

# ART AND DESIGN: LENS BASED IMAGERY

Paper 9834/1, 2 and 3  
Project

*Please note: There are five Art and Design Pre-U syllabus codes available, in June 2011 entries were submitted for 9798, 9830 and 9834. This is a general report that covers all three of the syllabuses but for administrative purposes the report has been reproduced with three separate headings according to the three syllabus codes for which candidates were entered.*

## General comments

The general standard of work submitted this year was high in all three components and candidates appeared to thrive on the extra time that Pre-U affords; enabling a greater opportunity to explore materials and develop ideas. On the whole, exhibitions were prepared with care which was a great aid to the moderation and marking process. Examiners were delighted with the inventive approach and the creativity expounded by many candidates when preparing their final exhibitions.

In some cases, the start of *The Portfolio* with the notion of ideas such as 'unwrapping and wrapping objects' ended up as the central theme to the whole submission which covered all three components in a very imaginative and stimulating way.

Usually Centres divide the units more clearly, with definite emphasis on processes and experimenting with materials and techniques in Component 1: *The Portfolio*. This experience is then used as a foundation for developing work in the second year of the course, but there is no compulsion for techniques and subject matter to link to Component 3: *The Project*. This can be a totally fresh start and can give new impetus to ideas and outcomes.



## **Paper 1: The Portfolio**

Most Centres had worked on a series of tasks and activities which explored a wide range of ideas and media, these were then presented in a range of sketchbooks, portfolio folders and more carefully selected folders with larger works mounted in an exhibition space. Time had been used well to introduce ideas, and experiments with materials were thorough and well developed, with candidates finding time to reassess and develop work into further levels of achievement. Some Centres had started with a foundation like structure for a period of several weeks in the initial term. Others had adopted an Art School approach with a system of rotating a number of weeks and tasks set aside for painting, textiles, sculpture and printmaking.

*The Portfolio* should not be seen as an opportunity to present every mark made without recourse to any editing and selection. It is important that candidates fulfil the assessment objectives with equal rigour; there were indications that *AO1 Record* and *AO4 Respond* were being met to a lesser degree than the other Assessment Objectives. It is vital that drawing as a skill is explored in all of its guises as a direct and imaginative discipline, as well as working alongside digital recording. Copying of photographs and the interplay of digital processes is a vital factor in candidates work at this level but this should not be at the expense of the challenge of direct drawing from life.

In some cases there seemed to be little attempt to complete a final piece of work in *The Portfolio*, the extra time that the Pre-U course allows should encourage candidates to make a more determined effort to complete some elements of work to a good standard in preparation for the second year of the course. It is not essential that Centres follow a prescribed theme through *The Portfolio*, particularly as the first year of the course offers challenges in light of the new experiences and new materials introduced to broaden the skills and techniques of candidates. However, if a Centre can sustain one theme effectively across the course then this is perfectly acceptable. In some candidate's work the submission of all aspects of *The Portfolio* into an A3 sketchbook inhibited some ideas which might have thrived on a larger scale.

All Centres had incorporated gallery visits and analysis of the work of other practitioners in both written and visual formats and this experience gave relevance and a personal aspect to *The Portfolio*. Some Centres had developed critical studies elements into dedicated sketchbooks or journals which can include news cuttings, found materials, written articles as well as drawings. The critical studies element was well covered in all Centres and in many cases effectively aided candidates' understanding and use of materials.

Internal marking of *The Portfolio* by Centres using the Assessment Objectives was generally well organised and effective. There were only minor adjustments to Centre's marks. *AO1 Record* was the area that needed most adjustment during the moderation process. Many candidates showed strong developments towards more maturity at the end of year which was good to see. The setting of interim trial examination days to give a variety of tasks to candidates was beneficial as it enabled candidates to adjust to the linear structure. The Pre-U course is intended to be flexible and allows Centres to structure their own procedures depending on facilities and staff teaching strengths. The actual structure of *The Portfolio* was put into good use by candidates when applying for Foundation Art courses or degree courses in Higher Education.



