GCE

Art and Design

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Units F410 – F445

General Comments

As in previous years a wide variety of work was seen that reflected an enthusiastic approach by candidates, some excellent support and guidance within centres and well-planned courses.

Most centres devise courses, which reflect the requirements of the qualifications to good effect. Some course structures have been refined to incorporate the evolving nature of digital applications. However, other centres seem to repeat long established approaches, which neither meet the demands of the specifications nor reflect current trends within Art and Design. Indeed, a few continue to deliver courses that were conceived in response to the legacy qualification.

Successful candidates' work was often solidly founded on gallery visits or artist workshops, which exemplified excellent practices within some centres. In stark contrast it is regrettable that some candidates still resort to downloading a thin veil of superficial contextual images, which neither support practical work nor promote the development of ideas.

Moderators reported that critical studies had once again underpinned the work of most candidates. Even so, for some connections with personal artwork were tenuous and showed scant understanding of the essential role contextual research plays in the development of ideas. **Meaningful contextual referencing is an aspect of the specifications that centres can readily improve upon within the framework of support and guidance.**

Candidates' responses to contextual and critical sources had a vital influence on the practical directions taken in the work. Materials gathered from books, magazines, other periodicals, the Internet, museums and galleries were widely employed to good effect.
Those that engaged with their local environment through investigations into museum collections, architecture and landscape often benefited from highly stimulated and intensely individual outcomes.
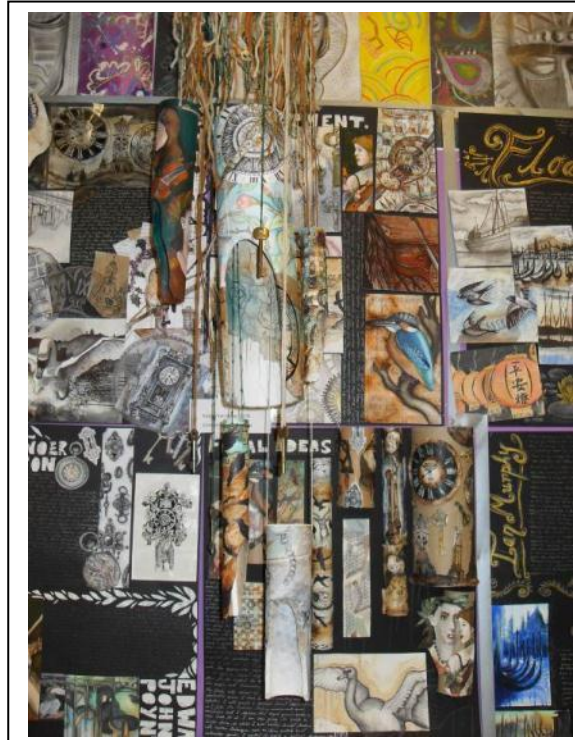
Again this year some candidates produced large volumes of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. As emphasised in previous reports the specification gives no specific guidance in respect of an ideal quantity of work. Candidates should refer to the Assessment Objectives and carefully consider the extent to which their initial intentions are realised as their work progresses. Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent creative journey enriched with a sense of purpose and culminating in genuine achievement. Less successful work often lacked direction and was invariably fragmented and poorly executed.

Most centres completed administrative procedures satisfactorily and met the May 31 deadline for the return of mark sheets. Indeed, those that submitted marks before the deadline and forwarded the documentation early are to be thanked for their proactive efficiency.

Commendably many centres completed the paperwork electronically by downloading from the OCR GCE website PDFs of Centre Authentication and Assessment Summary forms. Although the latter reduced arithmetical and transcriptional errors some still occurred during the marking process. In such instances sample selection and the moderation process was impeded. **Centres are positively encouraged to use the electronic interactive Assessment Summary forms (GCW269i for AS and GCW315i for A2), which are available on the OCR website.**

The Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) is a mandatory Code of Practice requirement and moderators must be in receipt of a completed copy before commencing their duties. This should be forwarded to the moderator with MS1 mark sheets and the Assessment Summary Forms.

Exhibitions devised for public access could also serve for moderation purposes. **However, centres are reminded that displays must be by Unit in separate rank orders to facilitate the moderation process. This requirement cannot be compromised.**

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

<u>**Download and use the Assessment Summary Forms (GCW269i for AS and GCW315i for A2)**</u>**, which are available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks thus avoiding arithmetical errors.**

Display the Units in separate rank orders.

Clearly identify individual Units and highlight final outcomes.

Centres are reminded that in addition to the work sampled for the purposes of moderation all submissions must be readily available.

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Most centres established a reliable rank order within individual Units. However, when inconsistent the moderation process was adversely affected and in the most undependable cases a centre re-mark required. It is therefore of critical importance that centres' rank orders in all Units are accurate before moderation commences.

Cross standardisation across endorsements is essential to the successful completion of the marking process.

Each of the Assessment Objectives has different demands and centres should recognise that candidates' achievement is not necessarily consistent within these.

Written analysis, annotations and in some instances more extensive prose continued to be widespread across both AS Units. For some candidates this provided genuine insight into ideas. Nonetheless, some candidates merely filled spaces or pages in books without real purpose or meaning. **Written material should provide evidence of how knowledge and understanding will impact on the creative directions taken.**

The use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet enabled candidates to access the work of an ever-widening range of artists, designers and craftspeople.

However, teachers and lecturers should be vigilant in checking the websites used by candidates to ensure material is appropriate.

The trend to use a digital camera both as a tool for recording and a means to explore ideas continues to grow. Specifically, Adobe Photoshop was frequently used for the exploration and refinement of ideas. As has become customary many Graphic Communication candidates exploited computers extensively in both preparatory work and final outcomes.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates' achievement was often directly related to the quality of task or theme set by teachers and lecturers.

It was again noticeable that there was a significant increase in digital sketchbooks. These continue to be well-presented and displayed candidates' critical thinking and development of personal outcomes effectively. Regrettably presentation in this form showed a sharp contrast to the poorly annotated and labeled sketchbooks, in which thinking was often confused and lacking in direction, produced by others. For some sketchbook submissions were often presented as a journey through the Assessment Objectives, with different pages describing candidates' thinking and personal responses. Even so, there were many mature submissions that had synthesised the Objectives into a series of powerful personal images, which were cohesive, informed and possessed a strong sense of purpose.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Some centres insufficiently support the principle of selection when presenting work for assessment. Invariably in such cases all the work produced throughout the course is submitted. Consequently this results in inconsistent levels of achievement, which are responded to in the moderation process.

Candidates must select and present for assessment.

Coursework Portfolio, Unit 1: AS Level

Qualities and good practice established in the Coursework Portfolio had a significant impact on understanding and achievement in the subsequent Units.

The opportunity to explore different materials, techniques and ways of working was fully embraced in many centres. However, it must be stressed that exploration should be specific to the development of the given theme or idea. At best, candidates were encouraged to study a more extensive range of critical and contextual materials than at GCSE and some had opportunities to engage directly w ith the work of artists, designers and craftspeople in studios and workshops.

The contemporary thrust of museums and galleries to be more inclusive and widen participation has been mirrored by the production of educational support materials. These have been well received by candidates and have distinctly benign effect on levels of critical appreciation and understanding.

Candidates were also greatly influenced by all aspects of 'Street Art'. Although the focus of attention was frequently towards the practitioners of graffiti and other 'alternative' art forms for some candidates a keen understanding of 'Public Art' in the broader sense was evident.

A noticeable feature of successful delivery of this Unit was the way in which a period at the beginning of the course for guidance and the establishment of foundation skills enabled candidates to understand the demands of AS and progress with greater confidence and independence.

Many candidates selected a single project for their Portfolio whilst others submitted more, which may have reached a consistent standard. Unfortunately in some instances submissions were a random collection of items that did not form a cohesive portfolio of work. Exceptions to this were to be found in endorsements such as Graphic Communication in which candidates successfully produced more than one outcome when considering different aspects of their chosen theme.

Candidates' achievement was often directly related to the quality of task or theme set by teachers and lecturers.

The range of skills, media and techniques employed by candidates in the production of the Coursework Portfolio largely left a healthy impression with moderators. Most candidates had followed courses with a clearly defined structure. Centre determined themes were memorable for their diversity, originality and appropriateness to the needs of candidates with the widest range of abilities. Candidates were frequently the beneficiaries of inspirational teaching and evidently responded positively to the advice and guidance given.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Qualities and good practice established in the Coursework Portfolio have a significant impact on understanding and achievement in the subsequent Units.

Cross standardisation across endorsements is essential to the successful completion of the marking and moderation process.

Controlled Assignment, Unit 2: AS Level

Candidates' responses to the starting points and design briefs were predominantly lively, showed much personal engagement and strongly suggested that the 2013 paper had been favourably received. Sufficient scope was offered to match candidates' various abilities. A strength of the qualification is the discrete AS and A2 papers, which were especially welcomed and highlighted the difference between the levels and the shift of emphasis in meeting the requirements of the Assessment Objectives.

Moderators reported that candidates largely chose starting points, which allowed them to build upon previous experiences and practices in producing work that very much reflected their individual strengths. However, a number of candidates were less prudent in their selection and over ambitious in their approach, which sometimes resulted in unimaginative and incomplete final outcomes.

Many candidates used the preparatory period to good effect and showed a clear progression through the Assessment Objectives. Most clearly relished the opportunity to demonstrate the intellectual and practical maturity gained from the positive experience of the preceding part of the course. Candidates mainly appreciated that the most crucial aspects of the AS Controlled Assignment are successful Development and Exploration and correspondingly an appropriate degree of emphasis was placed on these Objectives.

Candidates who had prepared carefully used the five hour supervised period effectively and the many excellent outcomes distinctly demonstrated that time constraints do not necessarily have a negative impact on quality.

> ### *SHARING BEST PRACTICE:*
>
> To enable the preparation of teaching and learning resources teachers should access the paper on receipt by the centre.
>
> Provisional entry lists submitted to OCR in the Autumn Term generate the dispatch of papers to centres.

Some candidates require guidance in respect of an appropriate range of techniques for a five-hour assessment period. Teachers may, and, indeed, are encouraged to give advice and guidance during the preparatory period. Assistance must not, of course, be given during the five-hours of supervised time.

Responses to all of the starting points in Section 1: Stimuli, Section 2: Observational and Section 3: Design brief were seen. Section 4: Art in Context proved attractive to a number of discerning candidates whilst Section 5: Visual Starting Points remained, somewhat surprisingly, undersubscribed. Popular starting points included:

'Nursery Rhyme' - won much support amongst candidates across all endorsements and was notable for the diversity of interpretation. Whilst some made rather macabre contextual links with the 'horror' genre others, more profitably, pursued avenues of research into the visual wealth of children's book illustration, both contemporary and historical.

'Floating' - particularly favoured by Fine Art and Photography candidates. Although predictable links were made with Millais' 'Ophelia' equally purposeful investigation into the illusion of levitation, which often culminated in visually exciting outcomes, was undertaken

'Cross-over' - a well supported starting point, which prompted much lateral thinking. Many sound links were made with broader cultural contexts such as film and literature in addition to a wide range of practitioners amongst whom metaphysical painters featured strongly.

'Boxes' - led to unusual, pensive directions being taken and, indeed, encouraged many candidates to 'think outside the box'. A wide variety of investigations into the nature enclosure and confined spaces were seen with the extreme perspectives of Jenny Saville often proving inspirational.

'Exotic fruits' - well liked by Fine Art, Graphic Communication, Photography and Textile Design candidates. The wide range of interpretations was almost invariably vibrantly colourful and in some instances led to rather more subtle research into form and texture.

'Manicure' - was adopted as a theme by many, especially Fine Art candidates, and sponsored work from direct observation with considerable scope for making particularly pertinent links.
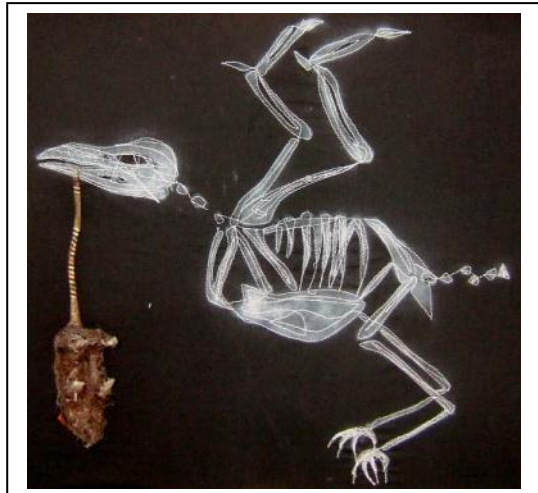
'Hedgerow' - was particular welcomed by Textile Design candidates and stimulated much inventive exploration and purposeful links with the work of other practitioners.

Section 3: Design brief

All of the starting points received responses especially Textile Design and Graphic Communications candidates.

'**A new organic energy drink'** was well subscribed by the latter and promoted a holistic approach to design. Not only were inventive proposals for promotional material forthcoming but also frequently candidates gave careful consideration to the packaging or container for the refreshment itself.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery.

Avoid excessive reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines.

Assessment Objectives within Art and Design: AS

AO1 (Develop)

Candidates' ability to develop ideas was an essential aspect of the most proficient work and impacted directly on success in the other Assessment Objectives. Those in the upper mark range not only demonstrated the knowledge gained from contextual sources but also simultaneously developed their own visual language.

Cultural understanding and critical analysis were demonstrated in both visual and textual forms. Written work not infrequently gave insight into candidates' knowledge, unde rstanding and decision-making but for the less successful was superficial and did not add cohesion to submissions or clarify intentions.

AO2 (Experiment)

Well devised AS programmes place emphasis on providing candidates with opportunity to explore the qualities of an often extraordinarily diverse range of materials, processes and techniques. When investigating a particular concept or theme candidates should be equipped to give fluent expression to the review and refinement of their ideas and to do so with ever increasing technical ability.

Nonetheless, exploration should be relevant to ultimate intentions and genuinely assist in creative progression rather than being simply repetitive. In some cases extensive experimentation had been undertaken but subsequently candidates simply reverted to copying initial imagery thus ignoring and nullifying the benign impact of earlier review and modification. The least successful submissions tended to display an unskilful and inappropriate use of materials, processes and techniques and culminated in unresolved outcomes.

The expansion in the use of electronic media, particularly digital photography and Photoshop, continues unabated in all of the endorsements. Nonetheless, the spontaneity of the technology can be disadvantageous to candidates if evidence of experimentation is narrow and shallow.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Each of the Assessment Objectives has different requirements and centres should recognise that candidates' achievement is not necessarily consistent in meeting these.

Graphic Communication candidates, for example, when they had access to commercial quality printers, could move very qu ickly from initial ideas to final presentation with limited exploration of an idea or significant experimentation. In such instances candidates need to ensure that a range of alternatives have been researched and are clearly demonstrable.

AO3 (Record)

Digital cameras and mobile phones with cameras are now part of our everyday culture and are used extensively. Candidates now recognize these as a valid means of recording. At a basic level snap-shots and moving images may be produced with immediacy. However, more able candidates extended the creative potential by employing image processing and software packages to review and modify imagery.

As in previous years, there were many examples of carefully observed, analytical drawings, which recorded using a wide range of materials and a variety of techniques appropriate to the endorsement entered. Some candidates recorded observations in written form, which is particularly helpful when insight is given into thought processes rather than being a mere log of factual data.

