GCE

Art and Design

Advanced GCE **A2 H560-H566**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H160-H166**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

GCE Art and Design Units F410 – F446

General Comments

In 2016 moderators reported that 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 very good effect. Some course structures continue to be refined to incorporate the evolving nature of digital applications. However, a small number of other Centres continue to repeat long established approaches, which neither meet the demands of the specifications nor reflect current trends within Art and Design.

As previously reported successful candidates' work was often solidly founded on gallery visits or artist workshops, which exemplified excellent practices within some Centres. In contrast it is regrettable that some candidates still resort to downloading superficial contextual images, which neither support practical work nor promote the development of ideas.

Moderators reported that strong contextual 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 creative 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. Those that engaged with their local environment through investigations into museum collections, architecture and landscape often benefited from highly stimulated and intensely individual outcomes.
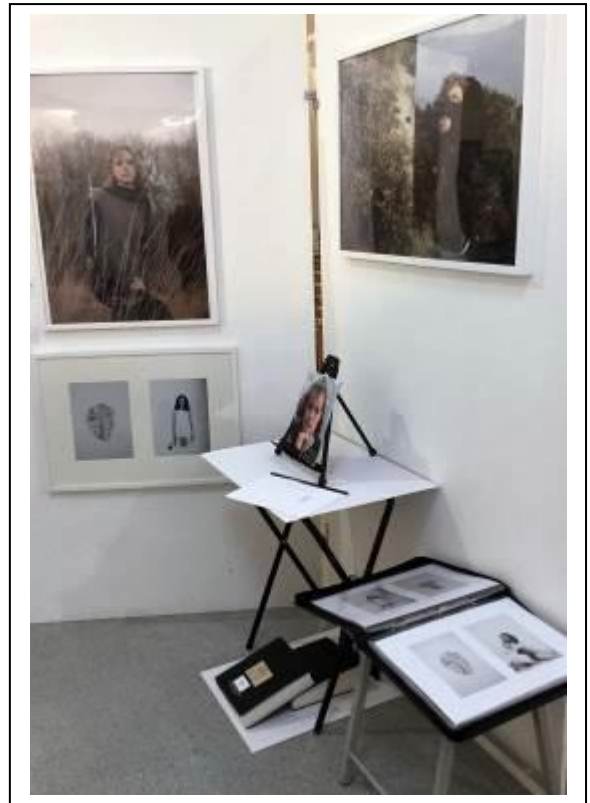
All AS: Units 1 and 2: F410 – F426

A small number of candidates were entered for the AS Units, of which the majority were retake submissions, therefore very little work was available.

Personal Investigation, Unit 3: A2 Level

Once again in 2016 the level of critical understanding within the Related Personal Study varied considerably from the descriptive or biographical to those that showed perceptive 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 should not be a feature of successful submissions.

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. This point is important to teachers in preparation for the new GCE.

Candidates undertake the Related Personal Study in significantly different ways. Some produce a dedicated separate sketchbook, which often includes an easily read transcription.

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 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 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.

Some candidates produced transpositions from one media into another, however not all were a success. Some candidates were simply copying the style and techniques of an existing artist in their own work without any meaningful critical analysis. Candidates require guidance and support in the acquisition of relevant skills and techniques if they are to achieve their full potential.

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 work and identify their strengths.

For the Personal Investigation Unit candidates must set their own task or brief. 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. 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.

Once again in 2016 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 are usually 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 or confident in nature.

2016 saw much innovation in the approaches adopted by candidates. Digital technology continues to grow and make an impact, in particular, more exciting departures into 'the moving image' or 'digital art' were seen.

Some candidates' submissions focused on work of a more conceptual nature, sometimes with expansive installations as an outcome, however for some the supporting studies did not always reveal convincing levels of technical ability or intellectual engagement.

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.

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Controlled Assignment, Unit 4: A2 Level

The 2016 'starting points' in the A2 Controlled Assignment Paper were, once again, well received. The themes and design briefs offered sufficient scope to meet the needs of candidates over the whole ability range.

Generally there continues to be 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.

As in previous years most 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.

