

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

Similar to previous sessions, two thirds of the candidates chose the open-ended questions of **Section A**, for which **Question 2** *Contrasts of light and shade* was by far the most popular. The specific starting points of **Section B** were undertaken by almost a quarter of the candidates, most of them choosing the still life arrangements of **Question 7** or **Question 8**. Less than 10% of submissions were for the specific design briefs of **Section C**, for which the DVD cover design of **Question 12** attracted the most responses. The majority of candidates produced work for the Painting and Related Media area of study. There were also a substantial number of submissions for Photography, but only a few for Textiles and 3D Studies. Graphic Design and Fashion Design specialists mostly chose the specific design briefs but there were also some responses for the open-ended themes.

Compared with the last session, more candidates produced work worthy of the upper levels of the mark range. Almost 20% of the work offered excellent responses and some of these were outstanding. The majority of submissions reached the mid levels of achievement by demonstrating a competent ability to meet the Assessment Objectives. There were also fewer attempts which fell below an acceptable standard for AS Level.

The best work was informed by coursework experiences, showing a clear development from directly observed research to the final solutions. The preparatory sheets overflowed with confidence and enthusiasm, engaging in a variety of investigations from the chosen starting points, experimenting with media and processes and exploring alternative arrangements for relationships of visual elements in an accomplished way. This sense of personal direction and creative development continued to be sustained in the final pieces of the 15 hour examination.

Mid level achievements always showed serious intentions when selecting and researching sources for a particular question. Experiments with media were lively and effective, although in many cases confined to a narrow range. However, it was often when this information was being developed towards the final pieces that limitations in the exploration of *Aesthetic Qualities* were seen. Candidates were reluctant to consider alternative arrangements of visual elements, tending instead to stick to the first idea and rehearsing it repetitively. This usually led to a mechanical reproduction of the idea for the examination piece with a consequent loss of creative development and liveliness.

Lower level responses offered a glimpse of a growing sense of maturity when searching for fresh ideas. Directly observed research, though, was sparse and sketchy with a noticeable tendency to rely on existing images or secondary source material from magazines. The range of media was usually very limited, with some candidates producing all the work in pencil or charcoal, when experiences gained from coursework ought to have instilled a more adventurous approach. At this level, too, very little exploration of the relationships of line, shape, colour, tone or surface qualities was apparent. Sometimes it was difficult to find any connection between the preparatory sheets, or sketchbooks full of cut and pasted images, and the work for the 15 hour Controlled Test.

The weakest submissions, however, showed only a basic level of ability to investigate sources, develop ideas and sustain the final pieces. Many of these responses focused on one or the other still life arrangements or the DVD cover design, but lacked sustained observation and analysis beyond the lower achievements of GCSE or O level. Indeed, it seemed that some of these candidates might not even have benefited from such earlier courses and had been entered for the AS level examination with little experience of the expectations.

The Examiners continued to appreciate the care and concern shown by the majority of Centres for the selection, mounting, labelling and presentation of the work. Problems still arose when the information on labels was incorrect or did not specify which question had been attempted. In a few cases candidates were