Sadly the tendency of weaker candidates to be over dependent on secondary sourced material, which is often simply copied without any form of development, persisted in this examination series.

Moderators once again reported that some candidates did not select sources that were appropriate to their intentions. In more accomplished submissions a wide range of sources were recorded in ways that promoted selection and offered a variety of creative directions.

AO4 (Present)

The most successful candidates produced impressive outcomes that embodied sophisticated use of detail, colour, scale as well as considerable technical ability.
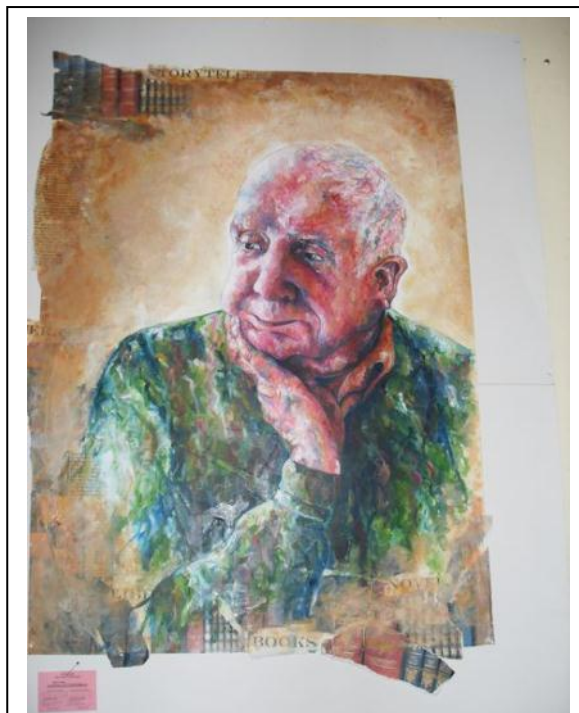
These works represented the culmination of a year's study and a thorough and mature understanding of the other Assessment Objectives.

Most candidates had spent time selecting, considering and presenting their work with attention to detail before submission for assessment. Disappointingly others had not and the progress and development of their ideas was at best obscure.

The overall submission should be cohesive and distinctly demonstrate how the requirements of the Assessment Objectives have been addressed. In this respect successful candidates had ensured that perceptive critical thinking, on-going experimentation and purposeful recording informed all stages of 'the creative journey' and were not restricted to the initial phases of development.

In contrast, less successful candidates were unable to properly realise their intentions because shortcomings in the preparatory studies had a negative impact on meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4 more comprehensively.
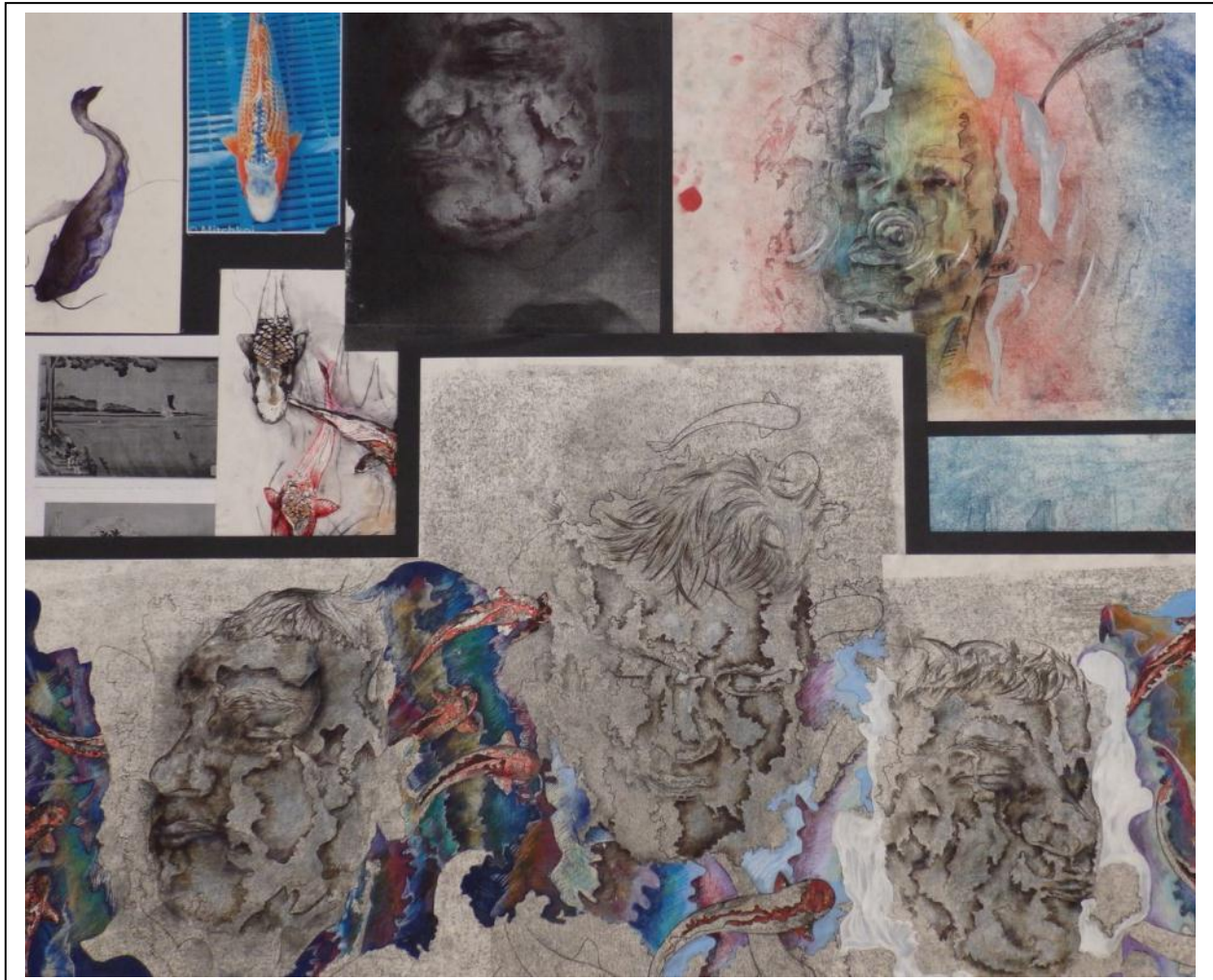
Personal Investigation, Unit 3: A2 Level

Again the level of critical understanding within the Related Personal Study varied considerably from the descriptive or biographical to those that showed perceptively analysis and genuinely informed personal development as the work progressed. Biographical detail is important in placing practitioners within a historical context but basic 'cut and paste' from the Internet can never be a feature of successful submissions. Centres are reminded that candidates should use an appropriate technical vocabulary if they are to attain marks within the Mature Band.

Often candidates find it easier to write analytically when they compare the approach of different practitioners. Centres should be mindful of this and encourage candidates to investigate a range of related sources. An analytical approach is not an innate skill for many and therefore needs to be cultivated by adopting appropriate teaching strategies. For example, candidates could be asked to give detailed descriptions of others' work and in doing so identify areas of similarity and difference.

Candidates undertake the Related Personal Study in significantly different ways. Some produce a dedicated separate sketchbook, which often includes an easily read transcription. Whilst the specifications do not advocate any preference this method does allow for a focused approach in which candidates can explore in depth and the Study has a distinct beginning, middle and end.

Candidates that fail to respond to the Related Personal Study by providing written material in continuous prose should be requested to submit material in an appropriate way or be withdrawn from the Unit.
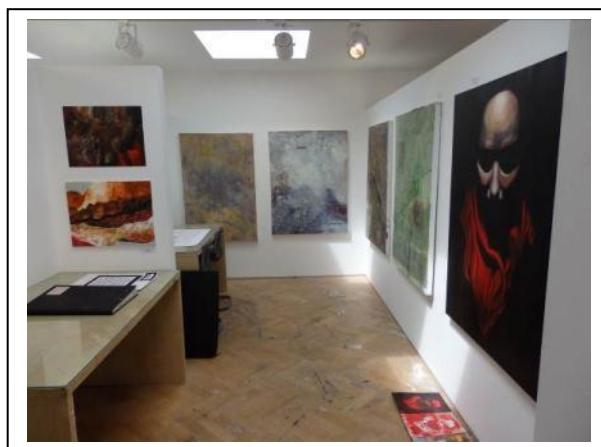
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates' success in this Unit was often dependent on the guidance given and the establishment of foundation skills during an AS course, which cultivated an understanding of the demands of A2 and greater confidence and independence in the approach to work.

Other centres adopt a different approach in that the Study is located within the body of the visual research. This can have a strong developmental quality when candidates enter into a dialogue between their work and that of their selected subject. The potential area of weakness is that this approach can lead to a rather confused or diluted Study within the submission. It is important that candidates conspicuously and coherently link the various written elements for the Related Personal Study within their work.

Transpositions from one media into another did not guarantee success. Some candidates were simply copying the style and techniques of an existing artist in their own work without any meaningful critical analysis.

There appears to be a good connection between the critical and contextual work that is carried out at AS and the Related Personal Study at A2. Candidates often selected a method or subject that was introduced at AS level.
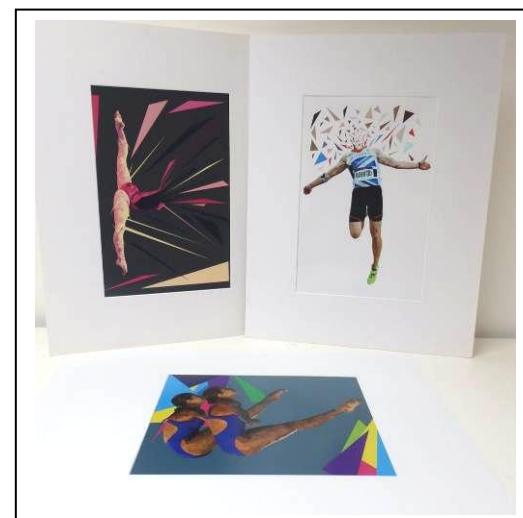
Once more it is important to stress that at A2 individually negotiated programmes of study appear to be a successful model in which candidates review and reflect on their AS work and identify their strengths. These can be developed further whilst producing the main theme of the Personal Investigation. Even so, many candidates require guidance and support in the acquisition of relevant skills and techniques if they are to achieve their full potential.

Moderators continue to report that some centres provided a common starting point for all candidates but this often resulted in similar work being produced and restricted the level of personal response.

Centres are reminded that for the Personal Investigation Unit candidates must set their own task or brief.

Moreover, it is essential when candidates choose their own themes that guidance is given by teachers as to the suitability or appropriateness of the selection for public assessment.

Far too often the less successful submissions tended to simply descriptive rather than showing sustained critical analysis. A 'catalogue of events' is not especially informative and candidates would be better advised to pay attention to the analysis of their own work and that of others by providing insights into their intentions and progress.

Moderators also praised the inventiveness and ambition of many submissions seen at A2. Many of these demonstrated a highly individual response and significant intellectual or critical content. The levels of creativity, critical understanding and technical accomplishment were often impressive.

A2 themes were often negotiated on a 'one to one' basis with the individual candidate. When appropriate advice and guidance was given and an ongoing dialogue occurred between teacher and candidate the submissions presented were frequently mature in conception and displayed direct relationships with contemporary practice and a sound knowledge base founded on first-hand research.

This year saw much innovation in the approaches adopted by candidates. Digital technology continues to make an impact and, in particular, exciting departures into 'the moving image' were witnessed. Some candidates' submissions focused on work of a more conceptual nature, sometimes with expansive installations as an outcome, but the supporting studies did not always reveal convincing levels of technical ability or intellectual engagement.

The size, scale and display of the submissions varied considerably with successful candidates sourcing interesting subject matter and producing final pieces that were professional in execution.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Exploit local resources:

- Museums or galleries.
- Botanical gardens, parks, zoos
- Artists and designers
- Community Arts Centres
- Workshops or artists in residence
- Exhibitions or studio visits
- Carnivals, fairs, parades.

The best work often provided evidence of a coherent journey with a genuine sense of purpose. More successful candidates demonstrated not only that they had learnt from others' work but also simultaneously developed their own visual language.

The content of the A2 Controlled Assignment paper was well received. The starting points and design briefs offered sufficient scope to meet needs of candidates over the whole ability range.

There was good use of the preparatory period. Preliminary studies are a vital aspect of this Unit and successful candidates produced sustained recording and clearly defined their creative progression towards a final outcome.

Generally centres encourage candidates to work to their individual strengths and confidently take advantage of the experiences and skills gained earlier in their Personal Investigation.

The highest achievement was by candidates that took best advantage of the preparatory time to develop, experiment and refined their ideas before the supervised fifteen-hour period. Candidates who prepared carefully were able to use this time more effectively.

In contrast, for less successful candidates, poor time management, research and selection made the major contribution to under achievement. Such submissions often displayed incomplete developmental work, limited or superficial connections with the work of other practitioners, and a narrow exploration of ideas, which combined to produce outcomes that were unresolved and lacking in conviction.

Some candidates require guidance in respect of an appropriate range of techniques for a fifteen-hour assessment period. Teachers may, and, indeed, are encouraged to give advice and guidance during the preparatory period. Assistance must not, of course, be given during the fifteen-hours of supervised time.
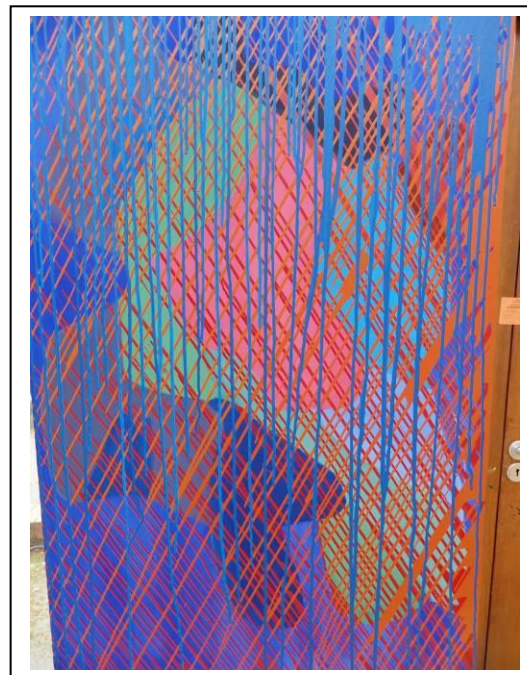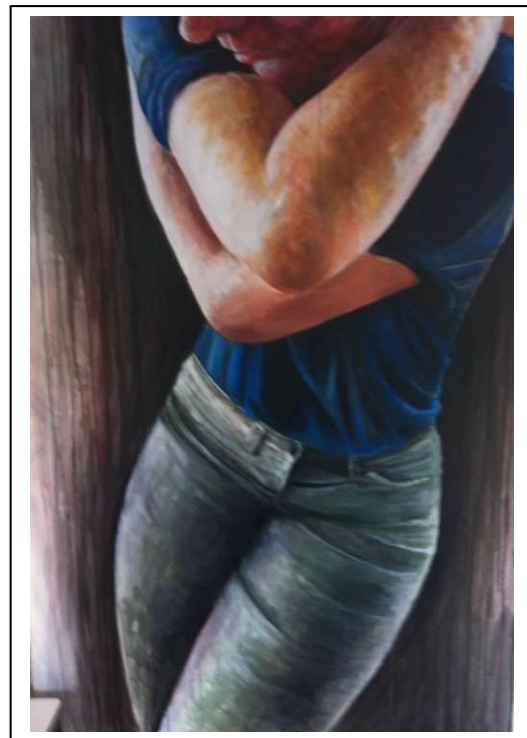
There were responses to all the Section 1 and Section 2 starting points at A2 with the following proving to be the most popular:


'Storyteller' - allowed for creative and imaginative directions to be explored often with solid links to the work of others.

