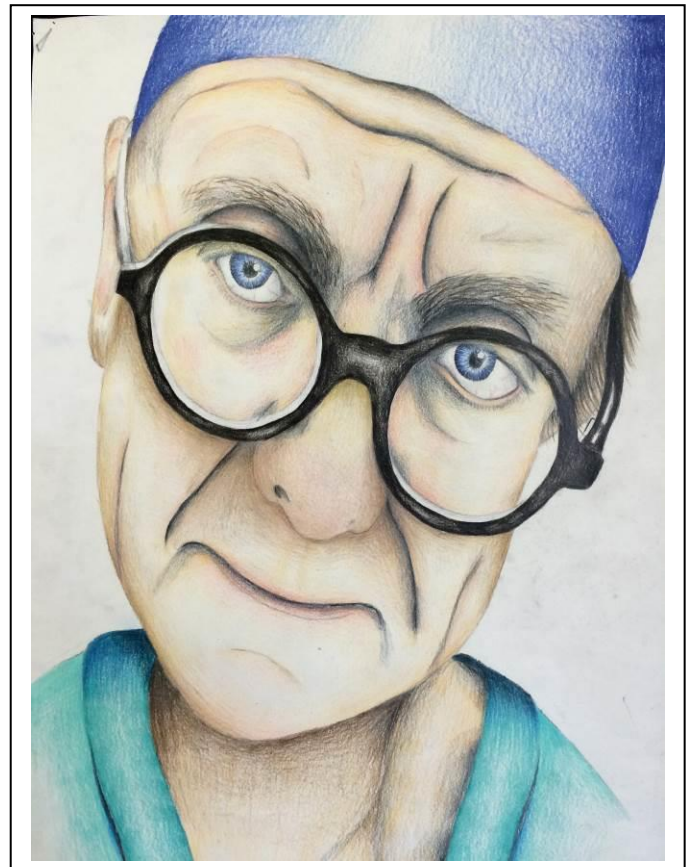
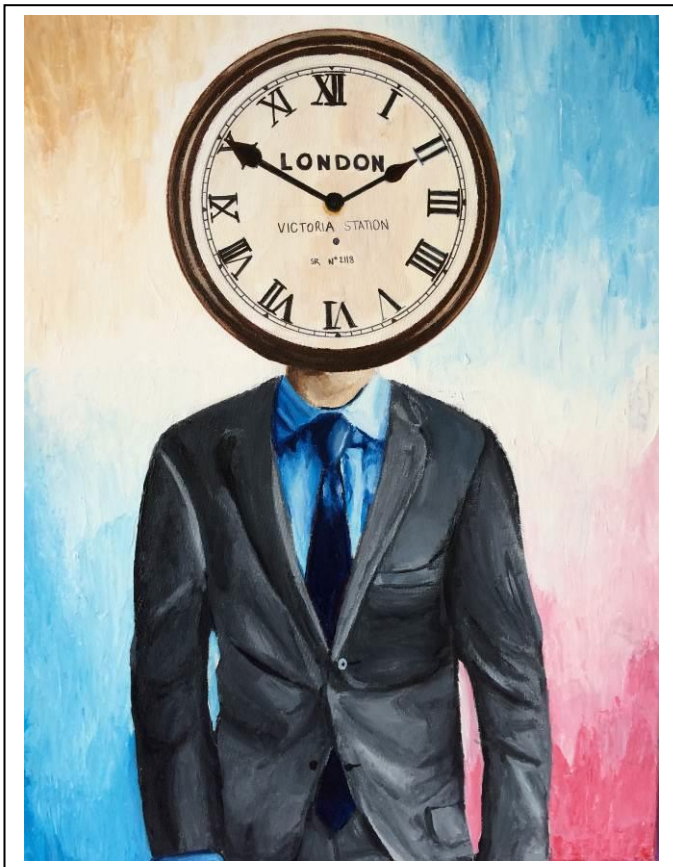


GCSE

Art and Design

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J160 – J167**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015



OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Art and Design

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: J160

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Fine Art J161

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Graphic Communication J162

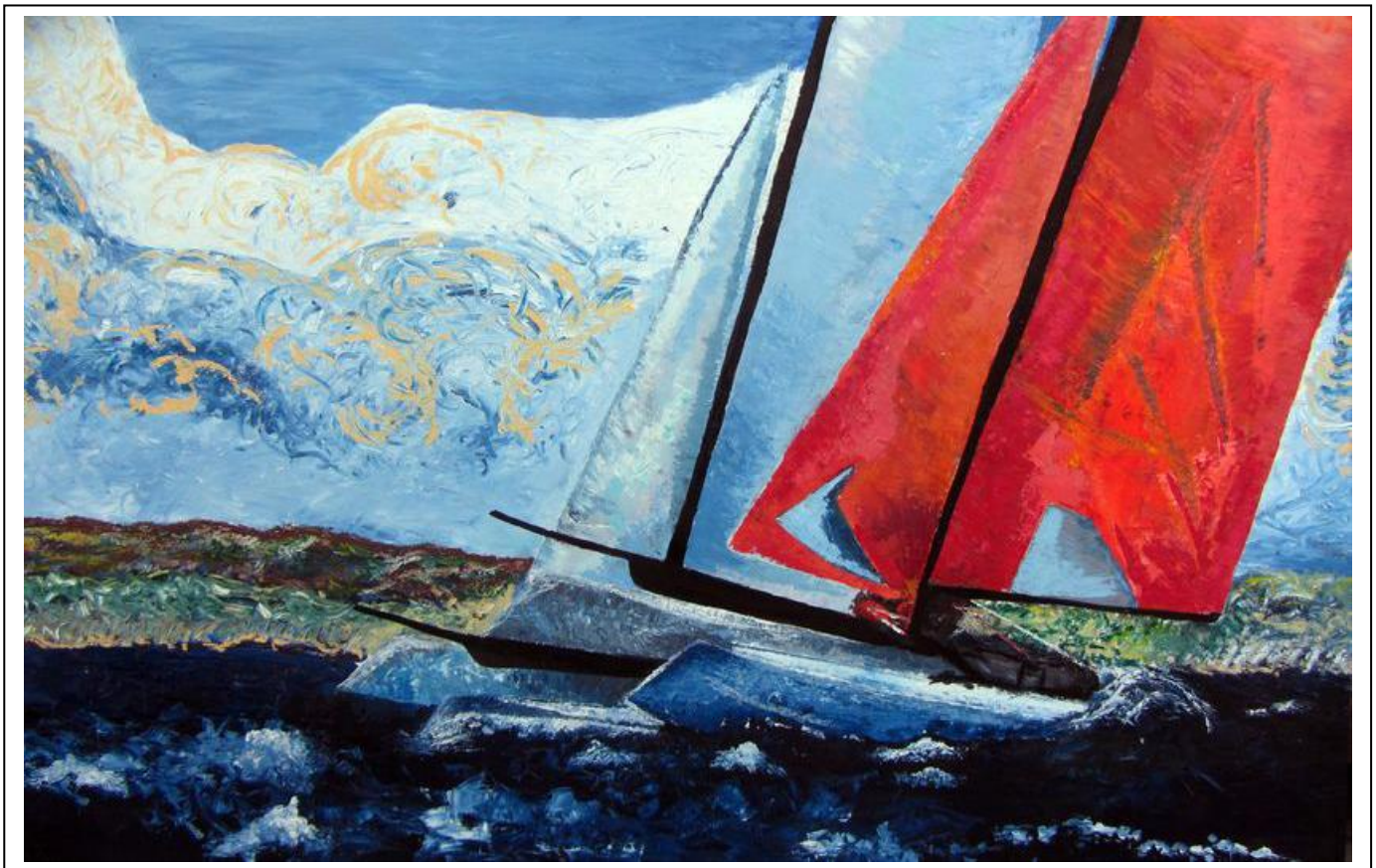
OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Photography J163

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Textile Design J164

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OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Critical and Contextual Studies J166

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Applied J167



Art and Design Units A110 – A127

General Comments

The GCSE Art and Design specification continues to be well received by teachers and candidates alike. Indeed teachers continue to develop teaching and learning strategies that support their candidates in achieving to the best of their abilities within the OCR's GCSE framework.