As in 2014 and 2015, for less successful candidates **poor time management** made the major contribution to under achievement. Such submissions often displayed incomplete developmental work, limited or superficial connections with the work of other practitioners or context and unfocused 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:

'**Contortion**' proved to be a particularly popular choice for many candidates with many interpretations of the human form or face being the principal vehicles through which this was developed. Frequently there were confident and sensitive renditions through a range of media that culminated in large scale paintings in both acrylic and oils. Photography proved to be a very useful and almost indispensable tool used for recording and refining ideas. Instances of photocopiers and scanners being used creatively were also to be found amongst the submissions. The work of a diverse range of artists and practitioners were sourced to support and develop personal responses. Scott Hutchinson, Helen Chadwick, Jeff Huntington and even the portrait embroidery of Louise Jones were effectively used to develop creative and personal responses.

'**Power**' was one of the most frequently encountered starting points with a myriad of sources and directions taken, including the power of the natural world, heroic and despotic characters, machinery and scale. For some, the idea of power as an abstract concept within the persona gave the opportunity for some very personal and insightful responses that were supported by mature and eloquent documentation. Whilst the range of artists and styles used to develop ideas was evident, these were generally not inhibiting in the approaches taken but were a positive factor in the refinement of a personal response and interpretation.

'**Signs**' provided candidates with an opportunity to explore a multitude of signs and imagery both contemporary and historical. The research and development of astrological symbols and tarot card designs enabled some candidates to respond in very graphical forms. These frequently explored a variety of sources from Chinese, Middle Eastern and Western cultures. Where road and city signage was employed, the temptation to simply collect groups of images was mainly avoided with some insightful interpretations and observations of contemporary life as well as potentially dystopian futures.

Assessment Objectives within Art and Design: A2

AO1 (Develop)

Again in 2016, candidates' ability to develop ideas is 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 many 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 often linking to contemporary practitioners. 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.

Many candidates showed an ability to review, refine and communicate through experimentation and exploration with confidence. Less successful submissions tended to display an unskillful, unfocused and inappropriate use of materials, processes and techniques and culminated in unresolved outcomes.

AO3 (Record)

Digital photography once again, and increasingly so, had a significant impact on approaches to recording. Photographic images were often produced first by candidates and subsequently followed by drawings and studies in a variety of media.

Some candidates recorded ideas and observations in written forms, frequently making notes whilst observing stimuli at first-hand such as a gallery or location visit. 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 and final submissions were thought provoking and individual because candidates had capitalised upon purposeful visual research and perceptive critical thinking with successful review and modification techniques.

Once again in 2016 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 New AS and GCE Art and Design during 2015-2016. Once again 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 the New GCE Specification 2015-2016 will be available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 851509 or by email to cpdhub@ocr.org.uk in September 2016.
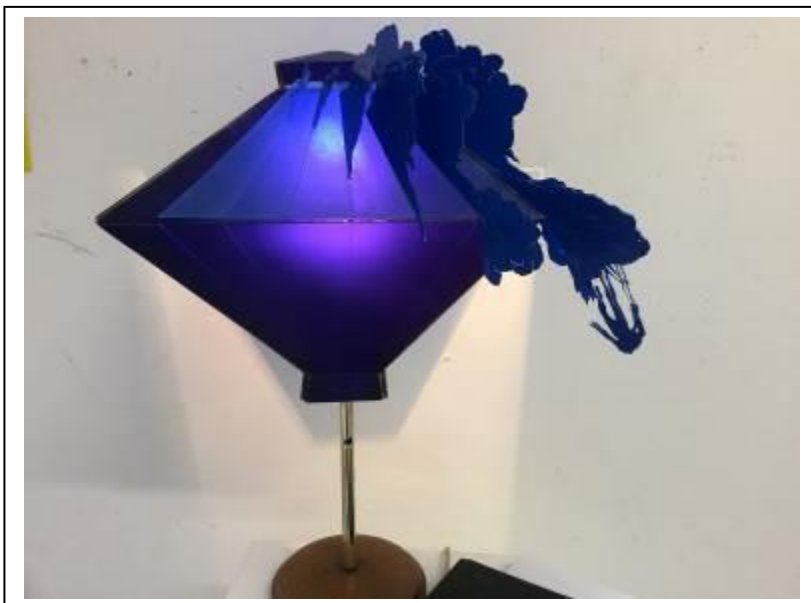
The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and are reproduced with the permission of the Centres concerned.

OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.
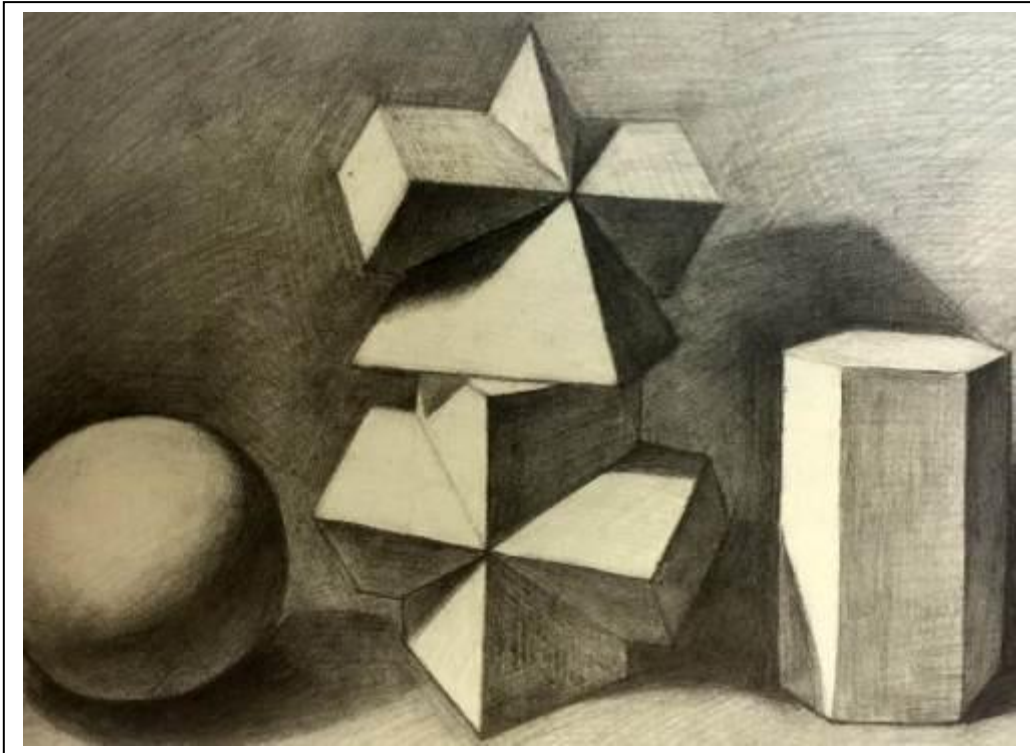
Additional Exemplar Work: 2016

Photography

Personal Investigation, 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 photographic skills and an assured use of appropriate techniques.

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

Again in 2016 the level of critical understanding within the Related Personal Study varied considerably from the descriptive or biographical to those that showed perceptive 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.

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.

Once again in 2016 some 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.

Photographic 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. Furthermore, the process of applying effects with 'Apps' or 'PhotoShop' often replaced sustained exploration offered superficial refinement of ideas.

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, especially if they are new to photography, if they are to achieve their full potential.

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 and resulting photography for public assessment.

Far too often the less successful submissions tended to be 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 in photography. Much of this demonstrated a very personal response by individual candidates and for some a significant intellectual or critical content. The levels of technical skill, both traditional and digital combined this with critical understanding of an impressive nature.

A2 photographic 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 both historical and contemporary practice.

In 2016 moderators reported innovation continue to thrive in the approaches adopted by candidates. Advancing digital technology and its developments continue to make significant impact and, in particular, exciting departures into 'the moving image' and 'games designs' were seen. Filmmakers such as Shane Meadows and Danny Boyle, continue to inspire some candidates. Theatrical photo shoots, stop-motion and blue screen are increasingly popular approaches and the care and attention taken resulted in professional outcomes. In some Centres these were presented as large-scale images in sets or series.

The size, scale, approach and display of the submissions varied considerably with successful candidates sourcing interesting subject matter and producing final pieces that were professional in execution often using studio techniques, digital editing and specialist equipment.

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

In the Related Personal Study, 'Portraiture', 'Landscape' and 'Documentary' continue to be commonly explored. The use of both Photographic and Fine Art based critical connections was a feature of some 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, Unit 4: A2 Level

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

Once again there was good use of the preparatory period. Preliminary studies are a vital aspect of this photography Unit and successful candidates produced sustained photographic 'recording', be it 'still' or 'moving' 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 Unit.