'Submerged' - baths, showers, swimming pools were just some of the locations used for much first hand recording. Candidates responded with many interpretations and approaches across all the endorsements.

'Bubbles' - although many soapy spheres were seen some candidates, less literally inclined, explored concepts of effervescence or exuberance.

'Taped, tied, bound' - candidates largely exercised some restraint in their responses and frequently interpreted with humour and originality.

'Scales' - was well subscribed throughout the endorsements with notable examples seen in Fine Art and Photography.
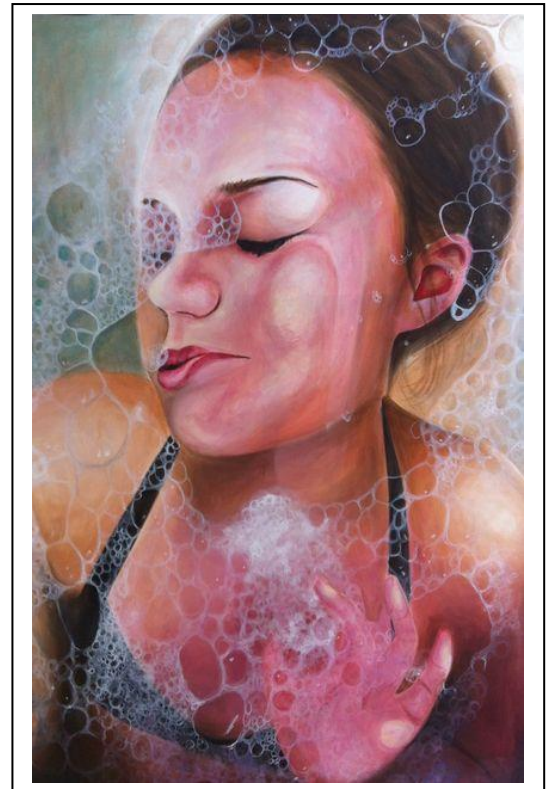
Assessment Objectives within Art and Design: A2

AO1 (Develop)

Candidates' ability to develop ideas was an essential aspect of the most proficient work and impacted directly on success in the other Assessment Objectives.
Evidence of analysis and critical understanding was provided in different ways. At A2 this Assessment Objective met with much good practice by candidates using a wide range of approaches and sources for reference. Indeed, some showed excellent levels of investigation by using first-hand contacts, gallery visits and workshop experience. As a result much of the work demonstrated a confident and creative combination of visual elements and written responses.

AO2 (Experiment)

The requirements of this Assessment Objective were generally ably realised at A2. However, in some centres candidates were inclined to experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques at the expense of selecting and refining. Exploration should be relevant to ultimate intentions and genuinely assist in creative progression rather than being simply repetitive.
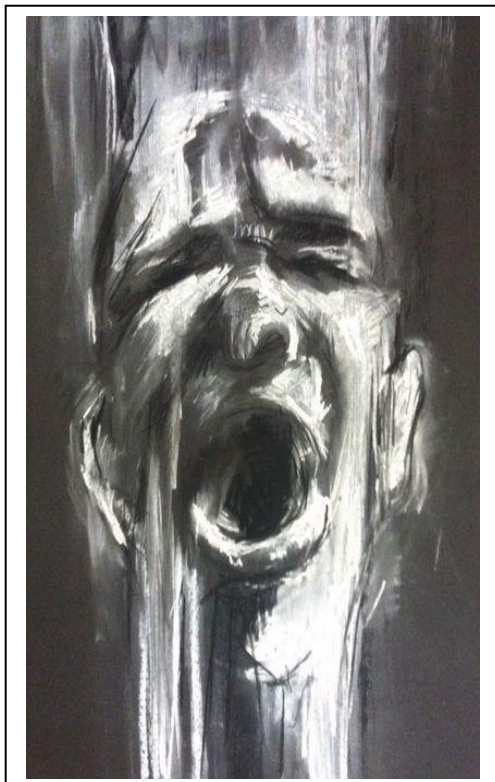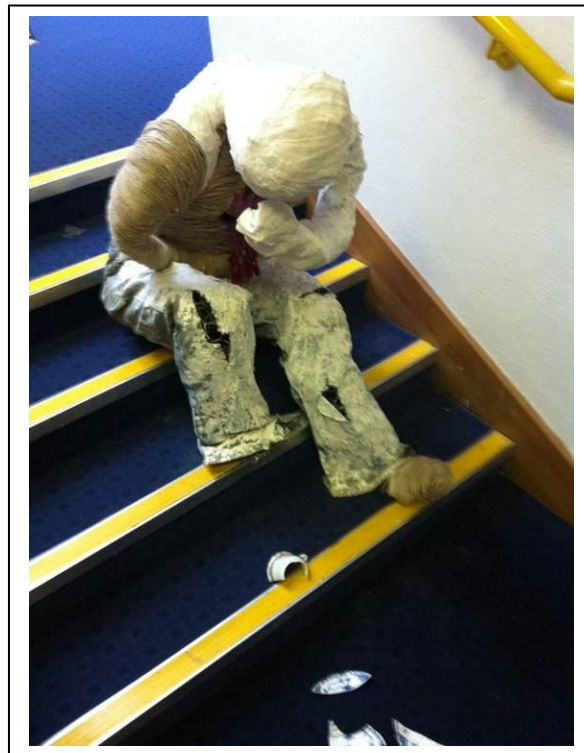
Most candidates showed an ability to review, refine and communicate through experimentation with confidence. Less successful submissions tended to display an unskilful and inappropriate use of materials, processes and techniques and culminated in unresolved outcomes.

AO3 (Record)

Digital cameras and mobile phones with cameras had a significant impact on approaches to recording. Photographic images were often produced first and subsequently followed by drawings and studies in a variety of media.

Some candidates recorded ideas and observations in written form, frequently making notes whilst observing stimuli at first-hand. Sometimes candidates' initial ideas were recorded as a series of thumbnail photographs or sketches. Others, particularly Textile Design candidates, presented their ideas in the form of mood boards. Observational drawing produced in life classes continued to flourish in a number of centres.

Whichever method of recording is used it is essential for candidates to understand that there is a direct link between the accomplishment shown in recording and the quality of outcomes.

AO4 (Present)

In many cases the personal responses in outcomes were thought provoking and individual because candidates had capitalised upon purposeful visual research and perceptive critical thinking with successful review and modification techniques.

Many moderators commented positively on the strong connections made to the work of other practitioners as invariably these enriched the quality of the personal response.

In the majority of submissions there was an appropriate balance in the volume of preparatory work produced and the time spent in realising intentions. Most candidates fulfilled their potential and exploited the particular opportunities made available in producing final outcomes.
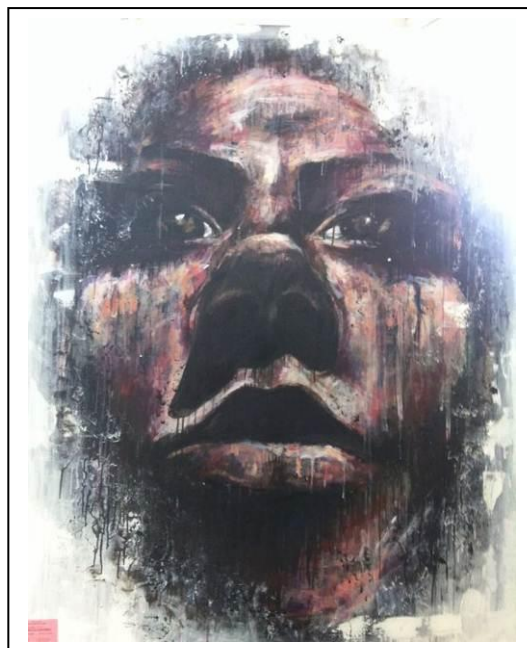
Summary and Guidance

Centres are reminded that applications for Special Consideration must be made well in advance of the moderation visit. This responsibility lies entirely with centres as the moderator cannot activate the procedure. It is advisable to notify the moderator of such cases when forwarding documentation for the May 31 deadline.

OCR thanks the many teachers who attended the Professional Development meetings for GCE Art and Design during 2012-2013. Their encouragement was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the ongoing development of support materials for both candidates and teachers.

Further information regarding Professional Development for 2013-2014 will become available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk in due course. Alternatively OCR Training may be contacted by telephone (02476 496398) or by email (training@ocr.org.uk)

Teachers are reminded that they can join the OCR Art and Design e-list via the OCR website. The e-list covers all Art and Design specifications and can be used as a forum to ask questions, share good practice and resources and to contact colleagues delivering the OCR specifications in your local area. All OCR senior examining and moderating personnel are members of the e-list and would welcome any questions, comments or feedback from teachers regarding this report.

The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and are reproduced with the permission of the centres concerned.

OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.
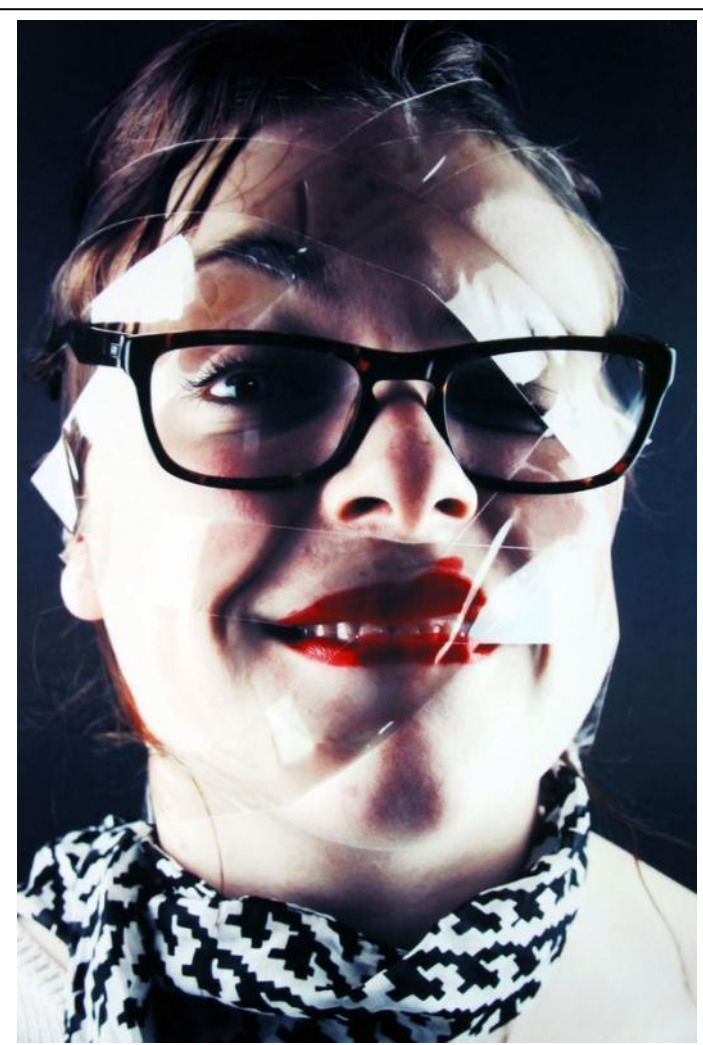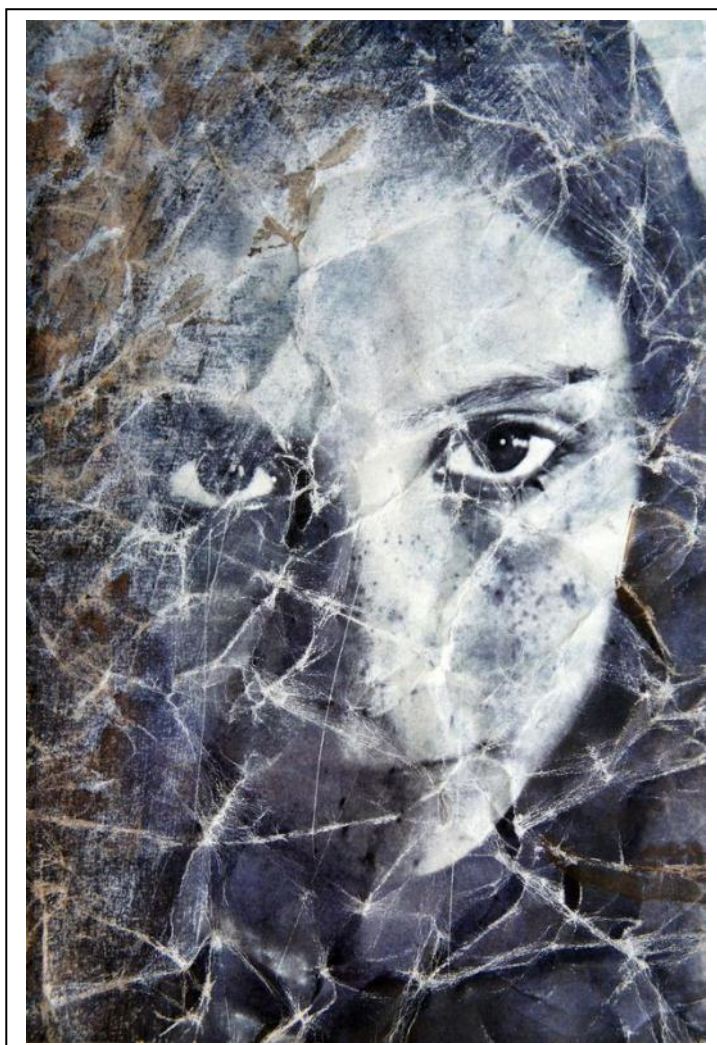
GCE Photography F113 – F443

Photography

OCR GCE AS in Photography: Coursework Portfolio   F413

OCR GCE AS in Photography: Controlled Assignment F423

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# Units F113 – F443

General Comments

As in previous years a wide variety of work was seen that reflected an enthusiastic approach by candidates, some excellent support and guidance within centres and well-planned courses.

Most centres devise courses, which reflect the requirements of the qualifications to good effect. Some course structures have been refined to incorporate the evolving nature of digital applications. However, other centres seem to repeat long established approaches, which neither meet the demands of the specifications nor reflect current trends within Photography.

Successful candidates' work was often solidly founded on visits to galleries and practitioner's studios or through workshops, which exemplified excellent practices within some centres. In stark contrast it is regrettable that some candidates still resort to downloading a thin veil of superficial contextual images, which neither support practical work nor promote the development of ideas.

