of achievement, maturity and competence. Clearly, such work was the result of many hours of conscientious effort and practice.

At the core of much of the most successful work, across a range of endorsements, was the development of drawing skills as a means of researching and investigating, and developing ideas. In some cases drawings were successfully presented as final outcomes.

A continuing problem was the tension between quality and quantity. Many students produced large quantities of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. There is no specific guidance in the specification about an ideal quantity of work. Students should be guided by the assessment objectives and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are realised through their work. Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent journey, with a genuine sense of purpose. Less successful work was often fragmented and poorly executed.

Sketchbooks and workbooks continued to be a key feature of the work of the majority of students. A smaller number chose to display their preparatory work solely on mounted sheets. Such work has become an essential means for researching and developing ideas and referencing critical/contextual work. It can reveal key aspects of a student's thinking, the starting point for their ideas, the impact of their observations and the influence of the work of others. In some cases, the quality of work produced was quite outstanding and demonstrated high levels of commitment and technical skills. Unfortunately, some sketchbooks were little more than a collection of cut and pasted images from magazines that provided little insight into students' ideas or intentions. In Photography, the workbook has become a key means of providing evidence of students' explorations into different techniques alongside studies into the work of a number of photographers.

Annotations and more extended written materials continued to be widely used across all units. At best, such material provided genuine insights into students' ideas, intentions and subject knowledge. At worst, written materials took the form of fairly superficial page fillers. Successful written materials can provide evidence of students' knowledge of subject specific

terms, the reasons for making various choices and the influence of particular works of art or design.

The use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet enabled students to access the work of a wide range of artists, designers and craftspeople. However, teachers and lecturers need to be vigilant in monitoring the websites used, steering students away from inappropriate material. Most students used a digital camera at some point in their course. Adobe Photoshop was widely used for the development of ideas. The majority of Graphic Communication students used computers extensively in both preparatory work and final outcomes.

### ***Administration, marking and moderation***

Many moderators reported improvements in the provision of essential paperwork. In the majority of centres mark sheets were correctly completed and deadlines were met. Problems occurred in a number of centres where Candidate Record Forms (CRF) and Centre Declaration Sheets were not completed prior to the moderation visit. Detailed comments on the Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) were helpful and informative.

Preparation for moderation visits was generally good, with required samples organised as an exhibition or as a collection of folders. In some centres, labelling was very helpful and clear. Useful maps, indicating exactly where samples might be found, were particularly useful. Most centres made every effort to provide a quiet environment for moderation to take place. Many moderators commented on the warm reception they received although there were still occasions when they felt under pressure to reveal marks. General feedback was generally well received and thought to be helpful.

A better understanding of the assessment objectives resulted in more accurate marking in many centres but there was a tendency to be somewhat lenient in quite a few centres. Occasionally, problems occurred when centres awarded their top student maximum marks when a far lower mark in the high sixties was appropriate. Many teachers and lecturers commented on the value of standardisation meetings and the provision of examples of work at different levels. Unsurprisingly, erratic marking was often linked to non attendance at these meetings.

### ***Assessment Objectives***

#### ***AO1***

The ability to develop ideas in a coherent manner was a key feature of the most successful work and impacted on all four assessment objectives. Successful students provided sound evidence of learning from contextual materials but at the same time developed their own visual language. Evidence of analysis and critical understanding was provided in different ways. Written materials often gave insights into students' knowledge and understanding and the reasons for making various decisions. In less successful submissions work seemed fragmented, intentions were not always clear and connections with the work of others were often somewhat superficial.

#### ***AO2***

A well organised course, at the beginning of the AS year, often gave students a good understanding of the nature and potential of a range of materials, processes and techniques. Students were able to build on these experiences when responding to a particular idea, issue or theme as they had a range of options available to them. It was clear that many hours had been spent developing these technical skills. Students were able to review, refine and communicate their ideas with confidence. In the least successful work, basic skills of handling materials failed to be developed and made it difficult for students to successfully explore ideas and realise their intentions.