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 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.
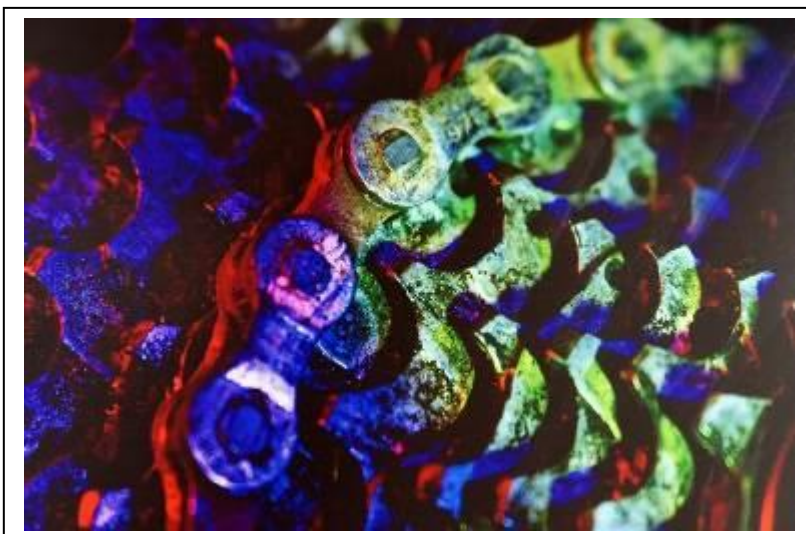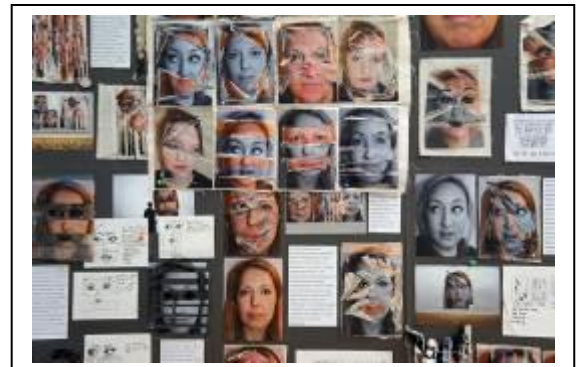
There were responses to all the Section 1 and Section 2 starting points at A2 with the following proving to be the most popular:

'Falling' – encouraged a wide variety of interpretations and approaches. Much excellent contextual referencing was evident with purposefully sustained research into the work of practitioners such as Hayashi Natsumi, Li Wei and Erich Leeth. Candidates evidently enjoyed the process of responding to 'Falling' as a means of using creative processes in a range of digital manipulation techniques to achieve their desired aims. The care with which photoshoots had been arranged and the deliberation in costuming and composition of images was testimony to the 'considered refinement of the ideas'.

'Sleep' - was responded to in a multiplicity of genres and styles prompted by the work of such disparate sources as Nan Golding, the Pre Raphaelite brotherhood and children's literature. Much effort had obviously been spent in the planning and development of sets for 'shoots' which demonstrated the care with which light, colour, composition and harmony had been considered. Whilst the majority of responses were digital, there were some instances of black and white darkroom photography which demonstrated sound compositional, editing and processing skills.

'Legs'- although falling occasionally to the more obvious interpretations, this theme also supported some innovative and carefully crafted responses. With consideration, skill and creatively using manipulation and layering techniques 'Legs' prompted a number of subtle outcomes that had been refined through the exploration of many photographers and practitioners such as Nir Arieli, Miguel Ribeiro, Spencer Tunick and Bill Brandt.
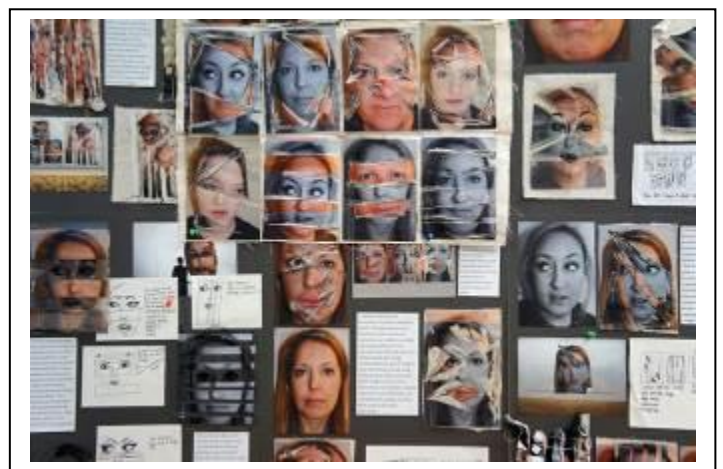
Assessment Objectives within Photography: A2

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 in photography. There were examples of development from local and national sources and candidates had formed ideas using web-based as well as primary research.