## **Component 2: The Evaluative Study**

*The Evaluative Study* is primarily an academic study which may or may not be supported by, and further extended with, relative practical work. It is compulsory to write an essay of 3500 words and whatever format is chosen to relay the research and evaluation, a hard copy of the text must be available to Moderators. It is possible to develop *The Evaluative Study* from an element of *The Portfolio* work but this is not compulsory. Centres are encouraged to submit titles and themes to CIE for comments and approval, on the whole the majority of Centres take full advantage of this external advice and it has proved to be a good catalyst for focus and research by candidates. The range of subject matter and themes were varied and covered many aspects of painting, digital art forms, architecture, film and aspects of sculpture and ceramics. There were examples of very strong recording in galleries which enabled meaningful first hand experience for the study. A number of candidates conducted interesting and valid interviews with their chosen artists and some original methods of research from these culminated in a filmed outcome with text or additional practical work with annotations. Independent research is a vital key in *The Evaluative Study*, candidates need to develop an evaluative stance which is not replicating pages of biographical detail or merely describing what you see in front of you. Some candidates had their Studies bound and made into 'published' style books which actually looked very good but gained no additional marks according to the assessment objectives. A well illustrated, carefully researched and edited study which becomes critical and evaluative and not just descriptive brings about the most effective result. To ensure the study is pitched at the highest level certain factors need to be considered, such as;

- does the theme have good resources with access to some of the nominated works for study
- does the selection of key works allow for in-depth research and analysis
- is there enough written and internet material for the purpose of the study
- is the title of the study focused, giving a clear indication of intent
- is the use of subject language and facts like dates, names, and art movements accurate
- is the layout clear and readable; if the practical work has the text embedded in it then a hard copy of the essay part should be made available to Moderators

- Can the candidate evaluate and make judgements of received opinion
- is the study repetitive
- A bibliography and list of electronic resources is essential
- quotations and other ideas taken from books or web sites are appropriate acknowledging according to academic convention
- the word limit does not exceed 3500 words
- Analysis of the candidates own ideas is supported by relevant examples.

Most candidates were able to produce a good theoretical argument with a good choice of resources and academic analysis but the re-jigging of parts of books and internet material in a 'cut and paste' fashion should be avoided. There were many well analysed and researched studies which culminated in some very good final essays. These were usually word processed and completed according to the allotted 3500 words. Details of research interviews and any relevant materials such as leaflets of relevant gallery visits can be placed in an appendix at the end of the submission, and therefore are not considered as part of the word limit. Some studies were under-marked and others too highly assessed as they revealed a lack of research or were unclear as to the objectives being studied. One or two candidates fell short of a sound mark as they merely reorganised copied written elements from books without any personal input. When carried out to a high standard these studies make an excellent adjunct to applications for courses in Higher Education regardless of the nature of the course applied for.

It is good practice to get well under way with study by the start of the second year and there is nothing to stop Centres having titles clarified by the end of year one if they wish to make early research possible over the summer vacation.

### **Component 3: The Project**

*The Project* allows candidates to really explore their work in considerable depth with strong recording, planning and experimentation. A good final exhibition was presented by Centres which Examiners agreed had brought about some very high quality submissions. The actual display of work was excellent, with clearly labelled and mounted work, all of which aided a smooth marking process. Final outcomes in *The Project* displayed considerable improvement on levels of skills which built upon and grew from *The Portfolio* work.

*The Project* displayed a mature response and the work was often of a high or outstanding level, reflecting the extra time allowed by the course structure. The question paper is intended as a series of starting points and once underway candidates can develop work into new areas as long as the process of change is logged and visible in the development of the work. The emphasis must be on the quality of the final outcome which can be a single work of considerable size or a series of linked pieces. Some candidates made stunning installations in all manner of materials. This was also reflected in the size of many works, here the outcome was afforded the opportunity to break the boundaries and become very substantial in scale, but still very well thought out and constructed. Candidates worked in all manner of techniques, painting, printmaking, installation pieces, mixed media and lens based elements. Supporting work to the finished parts of *The Project* were usually in the form of sketchbooks, an allied folder or a series of maquettes. Many candidates made effective use of digital photography and critical studies of other relevant artists but the overall feel was that submitted work was very personal and well thought out.