Moderators reported that critical studies had once again underpinned the work of most candidates. Even so, for some connections with the candidate's own photographic work were tenuous and showed scant understanding of the essential role contextual research plays in the development of ideas. **Meaningful contextual referencing is an aspect of the specifications that centres can readily improve upon within the framework of support and guidance.**

Candidates' responses to contextual and critical sources had a vital influence on the practical directions taken in the work. Materials gathered from books, magazines, other periodicals, the Internet, museums and galleries were widely employed to good effect. Some centres arranged workshops with visits from practitioners or encouraged their candidates to contact photographers. Such good practice proved to be effective and productive.
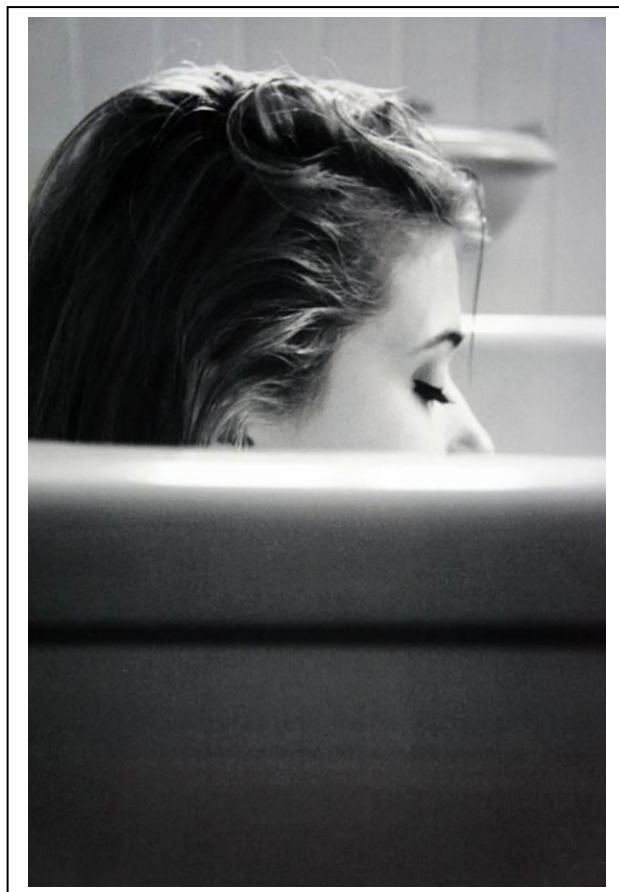
Regrettably some candidates seemed unable to make connections to inform their work and this resulted in unresolved final submissions. Candidates who successfully forged strong contextual links produced some engaged and inventive outcomes.

Many candidates produced large quantities of photographic work or long PowerPoint presentations but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. There is no specific guidance in the specification about an ideal quantity of work. Candidates should refer to the Assessment Objectives and carefully consider the extent to which their initial intentions are realised as their work progresses. Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent creative journey enriched with a sense of purpose and culminating in genuine achievement. Less successful work often lacked direction and was invariably fragmented and poorly executed.

Most centres completed administrative procedures satisfactorily and met the May 31 deadline for the return of mark sheets. Indeed, those that submitted marks before the deadline and forwarded the documentation early are to be thanked for their proactive efficiency.

Commendably many centres completed the paperwork electronically by downloading from the OCR GCE website PDFs of Centre Authentication and Assessment Summary forms. Although the latter reduced arithmetical and transcriptional errors some still occurred during the marking process. In such instances sample selection and the moderation process was impeded.

The Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) is a mandatory Code of Practice requirement and moderators must be in receipt of a completed copy before commencing their duties. This should be forwarded to the moderator with MS1 mark sheets and the Assessment Summary Forms (GCW269i for AS and GCW315i for A2).

Exhibitions devised for public access could also serve for moderation purposes. However, centres are reminded that displays must be by Unit in separate rank orders to facilitate the moderation process. The requirements of the moderation process must take precedence over 'end of year' shows.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Download and use the Assessment Summary Forms (GCW269i for AS and GCW315i for A2), which are available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks thus avoiding arithmetical errors.

Display the Units in separate rank orders.

Clearly identify individual Units and highlight final outcomes.

Centres are reminded that in addition to the work sampled for the purposes of moderation all submissions must be readily available.

Most centres established a reliable rank order within individual Units. However, when inconsistent **the moderation process was adversely effected and in the most undependable cases a centre re-mark required. It is therefore of critical importance that centres' rank orders in all Units are accurate before moderation commences.**

Written prose and annotations are now commonplace in Photography submissions and these provided a vital insight into candidates' thinking and ideas. The more successful candidates demonstrated genuine subject knowledge, used subject terminology accurately and presented reasoned arguments but the least successful tended to fill pages with superficial trivia.

The use the latest digital technology and all aspects of ICT were again a significant feature in the submissions whilst the Internet enabled candidates to access the work of a wide range of photographers. Some sites provided direct access to photographers and galleries, up to date information on exhibitions and access to on-going work.

Increasingly candidates used digital cameras as a tool for recording and a means to exploring ideas. Specifically in relation to Assessment Objective 2 Adobe Photoshop was widely used for exploration and the refinement of ideas. Digital media are becoming dominant in photography and the submissions embraced the use of Apps and public image sharing, such as Flickr. Constant developments in new media are supporting this evolution. Similarly there was an increasing number of candidates using film media, stop frame or gaming animation as part of their exploration of the moving image.

There was a noticeable improvement this year in the submissions with better organisation, structure, selection and clarity of thinking. This was particularly evident in the responses to Assessment Objective 1 where clear links between candidates' work and other photographers informed the development and resolution of outcomes. The more successful submissions displayed personal ideas and observations being reviewed and refined in response to carefully conceived photographic analysis and critical thinking. Less successful candidates often tended to produce simple interpretations of existing photographers' work or reproduction of factual information.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates' achievement was often directly related to the quality of task or theme set by teachers and lecturers.

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The most popular formats for submitting work were annotated sketchbooks, work sheets and mounted display boards and PowerPoint presentations. There were many excellent examples of lively and thoughtful submissions, which displayed sustained and informed critical thinking, experimentation and analysis. These were underpinned by the use of an appropriate subject vocabulary that had informed personal directions and outcomes.

It was again noticeable that there was a significant increase in digital sketchbooks. These continue to be well-presented and displayed candidates' critical thinking and development of personal outcomes effectively. Regrettably presentation in this form showed a sharp contrast to the poorly annotated and labeled sketchbooks, in which thinking was often confused and lacking in direction, produced by others. The digital submissions were often presented as a journey through the Assessment Objectives, with different pages describing candidates' thinking and personal responses. Even so, there were many mature submissions that had synthesised the Objectives into a series of powerful personal images, which were cohesive, informed and possessed a strong sense of purpose.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Some centres insufficiently support the principle of selection when presenting work for assessment. Invariably in such cases all the work produced throughout the course is submitted. Consequently this results in inconsistent levels of achievement, which are responded to in the moderation process.

**Candidates must select and present for assessment.**

The opportunity to explore different photographic, techniques and ways of working was fully embraced in many centres. At best, candidates were encouraged to study a more extensive range of critical and contextual materials than at GCSE and some had opportunities to engage directly with the work of photographers, graphic designers and film makers in studios and workshops. Galleries, museums, photographic websites, and specialist Apps have promoted wider access for all students and produced some excellent and informative educational materials.

Many candidates selected a single project for their Portfolio whilst others submitted more, which may have reached a consistent standard. Unfortunately in some instances submissions were a random collection of items that did not form a cohesive portfolio of work. Others included elements of the taught course that showed admirable teaching and learning but did not contribute to the development of the chosen theme. Once more centres are reminded that candidates are required to select and present work for assessment.

The range of photographic skills, media and techniques employed by candidates in the production of the Coursework Portfolio largely left a healthy impression with moderators. Most candidates had followed courses with a clearly defined structure. Centre determined themes were memorable for their diversity, originality and appropriateness to the needs of candidates with the widest range of abilities. Candidates were frequently the beneficiaries of inspirational teaching and evidently responded positively to the advice and guidance given.

The wide range of photographic subject matter seen made some well-informed critical connections to the work of professional photographers. Candidates produced digital work, often to a high standard, by employing a range of software to enhance and manipulate their images. Some candidates had extended this approach and gave a further demonstration of their skills by incorporating in their submissions animation and short films. These principally were generated by storyboard and narrative methods or stop-frame animation, which tended to lead towards abstraction. Carefully selected or produced sound sometimes added an additional dimension.
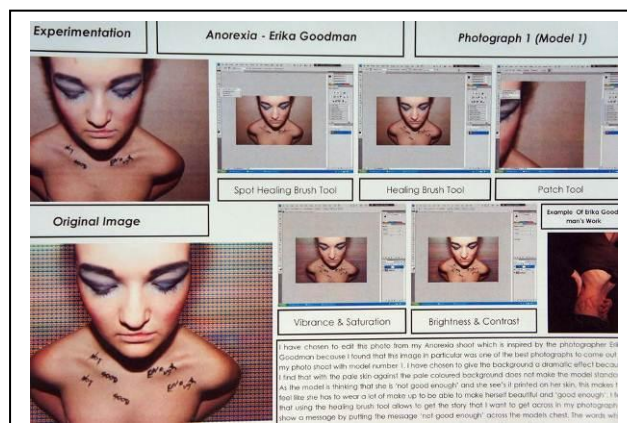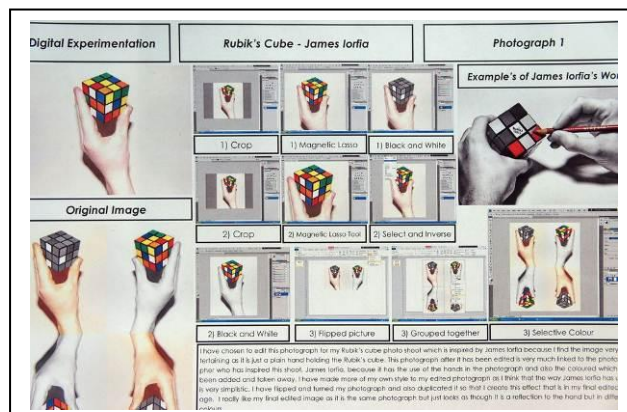
Some centres still deliver darkroom as well as digital photography often to the benefit of candidates who appeared to have a better grounding in the subject.

Investment in high quality printers and software continues in some centres. However, care must be taken to ensure that candidates adequately display their critical thinking, development and visual recording of their personal journey and not 'short circuit' the creative process by relying solely on pre-determined software options.

In the initial stages of courses most centres taught basic photographic techniques, as many candidates were new to the subject. These 'skill workshops' were usually combined with reference to specific processes and photographers. Therefore candidates developed both a skill base and a cultural understanding, which subsequently proved invaluable. Even so, this work did not make a positive contribution to the chosen Coursework Portfolio theme and centres should be mindful of the 'select and present' requirement of this specification.

As in previous sessions many centres delivered the Portfolio Unit as an introduction to photography in which candidates explore darkroom, wet film and digital techniques. Candidates gained experience in the use of specific technical vocabulary, basic camera skills, test strips and presenting a final image. Those who were working at a confident or mature level reviewed, refined and identified new directions in their work. In contrast the less able often appeared to lack a sense of purpose and their work was deficient in cohesion.

Hipstamatic Images

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Qualities and good practice established in the Coursework Portfolio have a significant impact on understanding and achievement in the subsequent Units.

Cross standardisation across endorsements is essential to the successful completion of the marking and moderation process.

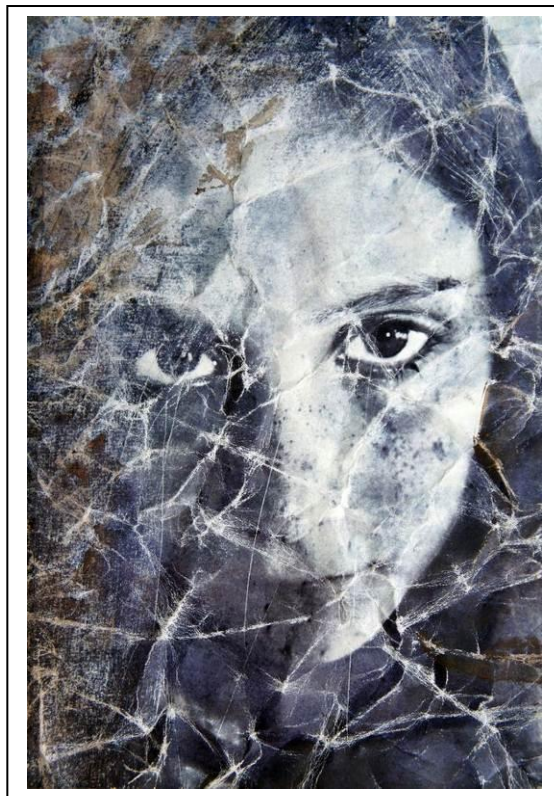# Controlled Assignment, Photography Unit 2: AS Level

Candidates' responses to the starting points were predominantly lively, showed much personal engagement and strongly suggested that the 2013 paper had been well received. Sufficient scope was offered to match candidates' various abilities. A strength of the qualification is the discrete AS and A2 papers, which were especially welcomed and highlighted the difference between the levels and the shift of emphasis in meeting the requirements of the Assessment Objectives.

Moderators reported that candidates largely chose starting points, which allowed them to build upon previous experiences and practices in producing work that very much reflected their individual strengths. However, a number of candidates were less prudent in their selection and over ambitious in their approach, which sometimes resulted in unimaginative and incomplete final outcomes.

Most candidates used the preparatory period to good effect and showed a clear progression through the Assessment Objectives. Candidates mainly appreciated that the most crucial aspects of the AS Controlled Assignment are successful Development and Exploration and correspondingly an appropriate degree of emphasis was placed on these Objectives.

The many excellent outcomes distinctly demonstrated that with thoughtful planning time constraints do not necessarily have a negative impact on quality.

Even so, a minority of candidates, especially those in the lower mark range, did not plan sufficiently for the Controlled Assignment and as a result their work lacked maturity and cohesion. For less successful candidates, poor time management, research and selection made the major contribution to under achievement. Such submissions often displayed incomplete developmental work, limited or superficial connections with the work of other practitioners, and a narrow exploration of ideas, which combined to produce outcomes that were unresolved and lacking in conviction.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

To enable the preparation of teaching and learning resources teachers should access the paper on receipt by the centre. Provisional entry lists submitted to OCR in the Autumn Term generate the dispatch of papers to centres.

Responses to all of the starting points in Section 1: Stimuli, and Section 2: Observational were seen. A significant number of discerning candidates seized the opportunity to produce 'a photographic portfolio' in response to starting point 17, Section 4: Art in Context. Popular starting points included:

'**Nursery Rhyme'** - inspired a wide variety of exciting responses, often narrative in style and rather macabre, with much 'dressing up' for photo shoots. Strong links were frequently made to children's illustrators and theatrical contexts as well as photographic practitioners.

'Floating' - whilst some predictable lines of investigation were followed laterally minded candidates responded to this starting point in especially adventurous and exciting ways. Research into disembodiment and levitation were seen in addition to rather more obvious water orientated themes.

'**Cross-over**' - this starting point gave rise to a significant range of outcomes and was remarkable for the breadth of interpretation. Themes involving spanning, bridging and traversal abounded but, rather less predictably, rather more abstract concepts of blending, mixture and moving from one state to another were purposefully investigated. The latter particularly gave rise to some dramatic visual imagery.

'Boxes' - some candidates took this prompt very much at face value but even so ideas that showed considerable originality of thought could evolve. Others interpreted the starting point less literally and investigated concepts such as confinement and enclosure or social issues relating to discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Consequently for some the contexts studied were richly varied and extended beyond making valuable links with the work of other practitioners.

'The design and use of windows' - this Art in Context starting point promoted some thoughtful responses, which often involved the examination of architectural themes and interior spaces with purposeful and imaginative links to a wide range of contextual sources.