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 including digital image manipulation, layering and combined approaches using moving image.
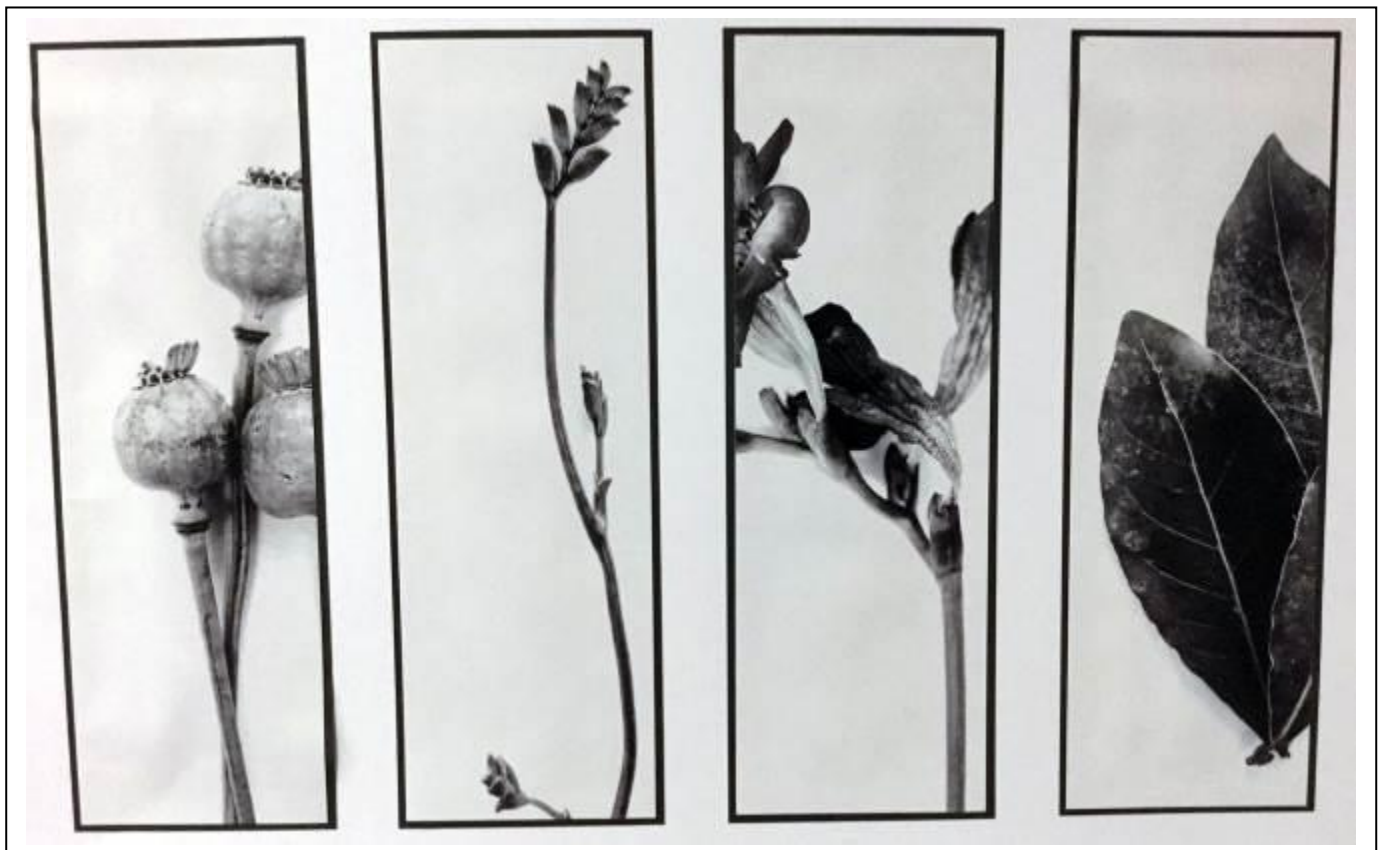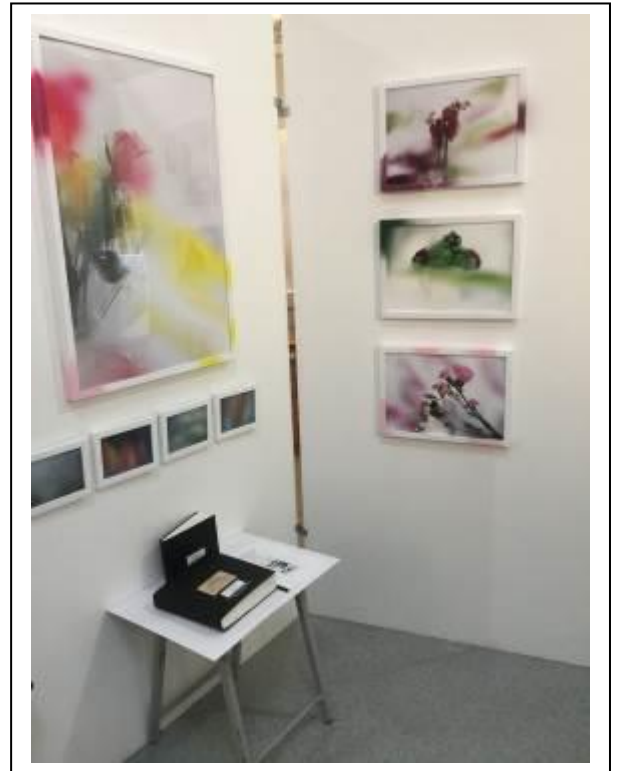
AO3 (Record)

