



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Art and Design (Photography)**

**Controlled Test 3206/T**

**Report on the Examination**

*2007 examination – June series*

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*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## **GCSE Art and Design (Photography) 3206**

### **Controlled Test 3206/T**

The question paper was well received and moderators reported a good response from candidates to all of the questions. They provided opportunities for the entire range of ability at this level and a wide range of approaches and photographic procedures. No question dominated candidates' choices but questions 3, 6 and 7 were the most popular. As with the Coursework, candidates used reference material relating to an increasingly broad range of photographers, artists and art movements. This showed an understanding of the traditional silver based processes and an awareness of contemporary and professional areas of photographic practice, very often involving the use of ICT. Although evidence of weak links between AO2 and AO4 were seen, there were also many comments from moderators highlighting strong, thorough analysis, a variety of evidence available for AO1 and innovative approaches driving the development of ideas and the final outcome.

#### ***Question 1 Points of View***

This was a popular question across the entire ability range and candidates produced strong evidence of the use of silver based SLR technology and darkroom procedures in addition to digital work. Macro lenses were much in evidence in a large number of responses. Physical viewpoints, as opposed to those based on opinions or issues, were a more popular choice for exploration. There were, however, interesting responses based on the local environment, reflecting candidates' views in both senses. Amongst the unusual approaches, Hockney 'Joiners' featured regularly and some interesting responses came from candidates who chose to produce a narrative based on a sequence of images. There was also evidence of large scale work being used to explore this theme. The starting point was easily accessible, reference material easily researched and suitable material easily found and recorded with varying degrees of success. There was evidence of good technical skill in a number of submissions.

#### ***Question 2 Classical Art***

Both options within this question, *Pandora's Box* and *Today's Temples*, produced some very thoughtful and provoking responses. Most of the work was clearly issues based and provided a vehicle for candidates to articulate their views and attitudes towards current affairs, contemporary youth culture and consumerism. Interesting approaches to montage techniques combined more traditional methods with the potential of digital manipulation.

#### ***Question 3 Portraiture***

This was a very popular question and clearly accessible to a wide variety of candidates across the whole ability range. It elicited responses using both silver based and digital technologies. The quality of responses varied greatly and some of the most interesting and some of the least interesting work was produced. Bill Brandt was a common source of reference and many candidates explored composition and camera viewpoint. The evidence of very high levels of skill was commented on, producing some powerful images. Candidates explored symmetry and asymmetry and the question provided some candidates with the opportunity for self analysis. Evidence of darkroom technique was good, as was evidence of considered use of image manipulation. At the other end of the scale candidates produced some very weak responses resulting in poorly considered and apparently random records of faces.

#### **Question 4 Constructivism**

Responses to this question drew almost entirely on the urban landscape. The Constructivist movement was well researched and strong links were made with artists, some candidates making links with Bauhaus photographers. Many images used interesting camera angles of architectural subject matter, some producing images which explored surface quality of materials, some which exploited the formal qualities of the subject to produce strong abstract compositions and some which used the reflective fabric of buildings to frame and compose their photograph.

#### **Question 5 Emotional Reactions**

This question elicited two extremes; one poor, one excellent. At the poor extreme, candidates produced responses with little or no thought about technique or content, showing ill conceived shots of friends smiling or ‘pulling faces’, resulting in obviously contrived expressions. At the other end, candidates thought carefully about the control of media and the possibilities available to them and carefully studied a variety of reference material, from both named and unnamed photographers. They produced interesting arrays of images from subjects such as street entertainers, sensitive records of social events and moments of drama. These resulted in engaging images showing insight, awareness and sensitivity.

#### **Question 6 Structures**

This was a very popular question. References were easily accessible and candidates of all abilities were able to access the assessment objectives at different levels. It was well received at centres. Careful observation, close focus and magnified detail were commonplace. Many strong, analytical images were seen in which there was often strong evidence of darkroom practice and macro photography. Flowers were a very popular subject matter, with Blossfeldt and Georgia O’Keeffe featuring strongly as sources of influence. In some instances candidates compared natural and architectural structures, identifying similarities and differences.

#### **Question 7 Recycling**

This was a very popular choice of question with all the suggested starting points addressed and explored. Occasionally candidates chose to explore many options around the theme rather than restricting themselves to one. There was some highly innovative work that combined a variety of materials and made useful links to contemporary references. There were examples of the interesting use of text to convey strong graphic messages on the issues connected with recycling, and numerous visual surveys of ways in which recycled materials have been turned into commercially functional, totally non-functional and aesthetically functional objects. In this question, as with others, candidates appeared to welcome the opportunity to articulate, in photographic and visual terms, their own views on issues of current concern, showing an ability to combine skills in the control of the media with a willingness and creativity to explore a variety of approaches and possibilities.

#### **Mark ranges and award of grades**

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