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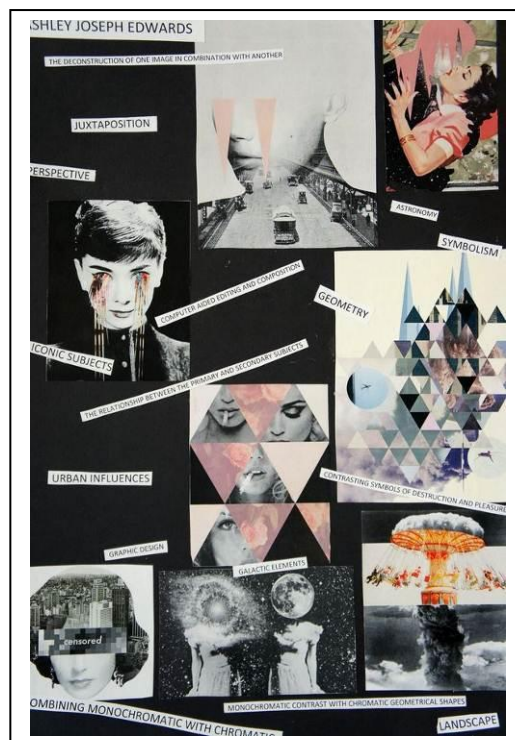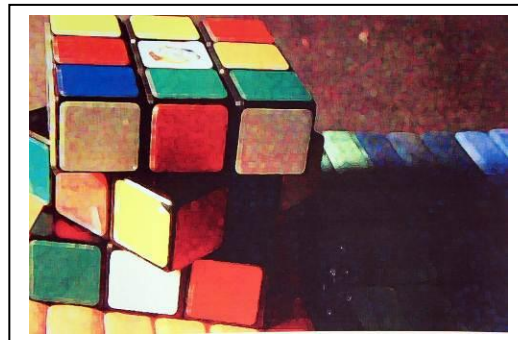
Assessment Objectives within Photography: AS

AO1 (Develop)

It was pleasing to note that again AO1 was generally well demonstrated. Candidates engaged actively in researching and combining ideas, processes and media, which is a vital part of the A' Level experience. With some candidates, too many resources were investigated and as a result there was insufficient experimentation and recording. Careful time management within the course may help candidates to avoid under-achieving in this way.

AO2 (Experiment)

As in previous examination series many centres met the requirements of this Assessment Objective exceptionally well in the first few months of the course by providing candidates with a thorough grounding in skills and techniques. This should be used as part of candidates' individual journeys of exploration.

A remarkable wide range of experimentation was evident this year. However, exploration does need to be appropriate with the focus relating directly to the subject matter or theme of individual candidate's work. Centres that encouraged exploration of a range of related processes enabled candidates to build a repertoire of skills that equipped them to experiment effectively with their ideas and different media.

Photoshop is now a commonplace resource within Centres and many candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of this software. Nonetheless, others should have developed their knowledge further. For example, rather than simply using a single filter change candidates should employ these more creatively in combination with other applications and adjustments within Photoshop.

> ### *SHARING BEST PRACTICE:*
>
> **Each of the Assessment Objectives has different requirements and centres should recognise that candidates' achievement is not necessarily consistent in meeting these.**
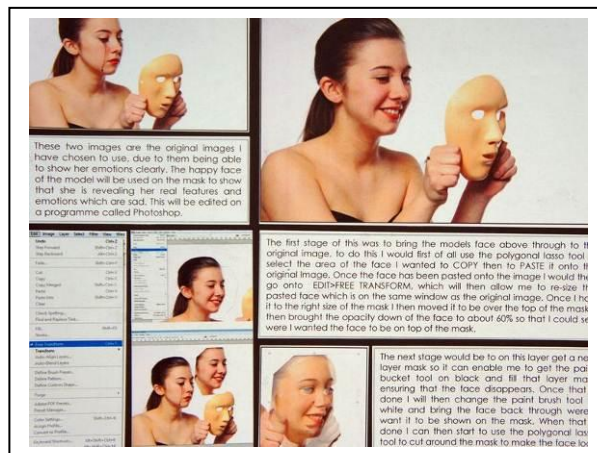
> ### *SHARING BEST PRACTICE:*
>
> Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery. Avoid excessive reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines.

AO3 (Record)

Digital cameras and mobile phones with cameras are now part of our everyday culture and are used extensively. Candidates now recognize these as a valid means of recording. At a basic level snapshots and moving images may be produced with immediacy. However, more able candidates extended the creative potential by employing image processing and software packages to review and modify imagery.

Some candidates recorded observations in written form, which is particularly helpful when insight is given into thought processes rather than being a mere log of factual data.

AO4 (Present)

The most successful candidates produced impressive outcomes that embodied sophisticated use of detail, colour, scale as well as considerable technical ability. These works represented the culmination of a year's study and a thorough and mature understanding of the other Assessment Objectives.

The quality of presentation, especially with the use of professional quality equipment and software, was in the main part very impressive.

Candidates should ensure that they select carefully from their body of work to make clear the progress and development of their ideas. The overall submission should be coherent and evenly address the requirements of the Assessment Objectives.

Some centres concentrated on delivering a tightly structured technical course at the expense of developing candidates' personal responses. Others promoted the exploration of a wide range of ideas and themes, which often resulted in a shallow response and unresolved outcomes. The most successful submissions in which work was continually reviewed, refined and developed showed a balance between the technical and the creative.
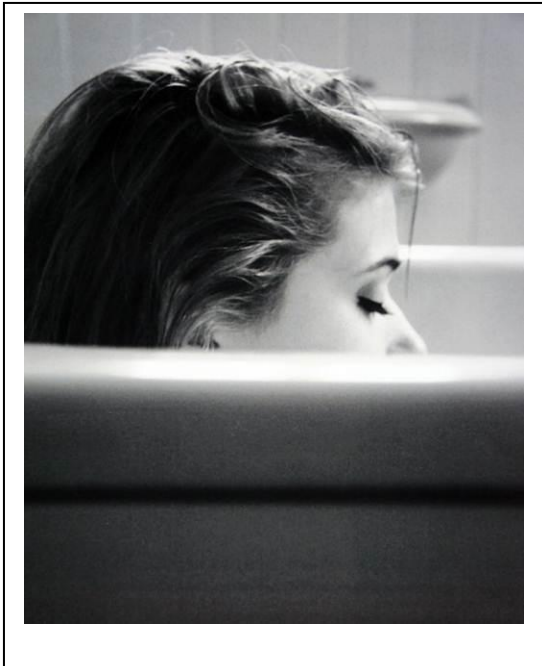
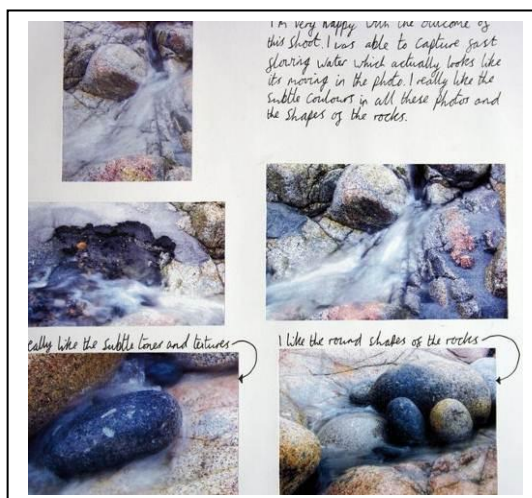# Personal Investigation, Photography Unit 3: A2 Level

At this stage of their programme candidates should be able to demonstrate significant inventive abilities combined with an excellent grasp of observational skills and an assured use of appropriate techniques.

Successful candidates were generally articulating photographic media with confidence. PowerPoints, journals and work sheets were well documented and demonstrated a range of mature and convincing experimentation and development.

Again the level of critical understanding within the Related Personal Study varied considerably from the descriptive or biographical to those that showed perceptively analysis and genuinely informed personal development as the work progressed. Biographical detail is important in placing practitioners within a historical context but basic 'cut and paste' from the Internet can never be a feature of successful submissions. Centres are reminded that candidates should use an appropriate technical vocabulary if they are to attain marks within the Mature Band.

Often candidates find it easier to write analytically when they compare the approach of different practitioners. Centres should be mindful of this and encourage candidates to investigate a range of related sources. An analytical approach is not an innate skill for many and therefore needs to be cultivated by adopting appropriate teaching strategies. For example, candidates could be asked to give detailed descriptions of others' work and in doing so identify areas of similarity and difference.

Candidates undertake the Related Personal Study in significantly different ways. Some produce a dedicated separate sketchbook, which often includes an easily read transcription. Whilst the specifications do not advocate any preference this method does allow for a focused approach in which candidates can explore in depth and the Study has a distinct beginning, middle and end.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates' success in this Unit was often dependant on the guidance given and the establishment of foundation skills during an AS course, which cultivated an understanding of the demands of A2 and greater confidence and independence in the approach to work.

Other centres adopt a different approach in that the Study is located within the body of the visual research. This can have a strong developmental quality when candidates enter into a dialogue between their work and that of their selected subject. The potential area of weakness is that this approach can lead to a rather episodic style within the submission. To overcome this problem candidates should conspicuously and coherently link the various written elements within their work. For example, they could examine how two different practitioners have approached the subject, which is central to their own practical work.

Transpositions from one media into another did not guarantee success. Some candidates were simply copying the style and techniques of an existing photographer in their own work without any meaningful critical analysis.

Once more it is important to stress that at A2 individually negotiated programmes of study appear to be a successful model in which candidates review and reflect on their AS work and identify their strengths. These can be developed further whilst producing the main theme of the Personal Investigation. Even so, many candidates require guidance and support in the acquisition of relevant skills and techniques if they are to achieve their full potential.

Moderators continue to report that some centres provided a common starting point for all candidates but this often resulted in similar work being produced and restricted the level of personal response.

Centres are reminded that for the Personal Investigation Unit candidates must set their own task or brief.

Moreover, it is essential when candidates choose their own themes that guidance is given by teachers as to the suitability or appropriateness of the selection for public assessment.

Far too often the less successful submissions tended to simply descriptive rather than showing sustained critical analysis. A 'catalogue of events' is not especially informative and candidates would be better advised to pay attention to the analysis of their own work and that of others by providing insights into their intentions and progress.

Moderators praised the excellent work seen at A2. Much of this demonstrated a very personal response by the candidate and a significant intellectual or critical content. The levels of technical skill combined with this critical understanding was often impressive.

A2 themes were often negotiated on a 'one to one' basis with the individual candidate. When appropriate advice and guidance was given and an ongoing dialogue occurred between teacher and candidate the submissions presented were frequently mature in conception and displayed direct relationships with contemporary practice and a sound knowledge base founded on first-hand research.

This year saw much innovation in the approaches adopted by candidates. Digital technology continues to make an impact and, in particular, exciting departures into 'the moving image' were witnessed. Filmmakers inspired some candidates with Shane Meadows and Danny Boyle being referenced. Theatrical photo shoots appear to be an increasingly popular theme and the care and attention taken resulted in professional outcomes.

Often these were presented as large-scale images in series. Several candidates had linked photographic techniques with installations or Fine Art based displays, which could be very effective.

There was no doubt that candidates in the upper mark range created stimulating and thoughtful work. The size, scale and display of the submissions varied considerably with successful candidates sourcing interesting subject matter and producing final pieces that were professional in execution.

SLR cameras were often skillfully used and contact strips gave evidence of a consistently thoughtful approach by recording the variety of options taken on a shoot. Candidates who adopted such practices distinctly demonstrated their thought processes and understanding of the visual language.

There appears to be a good connection between the critical and contextual work that is carried out at AS and the Related Personal Study at A2. Candidates often selected a method or subject that was introduced at AS level. The use of both Photographic and Fine Art based critical connections was a feature of the more successful submissions.
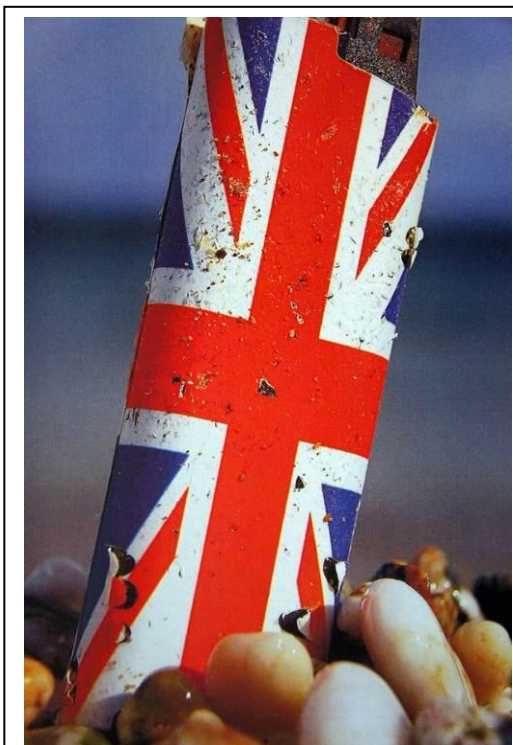
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Exploit local resources:

- Museums or galleries.
- Botanical gardens, parks, zoos
- Artists and designers
- Community Arts Centres
- Workshops or artists in residence
- Exhibitions or studio visits
- Carnivals, fairs, parades.

The best work often provided evidence of a coherent journey with a genuine sense of purpose. More successful candidates demonstrated not only that they had learnt from others' work but also simultaneously developed their own visual language.

Controlled Assignment, Photography Unit 4: A2 Level

The content of the A2 Controlled Assignment paper was well received. The starting points and design briefs offered sufficient scope to meet needs of candidates over the whole ability range.

There was good use of the preparatory period. Preliminary studies are a vital aspect of this Unit and successful candidates produced sustained recording and clearly defined their creative progression towards a final outcome.

Generally centres encourage candidates to work to their individual strengths and confidently take advantage of the experiences and skills gained earlier in their Personal Investigation.

The highest achievement was by candidates that took best advantage of the preparatory time to develop, experiment and refined their ideas before the supervised fifteen-hour period. Candidates who prepared carefully were able to use this time more effectively.

Candidates who produced only limited preparatory work did not achieve the levels of attainment of which they may have been capable.