The most successful candidates produced some truly outstanding photographic work, which impressed by the sensitive attention to detail often combined with an ambitious approach to content, viewpoint and location.

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 viewpoints. Candidates who restricted themselves to just one approach limited their potential. There continues to be a mixture of traditional and modern approaches to recording in photography including sophisticated technologies to aid time-based recording.

AO4 (Present)

Once again 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. There were examples of candidates utilizing web-based presentation methods such as 'scan-codes' which link to websites.

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.

In 2016 many Centres and candidates should be congratulated on the quality of the photographic work that is produced. The ambition, inventiveness and skill shown are a credit to all involved in photography.

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 for their encouragement which was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the support materials for both candidates and teachers.

Further information regarding professional development for the New GCE Specification 2016-2017 will be available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 851509 or by email to cpdhub@ocr.org.uk in September 2016.

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

Critical and Contextual Studies

Art and Design: OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Critical and Contextual: H166

A small number of candidates were entered for the AS Units, of which the majority were retake submissions.

OCR Advanced GCE in Critical and Contextual: H566

GCE Critical and Contextual Studies Units F416 – F446

General comments

The Critical and Contextual Specification is well understood by many 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. In both approaches the development of both written and visual skills are paramount and are reflected through candidates' achievement through the Assessment Objectives.

Generally, teachers were positive that the Specification gave them the opportunity to structure a course that integrates their own areas of expertise and interests. It also facilitated the use of local and national resources as a source of course material. Once again the more successful submissions made use of local resources, which displayed more engaged and personal submissions.

The moderation process was 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.

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. Centres should be congratulated for utilising local resources, where available, which often resulted in stimulating and lively submissions. Presentation varied from annotated sketchbook formats, mini-thesis structure, mounted panels, 3D models, portfolios, practical artwork and CD Rom.

An increasing mix of practical and written analysis was more in evidence this year, which allowed for more creative and personal submissions. In some Centres there had been a marked shift towards practical explorations that developed a personal theme or explored an idea using a range of media, which had facilitated some excellent technical responses. This was very much in line with the thinking of the new Specification and these Centres should be congratulated for their forward thinking.

Although there was a marked reduction this year, the excessive use of photo-copied hand outs and highlighted pages from the internet are still discouraging some candidates from reaching their potential by clouding progression through the Assessment Objectives. Some Centres in all of the Critical and Contextual Units filled their workbooks with seemingly unnecessary copied pages from books. In some instances candidates simply re-constituted copied information, which displayed restricted personal development. Research often remains narrow - sometimes a single source – with an over reliance on exhibition hand-outs 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 accompanied by detailed and sustained analysis and excellent practical skills.

The weaker candidates were often too descriptive with limited explorations and quickly reached conclusions based on their own personal opinion rather than by sustained analysis and limited observations. The more successful candidates expanded the analysis of images and included further contextual links, which were perceptive and analytical. This approach allows for more in depth analysis and understanding, leading to more mature and sustained written and practical responses.

Centres are also reminded of the requirement to edit, select and present work for moderation, which shows candidates' achievement through the Assessment Objectives.

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.

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

A2 F436 Personal Investigation: Public Art

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, including relevant information booklets and tickets, which were both diverse and imaginative. This encourages candidates to explore issues of space, scale, placement and audience.