In order to help the candidate explain and develop their own art work, it is sometimes appropriate to copy part of an art work using the same techniques and processes as the chosen practitioner, however this must be in order to develop and understand rather than becoming a copyist for its own sake.

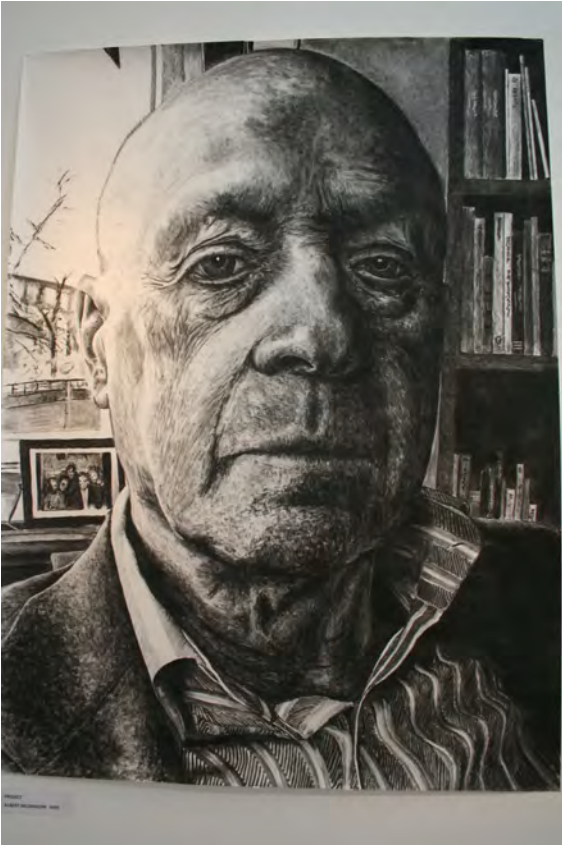
Good use was made of gallery visits in some Centres and this was often a good source of inspiration for developing ideas.

There were some excellent final outcomes in ceramics, textiles, painting, sculpture, installation, film and video and mixed media, all falling into either the 9798 unendorsed course or 9830 Fine Art or 9834 Digital and Lens Based Imagery courses. Whilst much of this work was good there were some issues over being ready for moderation and marking where machines malfunctioned or some work had gone astray. It is

absolutely vital, due to time issues, that film and video work is checked first and able to run on demand. It is also necessary to provide all of the support work for these in the form of logs, annotated sketchbooks or a linked folder. Many candidates had thrived upon the available time and the skills and techniques showed high standards which gave the whole two years a very positive culminating conclusion.

Some candidates had not always used the time effectively, particularly when they made a late start to *The Project*. Leaving decision making well into the year might inhibit and endanger the full process needed to build up to a high standard submission. Not having enough time to bring ideas to fruition and development caused one or two uneven and incomplete outcomes. It is important that *The Project* is under way by the first day of the Autumn Term or soon after and the papers are available for that purpose. Centres who delay the start of *The Project* into the Spring term would be advised to consider starting the work earlier in order to increase the depth of study and possible research that would otherwise be compromised through lack of time.





### **Administration**

The provision of maps for the use of the Examiner/Moderators was gratefully received and aided the smooth running of the moderation process. In addition, in some exhibitions colour coding was given to *The Portfolio* work, *The Evaluative Study* and *The Project* and this was also extremely helpful in keeping the three components apart for individual assessment but at the same time allowing for a holistic overview. Some Centres also included the details of the outline proposal form (OPF) for *The Evaluative Study* and this was a helpful aid in the moderation process as well. Paperwork is similar to the other UK A levels, so Centres coped well with the process even though for some this was their first time. Centres should be congratulated on all their patience and hard work undertaken which ensured the successful running of the course.