Some candidates require guidance in respect of an appropriate range of techniques for a fifteen-hour assessment period. Teachers may, and, indeed, are encouraged to give advice and guidance during the preparatory period. Assistance must not, of course, be given during the fifteen-hours of supervised time.
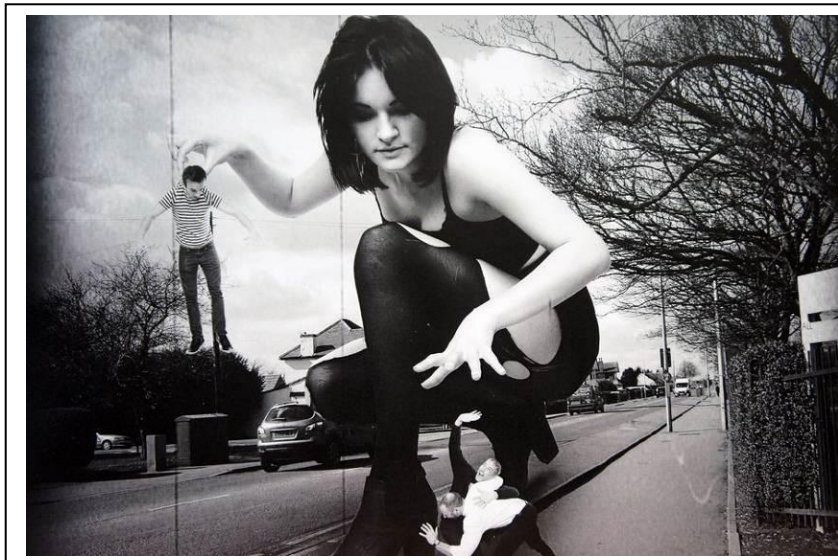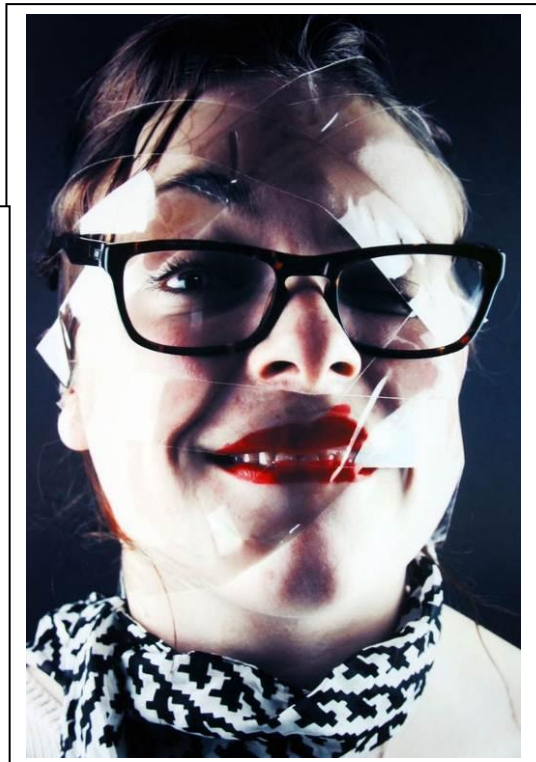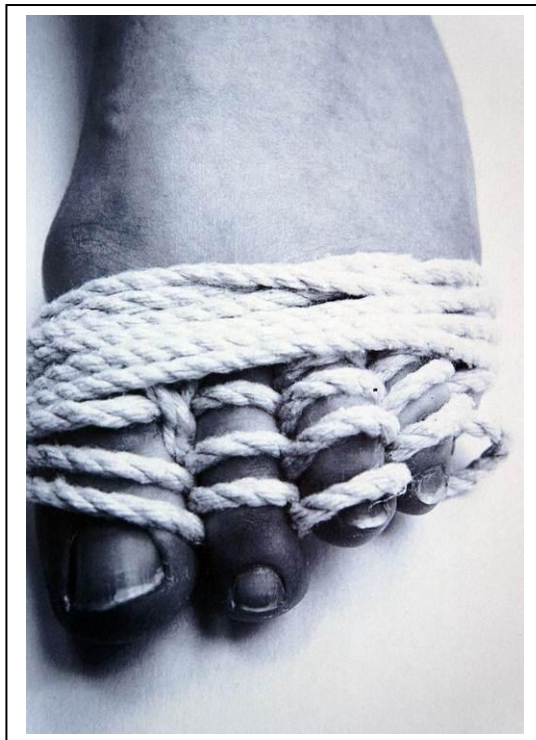
There were responses to all the Section 1 and Section 2 starting points at A2 with the following proving to be the most popular:

'Storyteller' - encouraged a wide variety of interpretations and approaches. Much excellent contextual referencing was evident with purposefully sustained research into literature, theatre and film as well as illustrators and photographers

'Bubbles' - although some rather predictable interpretations of soap and foam were seen, such responses were genuinely personal and often demonstrated acute first-hand observation. Some candidates displayed much greater intellectual engagement and by thinking more laterally produced outcomes of considerable originality.

'Taped, tied, bound' - led to many highly individual responses that were discreet, subtle and not infrequently witty. Many dynamic contextual links were forged with a variety of social contexts in addition to contemporary and historical practitioners
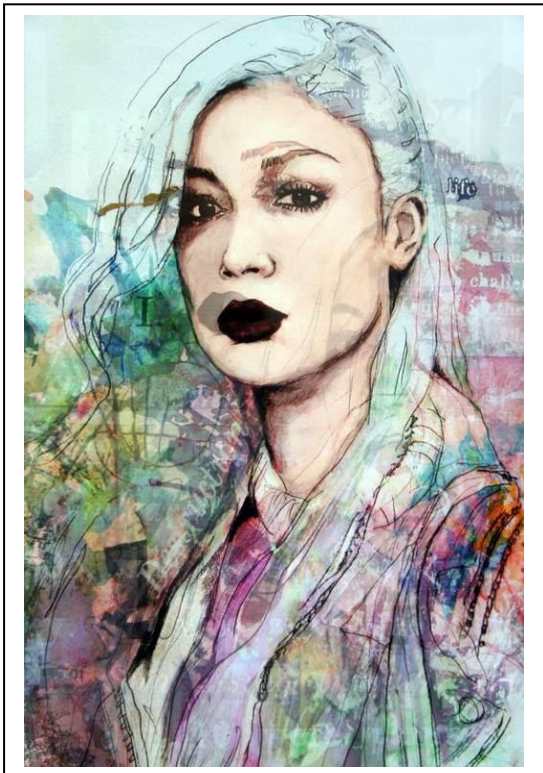
Assessment Objectives within Photography: A2

AO1 (Develop)

The requirements of this Assessment Objective were well demonstrated at A2. During their AS and A2 course candidates had learnt to value sustained and focused research informed by contextual and other sources. As a result much of the work that was produced displayed a confident and creative combination of visual elements.

AO2 (Experiment)

Similarly the demands of this Assessment Objective were ably met at A2. Candidates at this stage of their course were usually more than willing to take responsibility for the direction of their work and engaged actively in exploring their chosen focus. Experimentation that indicated much originality of thought was seen.
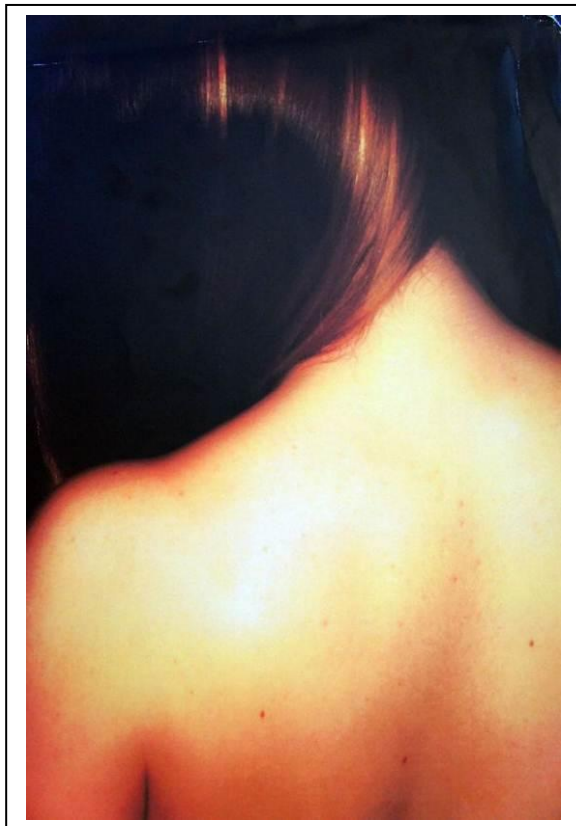
AO3 (Record)

The most successful candidates produced some truly outstanding observational work, which impressed by the sensitive attention to detail often combined with an ambitious approach to scale.

This Assessment Objective is weighted more heavily at A2 than AS and some candidates needed to ensure that their submissions reflected this greater emphasis.

To reach the highest attainment within this Assessment Objective there needed to be a range of successful observational methods. Candidates who restricted themselves to just one approach limited their potential.

AO4 (Present)

There were some memorable examples of adventurous work that firmly embedded all the Assessment Objectives by creating photography that was determined, perceptive, analytical and highly aesthetic. The formal visual elements were executed with flair and excellent technical control at a mature level.

This Assessment Objective is weighted more heavily at A2 than AS and some candidates needed to ensure that their submissions reflected this greater emphasis.

Candidates need to ensure that the submission addresses all the Assessment Objectives and that it has a clear, coherent line of research culminating in a fully resolved and well-executed final piece or series of works.

There is no doubt that centres and candidates should be congratulated on the quality of the work that is produced. The ambition and sheer inventiveness is a credit to all involved.
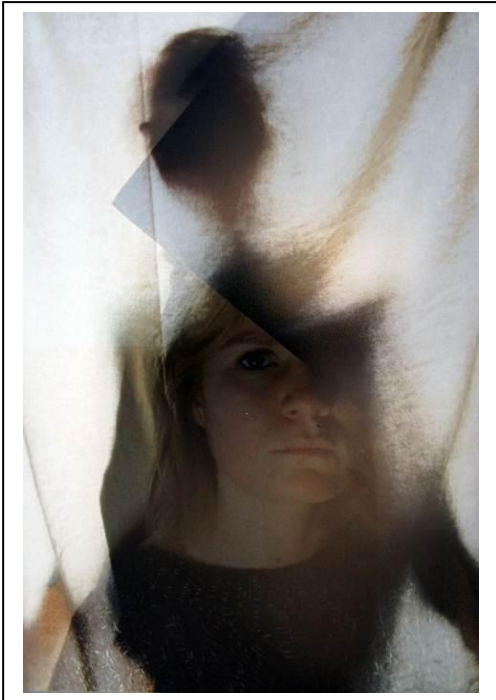
Summary and Guidance

Centres are reminded that applications for Special Consideration must be made well in advance of the moderation visit. This responsibility lies entirely with centres as the moderator cannot activate the procedure. It is advisable to notify the moderator of such cases when forwarding documentation for the May 31 deadline.

Further information regarding Professional Development for 2013-2014 will become available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk in due course. Alternatively OCR Training may be contacted by telephone (02476 496398) or by email (training@ocr.org.uk)

Teachers are reminded that they can join the OCR Art and Design e-list via the OCR website. The e-list covers all Art and Design specifications and can be used as a forum to ask questions, share good practice and resources and to contact colleagues delivering the OCR specifications in your local area. All OCR senior examining and moderating personnel are members of the e-list and would welcome any questions, comments or feedback from teachers regarding this report.

The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and are reproduced with the permission of the centres concerned.

OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.

Art and Design

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Critical and Contextual: H166

OCR Advanced GCE in Critical and Contextual: H566

Units F416 – F426

General Comments

The Critical and Contextual specification is well understood by some centres that have developed creative programmes for their candidates. Some centres concentrate on an analytical or ideas based approach, whilst others emphasise the visual aspects of presenting and exploring art works. Some centres stress the importance of citing references – it would be good to see this more actively taught as a skill in all centres. This year there is more evidence of thoughtless copying from the Internet and teachers must ensure that candidates are presenting original text. Research often remains narrow - sometimes a single source – with an over reliance on exhibition handouts rather than Art Historical texts. In the best submissions there were many excellent responses driven by first-hand research and experience of works of art.

Some of the work for these Critical and Contextual units showed high levels of commitment, personal research and analysis of art works. Other submissions, however, did not show a sustained or in-depth approach to AS study. Despite continual requests over time, some candidates again failed to submit a bibliography and list of first-hand visits or web sites accessed. **This is an important academic aspect of the specification and should not be ignored.**

Generally teachers expressed that the specification gave them the opportunity to structure a course that integrates their own areas of expertise and interests as well as make use of whatever local and national resources that are available in any given year. Once again, centres who found that candidates from this course were considerably aided in applications to study related courses at HE Level.

The moderation process is now generally a smooth operation with expectations of the procedures fully understood. Work was usually presented in a quiet and suitable environment for the moderation process and centres are reminded that they are required to release work for use in Award and Standardisation by OCR upon the request of the moderator.

Where centres run a course which allows candidates to present more than one unit in a sketch book or portfolio this must be clearly marked so as not to hinder the moderation process.

Some candidates produced 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. As highlighted at the start of this report it is particularly important to stress that Critical and Contextual candidates *should be guided by the Assessment Objectives and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are realised as their work progresses. Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent journey, with a genuine sense of purpose and achievement. Less successful work often lacked direction, and was invariably fragmented and poorly executed.*

It was noticeable this year that there was little evidence of digital journals or Power Point presentations. Digital submissions could easily be presented as a journey through the Assessment Objectives, with different pages describing candidates' thinking and personal responses. Digital submissions also facilitate a good way of presenting research of sources and context.

Coursework Portfolio F416

In the areas of study, Still Life, The Human Body and Built Environment were in evidence. Less popular, however, were the Machine Age and Contemporary Media in Art, which is somewhat disappointing as both areas provide many opportunities for a personal, engaged and well-resourced response.

It is good to see a mix of practical and written analysis. However achievement in each area was, in some centres, inconsistent and subsequently centre marking tended to be generous when this imbalance in achievement occurred. Two essays tend to be submitted - the first of these tends to be teacher set titles, which ensured the basics of extended prose were being covered. The second essay, however, is more personal, often dictated by the candidate's own interests - for example, 'Art and Monumentality since 1400'.

There were many excellent examples where candidates displayed fluidity in their ability to achieve personal critical analysis in both written and practical artwork.

Most centres had timelines. These ranged from the very formal images with captions, to those produced where candidates really had understood the notion of 'context' - to the extent of using themselves as a starting point, and including a lot of cultural material. Some were inadequate and did little to relate to context or vital socio-economic events.

Stronger submissions also had Gallery notebooks, where they kept informal notes/analysis on the works/exhibitions they had visited at first hand. Most work was presented in A4 or A3 sketchbooks or folders. With the advent of portable digital technology, this is another area which could be further utilised and developed.

Once again a wide variety of responses was seen this series, some taking a very practical outcome with annotations, some building up visual diaries, others teaching course elements and assessing essay outcomes.
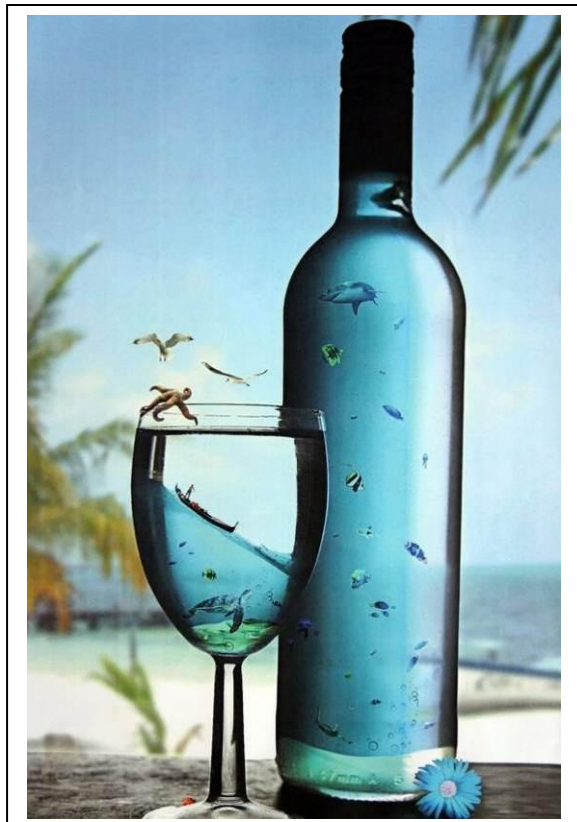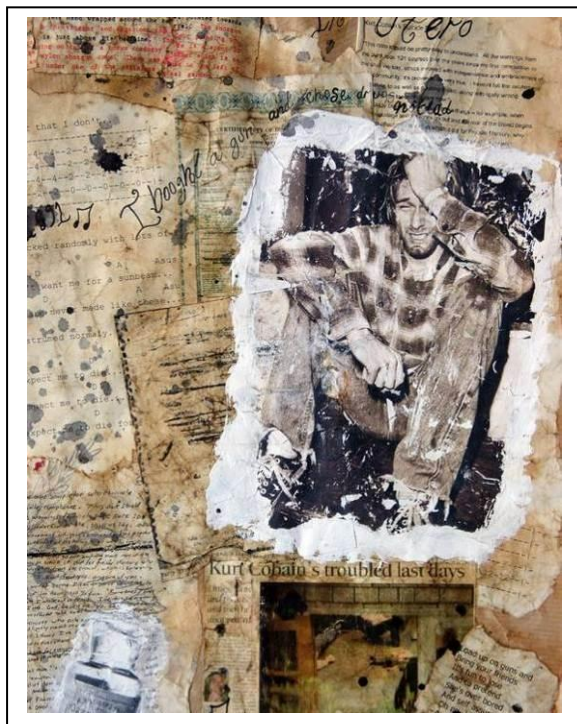
Many of the candidates made good use of gallery or architectural visits to inform their work and allow access to first-hand analysis and experience. This Unit requires candidates to show critical analysis, recording whilst on visits using cameras, sketching techniques and digital resources.