Many Personal Investigations showed well-balanced submissions, though it was only when they reached the Controlled Assignment that candidates wrote at their best. Some 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' or descriptions 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 'An Investigation into the St. Ives Group'. Another Centre's candidates chose to respond via A3 notebooks, which contained a diverse range of set projects on War Art - 'Local War Artists' and 'The effect of the War on Woman's Social Rights'. The more able candidates perceptively made connections to contemporary equivalents or contrasting contexts. Good practice was evidenced in the final presentation of these longer essays, some Centres are reminded of the requirement to select, edit and present work for assessment.

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. In many Centres, candidates' 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.

There was a noticeable high level of 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.
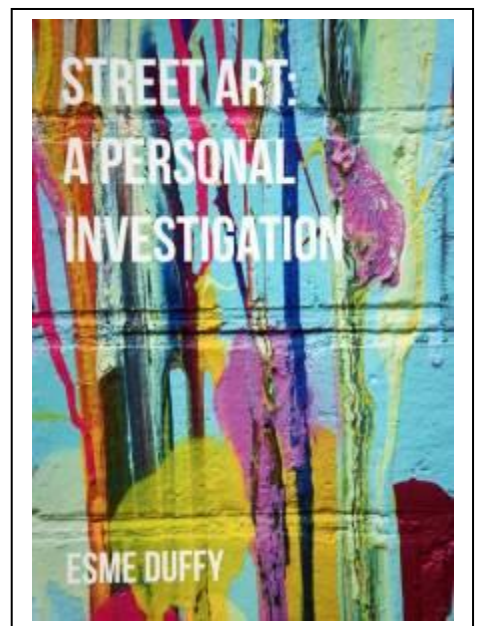
F446 Controlled Assignment

All candidates have sufficient time to both write and present creatively, but full and best use of the 15 hours is not always made in some submissions. However, the synoptic achievements of candidates in this paper were often impressive. Many candidates 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, scale models exploring of the use of materials in contemporary sculpture, and textile designs.

In some submissions presentation was often of a high quality and mature 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. The successful visual essay outcomes were from candidates who fully explored the content of what a visual essay could include. This enabled them to present outcomes which were mature in both their visual and written skills.

An increasing number of candidates approached the starting point with both an essay and practical response or; others in a journal format or entirely a practical response. In Centres where all candidates follow the same starting point there needs to be accurate differentiation in candidates' ability to develop and present personal and engaged responses through the marking criteria.

The more successful essay format entries continue to be academic and well-researched, revealing growing confidence with critical analysis and subject-specific language. Other submissions failed to develop individual responses much further than continuing to highlight downloaded text and highlighted photocopied materials. Some candidates failed to capitalise fully on the opportunities presented by the 'starting points', neglecting to add research details such as footnotes and a bibliography. Centres are reminded of the importance of presentation in this Advanced Level Specification, which is not just the outcome(s) but include the preparatory work.

Centres are advised to ensure that a supporting study folder or sheets should be edited, selected and submitted as evidence of research and planning, including class notes, sketches and any relevant materials, which inform the submission. Once again, Centres are reminded that the use of highlighters on photocopied and internet source material can cloud the candidates' progression throughout the AO's.

Responses to Section 4: Art in Context proved attractive to a number of candidates. Section 5: Visual Starting Points was also popular in 2016.

Section 4 – Art in Context:

Q16 'Painting 'en plein air' - was popular in written form with outcomes ranging from a public exhibition of work to technical investigations into the application of materials of a range of Impressionist artists. These were often informed by museum and gallery visits to local and national exhibitions.

Q17 'Self-portraiture' - this was another popular question which provided a range of technical approaches to the genre from Albrecht Durer to Sigmar Polke. Candidates' work included investigations into a range of techniques including, chiaroscuro, visual symbolism and painting styles throughout the history of art.

Q18 'Assemblage' - although not such a popular choice, this question enabled students to produce a range of practical outcomes, including collage, model-making and small sculptures, often based on the work of Joseph Cornell. Photographic joiners in the style of David Hockney were also popular.

Q19 'Floral' - this was a popular choice with many examples of exhibition curation detailing a wide range of floral images and styles, with particular emphasis on Renaissance and Dutch painting and the art of Georgia O'Keeffe. Other candidates were taking inspiration from textile designers and contemporary photographers.

Q20 'Food and Drink' - another popular choice, incorporating a range of historical and contemporary artists, including Claus Oldenburg, Caravaggio and examples from the Dutch Golden Age.