### **AO3**

The availability of digital cameras and mobile phones with cameras had a significant impact on the nature of recording. Digital images often came first in sketchbooks and were followed by drawings and colour studies. However, there were many examples of carefully observed, analytical studies, which formed the basis of other work. Some students recorded ideas and observations in written form, often making notes about particular locations, or as a means of noting aspects of colour, light and texture. Initial ideas were often recorded as a series of thumbnail sketches. In Textile Design many students presented their ideas in the form of mood boards. Evidence of reflecting on work and progress was provided both visually and in written form. In some of the least successful work students packed sketchbooks with poorly selected collections of magazine images.

### **AO4**

In AS courses there was generally less emphasis on making a personal response than at A2 as many students concentrated on honing their technical skills and strategies for developing ideas. However, in some centres, students were given free rein and were encouraged to explore a wide range of personal ideas, issues and themes from the beginning of the course. This approach was often problematic as students tended to produce somewhat superficial responses. Generally, students seemed to respond well to a limited number of starting points. This was noticeable in the work produced for externally set assignments. The linking of written and visual elements was most apparent in the Personal Investigation. In the most successful examples, careful consideration and serious intent was clearly evident. Written work enhanced and informed visual elements and provided insights into the students' knowledge and understanding.

## ***Three-Dimensional Design***

### ***A2 Externally Set Assignment***

A range of work, varying considerably in size, scale and material, was seen. On occasion, good use was made of computer programmes to place photographs of models into a selected environment. Students presented architectural models, installations, product and environmental artefacts, sculptural costume, jewellery and ceramic tiles and pots as final outcomes.

Many students took advantage of the contextual references suggested in the question paper while others selected alternatives. Most students used these sources to advantage and demonstrated varying levels of analysis and critical understanding. On the whole, students addressed the assessment objectives within the time frame but in a number of centres the time available had not been used to best advantage.

### ***Response to the Questions***

#### ***Figures***

A number of students explored the idea of totems and symbolic forms in African art. The influences of Henry Moore and Antony Gormley were considered by others. Good use was made of life studies by some students.

#### ***Towers***

Several students explored Islamic influences and produced a range of tall glazed pots. Other interpretations of this starting point looked at aspects of bridge construction, pylons and fairground structures.

#### ***Site-Specific Work***

This starting point was popular with sculpture students who chose to work in the style of Claes Oldenburg using a range of soft materials. Product design students explored squares

and piazzas as locations for street furniture. There was evidence of photographic manipulation to place images of final pieces in selected settings.

### ***Connecting Forms***

There were several architectural responses where students designed connecting walkways and links between buildings, small bridge designs for gardens and designs for furniture. The work of Thomas Heatherwick was particularly noted as a source. There was one very interesting response seen based on studies of human cell structure. This was a starting point that a number of students felt had many possibilities.

### ***Protective Casing***

There were a number of units seen where medieval armour had been used as a source to inform development. This was a starting point where objective drawing of spiked seedpods, crustaceans and similar forms provided excellent material for developing ceramic work of the type produced by Heather Knight and Marilyn Fox. Star Wars images were used in the exploration of costume and, in general, informed personal outcomes were seen.

### ***Functional sculpture***

The work of Anish Kapoor was used along with that of Ron Arad where students developed forms of seating. This was not the most popular starting point.

### ***Distortion***

Responses to this starting point followed the notion of caricatures often using the Fluck and Law model or gargoyles. Students often used distorted photographs of friends and cartoon drawings before creating puppet like images in clay or fabric with varying degrees of success.

### ***Recycled Materials***

This starting point proved to be extremely popular and yielded a considerable variety of informed and meaningful responses largely using the examples suggested in the paper. The availability of accessible material and the fact it was a topical 'issue' seemed to make this popular with many students.

There was little evidence of serious omissions in the application of the assessment objectives although the quantity of work presented to address them varied considerably with some submissions being 'thin'. Some students did not analyse contextual sources in depth and their inclusion was often rather superficial. Rather more focus on the reviewing and refining of ideas (AO2) and reflecting on work and progress (AO3) led to outcomes that were more informed and meaningful. However, there was evidence that centres are delivering enthusiastic well-structured courses that introduce students to a wide variety of three-dimensional media and techniques which enabled students to successfully realise their intentions.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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