Understanding, broadening and using the appropriate subject vocabulary is important, as is the building up of glossaries, image banks and critical skills.

The varied demands of the portfolio show evidence of a good grounding in setting works of art into a variety of contexts, and the strongest candidates dealt with this aspect very well with detailed time lines, evidence of detailed analysis from gallery visits and the start of some promising essay writing skills in the two compulsory essays.
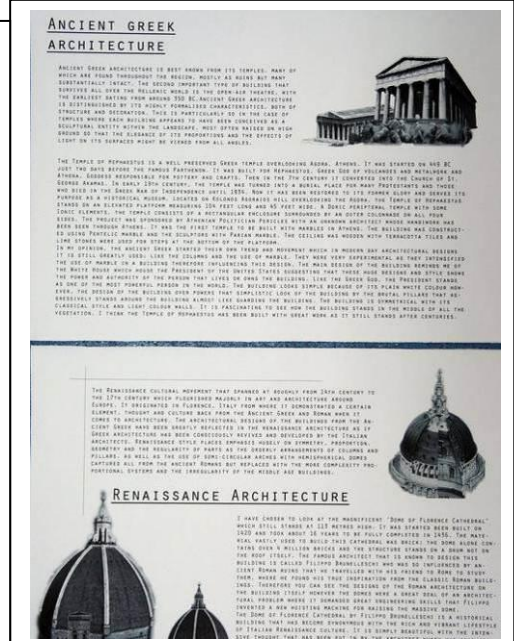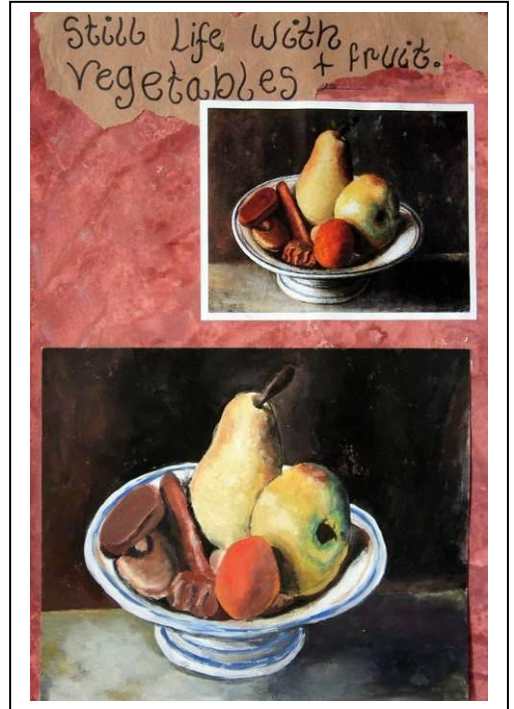
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Qualities and good practice established in the Portfolio Unit have a significant impact on the understanding and achievements made in the subsequent Units.

Cross standardisation across Endorsements in centres that enter in other areas of study is essential to the successful completion of the marking process.

Controlled Assignment, Unit 2: AS Level

The examination paper was well received by teachers. Most centres approached the questions with an essay response; others in a journal format and a small number of candidates tackled the practical response.

The best essay formats were academic and well researched and revealed growing confidence with critical analysis and subject-specific language. Weaker submissions failed to develop individual responses much further than highlighting downloaded text. Moreover candidates failing to capitalise fully on the opportunities presented by the 'starting points' still failed to add research details such as footnotes and a bibliography.
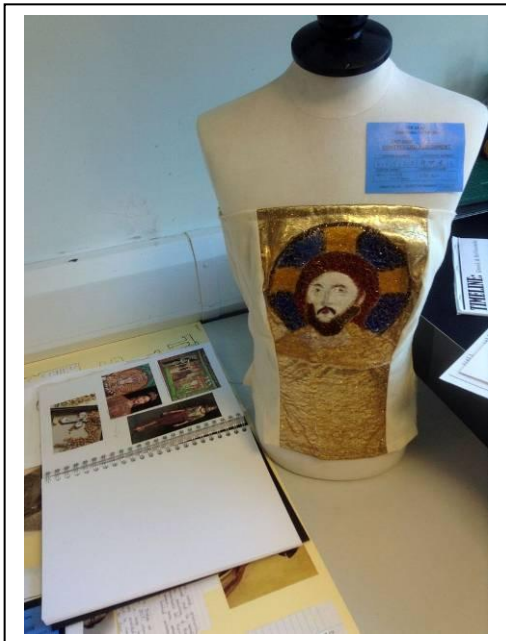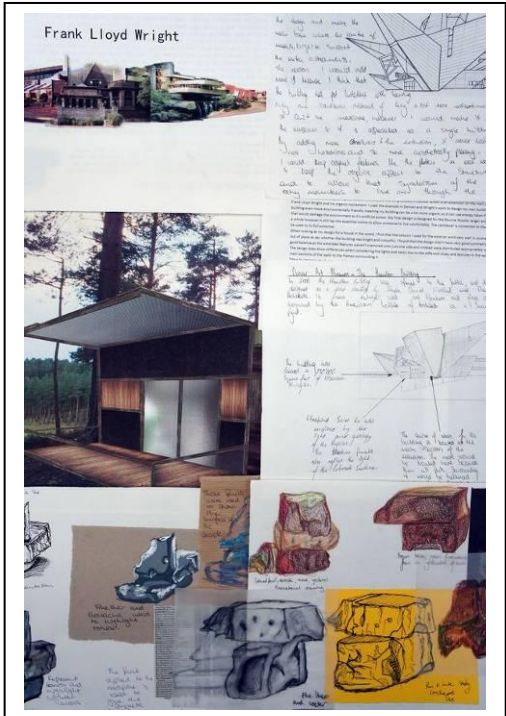
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Teachers should access the paper on arrival in the centre to enable the preparation of teaching and learning resources to support candidates.

The provisional entry lists submitted to OCR in the Autumn Term generate receipt of the paper.

Some candidates require guidance in respect of an appropriate range of techniques in preparation for the Controlled Assignment. Teachers may, and indeed, are encouraged to give advice and guidance during the preparatory period. Assistance must not, of course, be given during the five hours of supervised time.

Responses to Section 4: Art in Context proved attractive to a number of discerning candidates, whilst Section 5: Visual Starting Points remained popular.

Section 4 – Art in Context:

16 'Social Issues of People Working' – was popular and provided opportunities for study of a socio-economic impact or workers' class struggle. Also in evidence were the emergence of workers' rights and the recognition of women's contributions, which was dominated by 19th Century Realism and 20th Century War Art.

17 'Design and use of windows' – the more successful responses had explored differing perspectives or viewed the window as a portal for the exploration of visual elements in real and imaginary worlds. Surrealist influences were popular. So too were narrative responses, where the frame provided a tableau or a frozen moment in time.

18 'Creatures of air and water' – this provided opportunities for some creative graphic responses, sometimes using a range of digital media. Ancient Mythology frequently provided the foundation for personal exploration, some of which extended into contemporary life and advertising imagery.

19 'Religious or spiritual sculpture' – there were many sustained and personal written responses. A time line often provided the basis for focused studies displaying critical awareness. A study of Iconography was popular, frequently with visual imagery enhancing and extending written texts.

20 'Mood and atmosphere of the circus, theatre and concert hall' – this was highly popular and produced many personal responses based on the social history within a local environment. Candidates had responded in a variety of ways, including photographic "then and now" observations, architectural studies of periods and styles, and visual imagery exploring the diverse nature of performance and entertainment.

Section 5 Visual Starting Points

21 'House' by Rachel Whiteread 1993 – although not so popular there were some interesting responses questioning concepts of form and the use of internal space.
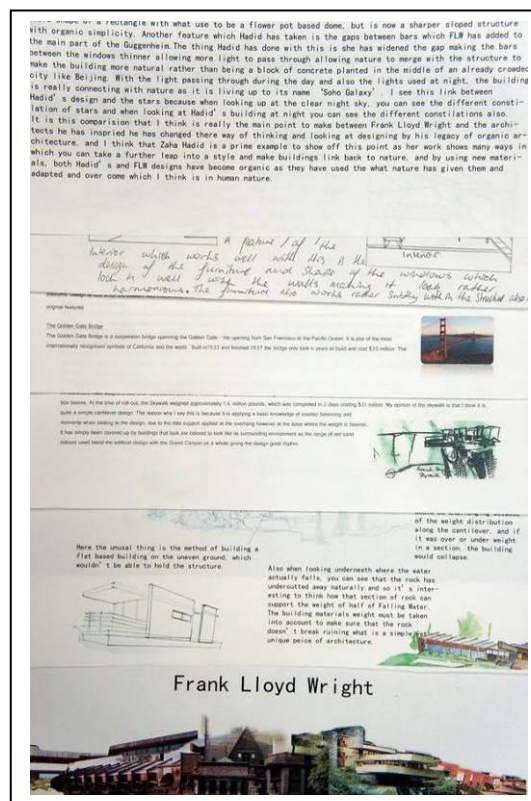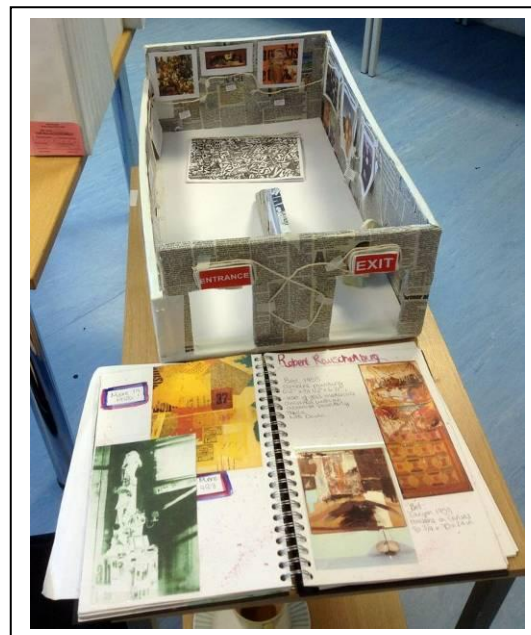
22 'Bathers at Asnieres' by Georges Seurat 1883-1884
– this question was popular, quite possibly because similar themes may have been explored in Unit 1. More able candidates were able to sustain a discourse comparing different artists and painting styles representing surface and form.

23 'The Robie House' by Frank Lloyd Wright 1908-1910 – there were some excellent responses to this question exploring the form and function of the cantilever. The more able candidates had explored construction techniques and applied them to their own designs, supported by 3D models, annotated sketches and computer simulations.

> *SHARING BEST PRACTICE:*
>
> Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery. Avoid too much reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines, especially highlighted downloaded text.

A2 F436 Personal Investigation: Public Art

This work often centred on visiting art galleries, assessing public sites of sculpture or public buildings and sometimes included research elements of high academic rigour. Presentation varied from annotated sketchbook formats, mini-thesis structure, mounted panels, 3D models, portfolios and CD Rom.

Most centres fully understand the requirements for this Unit, and their candidates produced excellent work. In one centre each candidate had curated an exhibition and designed and made models of the Galleries, which were both diverse and imaginative. This encourages candidates to explore issues of space, scale, placement etc.

Many Personal Investigations showed well-balanced submissions, though it was only when they reached the Controlled Assignment that candidates wrote at their best. Stronger centres emphasised inclusion of research folders as standard, with clear evidence of the processing and development of analysis whilst some weaker candidates simply presented a 'scrap book' of exhibition leaflets with little evidence of serious analysis.
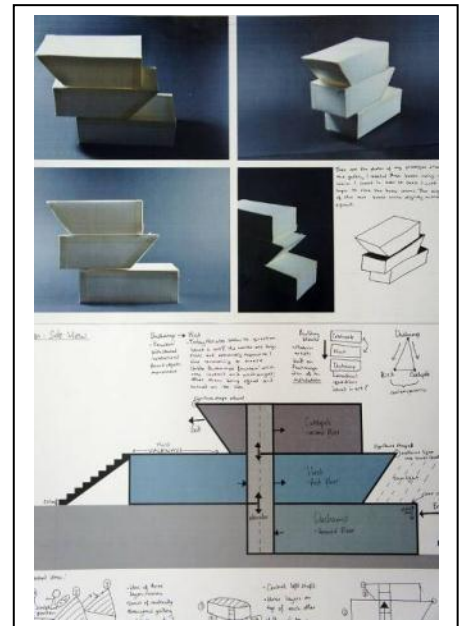
Long essays were also presented, some of which related directly to the exhibition content; others were rather more 'teacher-directed' but again dealt very appropriately with art in the public domain - one theme being representing 'National Heroes'. Another centre's candidates chose to respond via A3 notebooks, which contained a diverse range of set projects on Public Art - Banksy, Public Art in Swindon, Art-o-Mat, but these were contextualised through a long essay on The Medici and Patronage. The more able candidates perceptively made connections to contemporary equivalents or contrasting contexts.

It is worth mentioning the work of one centre studying architecture, which had the Personal Investigation firmly grounded in the candidates' own home, following extensive analysis of their home space and surrounding locality.

Centres are reminded of the requirement to select, edit and present work for assessment.

In many centres, practical work was submitted along with written work. There was, however, a wide variance of skills and in some instances the practical work did little to enhance submissions.

Personal observations and ideas were generally well supported by the selection of images. These varied between detailed hand-drawn transpositions, paintings, computer generated graphics, sketched annotations and direct downloads from the Internet. Those candidates who were less able had often downloaded material with little thought about selection, purpose or context.

Extremely well structured introductory sessions allow the candidates to produce their more personal responses.

There was a noticeable step up in quality, critical analysis and academic standards in some submissions at A2. Others, however, had failed to develop their starting points with the depth of research required. Successful candidates were often well informed and used the skills learnt at AS with increasing confidence and the use of subject terminology was often well controlled.

The questions on Botanical Forms and Harbours were well answered and the Found Objects question on seemingly unrelated discarded materials had proved thought provoking.

At A2 candidates have sufficient time to both write and present creatively but full and best use of the 15 hours is not always made in weaker submissions. However, the synoptic achievements of candidates in this paper were often impressive. They put to very good use the skills acquired during the course with often fluent prose and well-constructed essays. Exhibition design is always a popular choice for the outcome and whilst some were more to do with the architecture of the buildings, the production of imaginative models clearly demonstrated good understanding of architectural style. Other interesting responses included very well-executed 3D models and pictorial compositions from found objects, scale models exploring of the use of materials in contemporary sculpture and a CD recording of performance art.