Section 5 Visual Starting Points

Q21 'Light Sculpture' – a very popular choice allowing candidates to respond in a variety of 2D and 3D materials. Many used digital-based technologies to produce a range of publicity materials and gallery guides. Others used a variety of model-making techniques in the creation of exhibition prototypes. There were also many written responses illustrating how light sculptures are incorporated into urban and social environments.

Q22 'Triptych' - this was a highly popular choice facilitating both written and practical responses. There was a common thread of artists ranging from, Rogier van der Weyden, Grunewald and Bosch to the more contemporary including Francis Bacon and Bill Viola.

Q23 'Train Station Architecture' - often promoted fluidity between practical and written work, with candidates often responding in a variety of perceptive ways. Some submissions were model-based, while others demonstrated a range of analytical recording practices incorporating a wide range of 2D drawing and digital technical techniques. This often resulted in highly personal and technically proficient outcomes.

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

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.

A deep understanding of the area of study taken offers a good opportunity to show developing understanding of the relationship between critical and contextual elements.

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 can be varied in success, with some 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 overlooked. When candidates produced practical studies sadly, in some instances, the practical work did little to enhance the final outcomes.

Candidates that produce practical outcomes alongside the written element in the Critical and Contextual Units should be reminded that they should fully explore the materials used.

Experimentation can take other forms incorporating text and illustrations. 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 candidates. Similarly the production of gallery leaflets, exhibition models and PowerPoint presentations all enhance understanding through experimentation. Regrettably, in some instances, this has become formulaic rather than being driven by the need to communicate insight of the works studied.
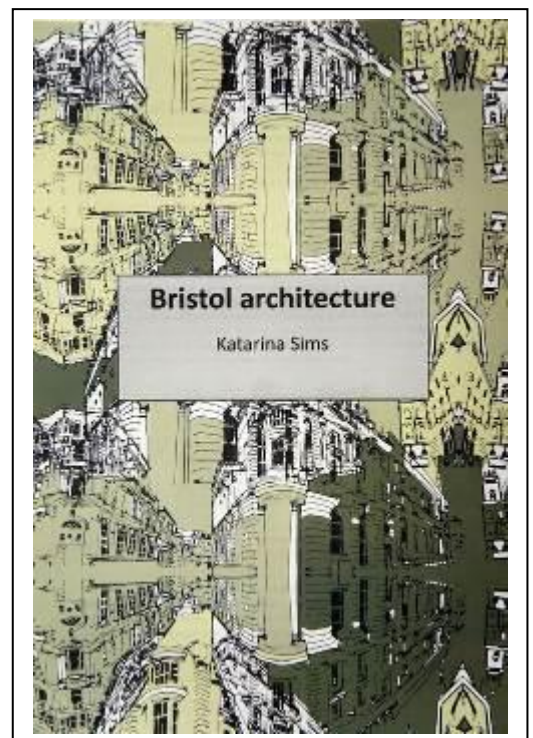
AO3 Recording

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

The use of illustrations is not always carefully considered by candidates and consequentially opportunities for exciting juxtaposition of visual images to reinforce ideas are missed. For some candidates there is scope for more considered presentation of written material through the use of digital media.

A small number of centres still adopt a legacy approach biased towards Art Historical facts while other Centres are embracing digital media and high quality technical artwork in the production of critically informed personal responses, which is embedded throughout candidates' submissions. These centres are well placed for the delivery of the New Specification.

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.
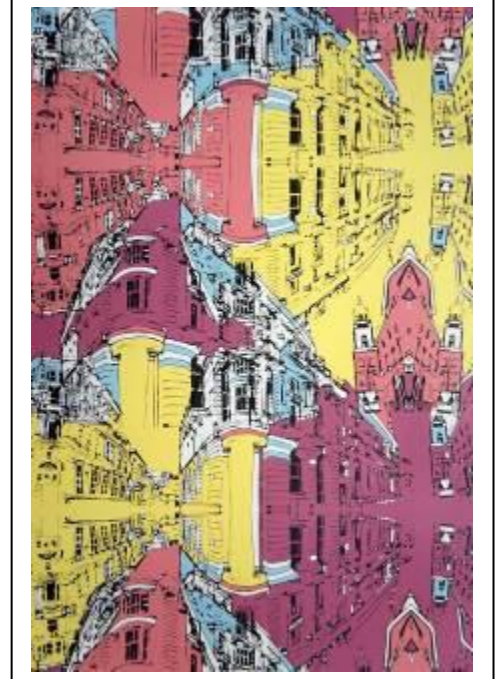
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