In the strongest submissions presentation was often of a high quality finish. Candidates who had made only cursory preparations were often caught out in terms of content and quality of outcome. Where candidates are suggesting ideas and theories, statements do need evidence to support them, which is sound academic practice.

At its best, some of the final essay writing was of an extremely high academic standard, full of evaluative critical analysis, thoroughly researched with an excellent use of subject language and terminology.

Weaker submissions were often too descriptive, simply restating existing biographical material. Failure to develop enough initial research is likely to compromise further development into more mature work.

Centres are advised to ensure that a supporting study folder or sheets must be submitted as evidence of research and planning, including class notes, sketches and any relevant materials which inform the submission.
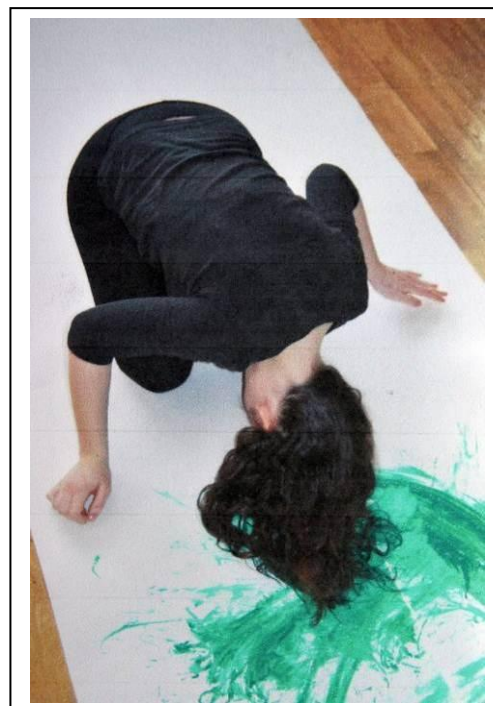
Once again at A2 some candidates require guidance in respect of an appropriate range of techniques for a fifteen-hour assessment period. Teachers may, and, indeed, are encouraged to give advice and guidance during the preparatory period. Assistance must not, of course, be given during the fifteen hours of supervised time.

Responses to Section 4: Art in Context proved attractive to a number of discerning candidates, whilst Section 5: Visual Starting Points remained popular.

Section 4 – Art in Context:

16 'Botanical forms and garden environments' – the work of artists in the Arts and Crafts Movement featured highly in submissions. So too were responses based on the work of Van Gogh, Edouard Manet and Dutch Still Life.

17 'Found objects' – proved to be a very popular theme with some excellent critical essays, which displayed perception and sustained visual analysis. These were often enhanced by practical artwork, either in the form of installations or pictorial compositions.

18 'Harbours and river scenes' – frequently evoked a Fine Art response with analysis of the work of Turner and a range of marine artists. There were some personal responses based on a local area, which included written and mixed media responses.

19 'Text and images' – although not so popular, there were examples where the shape and design of text images were explored with regard to the meanings they convey.

20 'Social and historical development of theatres and cinemas' – this was a popular question, with candidates making a variety of personal observations and responses, which had similarities to the "Theatre and Concert Hall" question at AS. Local sources were often researched with often in-depth analysis of style, form and function.

Section 5 – Visual Starting Points:

21 'Early One Morning' by Sir Anthony Caro 1962 – there were notable examples where candidates had explored the use of different materials in 20th Century Abstract Sculpture through written and visual analysis. These were often insightful, displaying perception and sensitivity in the nature of materials and their importance in the creation of Public Art.

'Found Objects Displayed Through Installation'

Cornelia Parker
Mass, Colder Darker Matter
1997
365.7 x 320 x 320 cm
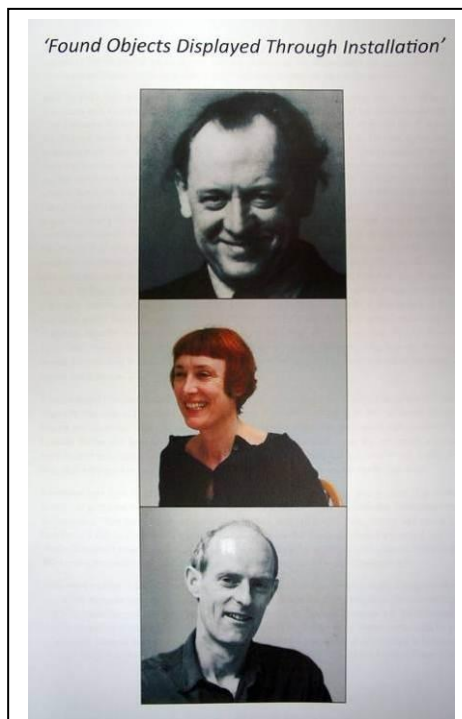
22 'The Annunciation' by Rene Magritte 1930 – Surrealism continues to be a popular theme and this starting point was well received, allowing candidates to express a range of personal and factual information. The more able candidates displayed sustained critical analysis, supported by an appropriate technical vocabulary, which facilitated maturely developed and realised outcomes.

23 'The Church of Notre Dame du Raincy' by Auguste Perret 1922 – although not a popular question, there were some well-researched responses to the development of the use of concrete in 20th Century architecture.
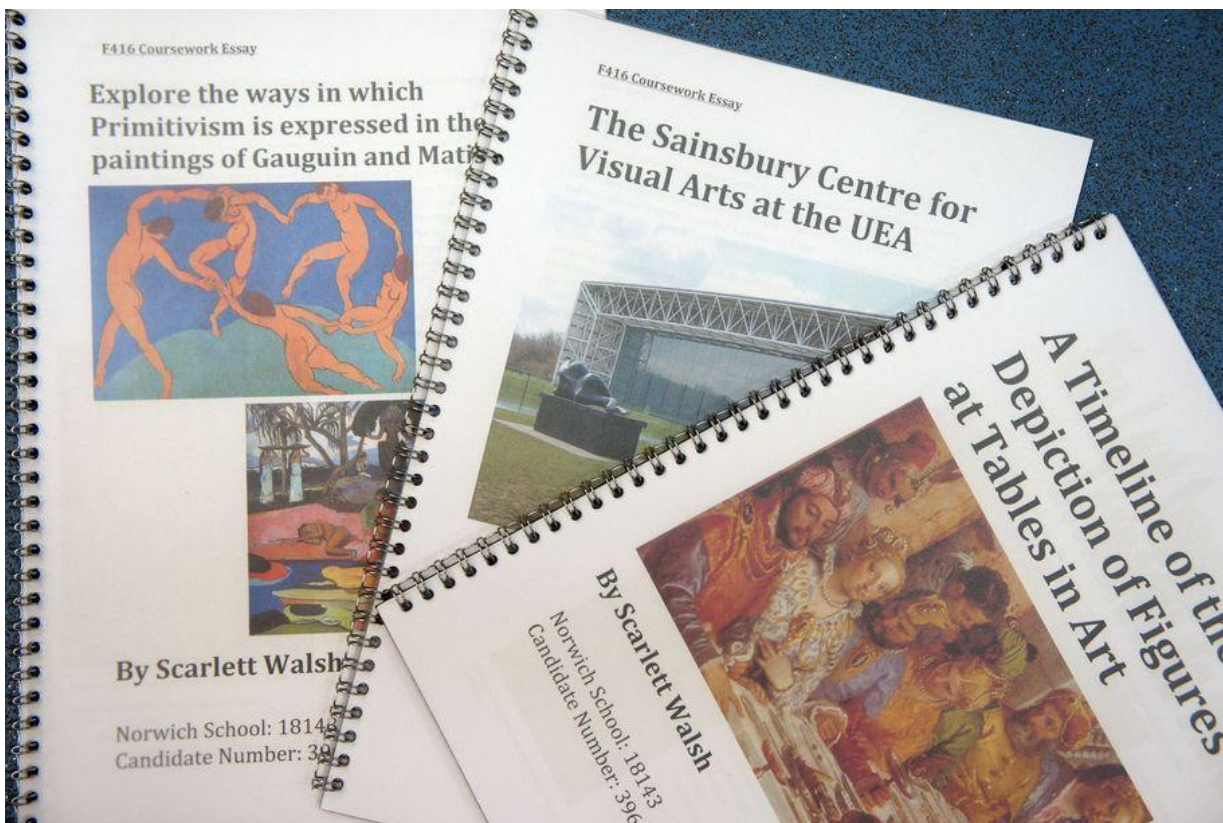
Assessment Objectives

AO1 Develop

The range of approaches taken by teachers is important. Often there is creative teaching at the early stages of the courses with works studied leading towards linked essays. Sometimes candidates have difficulties making connections between works and have not been sufficiently encouraged to find connecting threads that will develop their understanding. The time line offers a good opportunity to show developing understanding of the relationship between critical and contextual elements at AS. But these are generally weak, sometimes no more than reproductions pasted into sketchbooks sequentially with dates, rather than the creative juxtaposition of artworks with historical and cultural events. Written work at A2 level showed good development of ideas. Most centres have formulated a strong programme for the first term of A2 with visits and themes from which candidates can develop a personal direction for their Personal Investigation.

AO2 Experiment

The analysis of materials and processes is often a weakness, with candidates concentrating on an art historical framework rather than making a detailed exploration of individual works. The reviewing of ideas as understanding develops is a challenge and the refining of ideas and building of relationships is often missing, especially at AS level. Experimenting can take the form of different approaches to text or to visuals. The use of different prose styles, as appropriate to a newspaper or gallery guide rather than just an art appreciation essay, are well explored by some teachers. Similarly the production of gallery leaflets, exhibition models or power point displays all enhance understanding through experimentation; though this has become formulaic in some centres, rather than being driven by the need to communicate insight of the works studied.

AO3 Recording

Greater emphasis could be placed on the use of specialist vocabulary to enable candidates to analyse works more perceptively. There was little unmediated use of the Internet and it is encouraging to see some centres actively promoting the accurate referencing of sources and the citing of quotations. This enables candidates to make appropriate use of their own
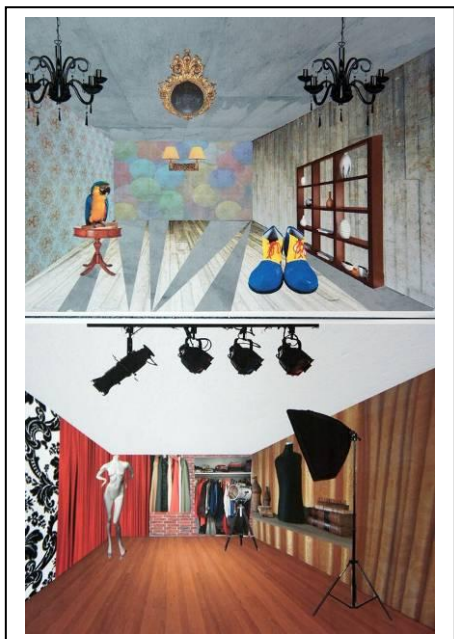first- hand observed recording as distinct from secondary material that is used to enhance their understanding.

At A2 candidates did not always spend long enough researching material. It would be good to see more extensive referencing of Art Historical sources and more detailed notes from gallery visits. Sketching was rarely used as a way of responding to Art works and there was surprisingly little evidence of candidates using their own photographs to record works considering that most museums permit this now.
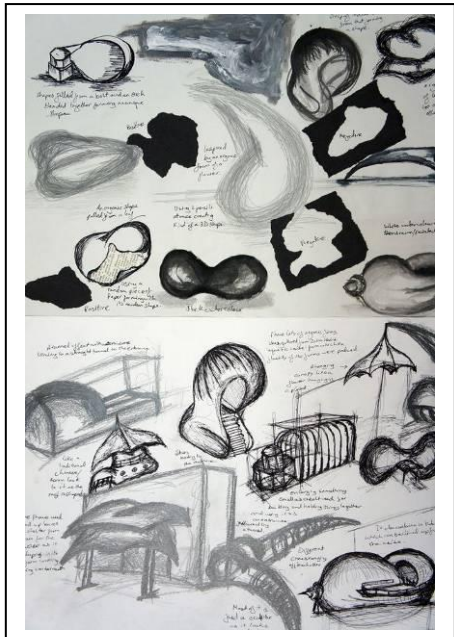
AO4 Present

There is scope for more considered presentation of written material through the use of ICT. The use of illustrations is not always carefully considered and consequentially opportunities for exciting juxtaposition of visual images to reinforce ideas are missed. Candidates tend to miss opportunities to make connections between works studied both in text and visuals.

In addition, submissions as a whole should be seen as embodying AO4. The standards of presentation, practical artwork, critical analysis and the development of ideas into realised outcome(s) should be viewed in their entirety.
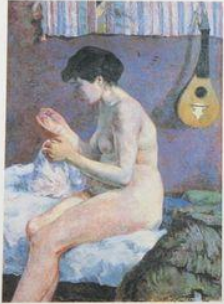
How did Paul Gauguin change the use of colour and ideas from non-western art and the depiction of the human form?

Paul Gauguin was born in 1848 in Paris but later moved to Lima in Peru for four years to stay with relatives before returning back to France. This connection to non-western civilization was to have a profound impact on Gauguin's art later in his life leading him to believe that there was more to art than just western influences.

Gauguin had many sources of influence on his art from a young age; his mother for example, had left her son her art collection of Pre-Columbian Peruvian pots upon her death in 1867. Gauguin also had a wealthy guardian by the name of Gustave Arosa who had a large art collection containing works by artists such as Camille Pissaro and Eugène Delacroix. Gauguin became a stockbroker in Paris in 1871 and later in 1873 he married Mette Gad, a young Danish woman. He was also a self-taught Sunday painter who was inspired by and even copied the ideas of many Impressionist artists. Furthermore through Gauguin's friendship with Pissaro he displayed some of his works at Impressionist exhibitions in 1881 and 1882.
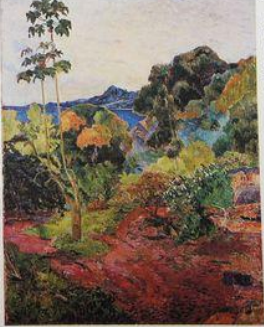
One of the works Gauguin displayed at the 1881 exhibition was a 'Nude Study' in which he uses pastel colours, possibly due to the influence of Degas, and paints a figure who is passive and by which Gauguin is celebrating the mystery of the inner being. In terms of brushwork Gauguin is influenced by painters such as Georges Seurat, utilizing the technique of optical mixing in order to attain a harmonious effect within the picture.

Following the stock market crash in 1882 Gauguin lost his job as a broker and he and his family moved to Rouen, with Gauguin attempting to make a living through selling his art. However when this failed his wife and children moved back to Holland in 1884 and Gauguin went to Brittany in July 1886. There he produced many idyllic pictures of the countryside often including the Breton people in their traditional costume. Gauguin's style however was still heavily influenced by the Impressionists such as Pissaro – through visible brushstrokes and pastel hues, and Degas – in his drawing of young girls.

In April 1887 Gauguin travelled to Panama and Martinique which had profound influences on his style of painting, it was here the artist began to brighten the colours on his palette and utilize unrealistic colour. In works such as 'Tropical Vegetation' Gauguin has used incredibly rich colours such as Prussian blue and Viridian green to convey the lush almost paradisiacal surroundings.

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