The majority of candidates continue to benefit from well-delivered courses, which had been carefully designed to take full advantage of the strengths of the qualification. Unendorsed and Fine Art pathways remain the most popular approaches to study. The other endorsements, often supported by subject specialists, are significant areas of delivery in some Centres, which have the appropriate physical resources to facilitate delivery. Photography – Lens and Light-based Media (J163) is particularly notable for the continuing increase in the number of candidate entries. Contextual Studies (J166) entries have also risen especially in those Centres where candidates undertake more than one GCSE Art and Design endorsement. Similarly, Applied Art and Design (J167), which meets the needs of those candidates seeking a more vocational pathway within the subject, has won further adherents and is now also delivered by Design and Technology Department.

As in previous years work for moderation continues to be very well displayed, with most centres going to considerable effort to showcase work and to meet the needs of the moderation process. Work was generally presented in ideal locations with minimal or no disruption. All centres were aware of the requirement to display the work in separate rank orders per unit, which aided the moderation process.

However and regrettably to report once again in 2015 a minority of centres did not give due consideration to the necessity of quiet and private accommodation for the moderation process. Other centres simply piled folders on tables, in cramped room spaces, which did not facilitate moderation.

Centres are also reminded that the moderation samples must be exhibited in merit order by unit.

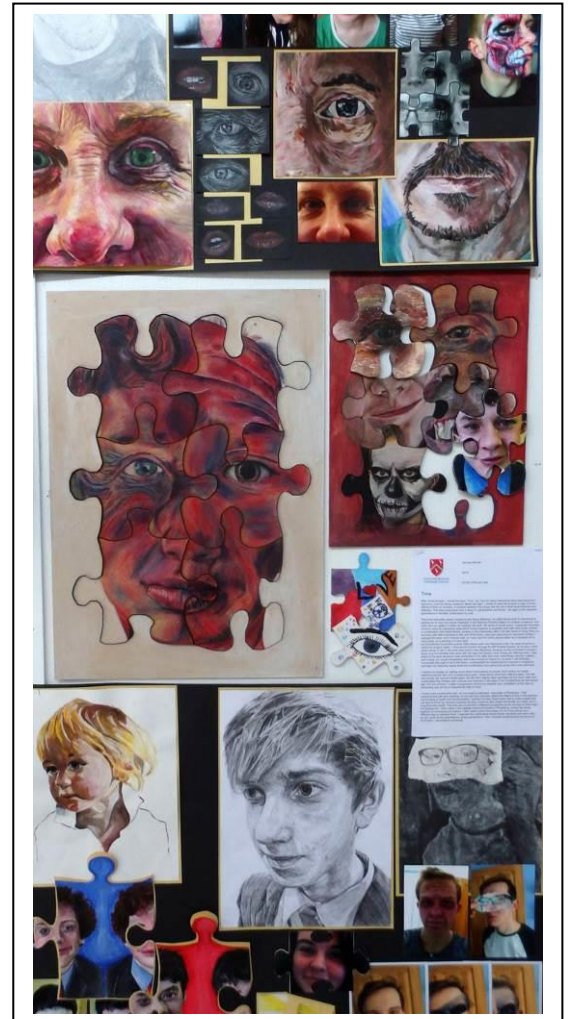


The loan work for the purposes of Grade Award, Standardisation and Training is essential to the well-being of the qualifications and OCR acknowledges centres' and Team Leaders' collaboration in this respect. The despatch of moderation samples is an important undertaking and whilst every reasonable precaution as regards safety and security is taken whilst these are in OCR's care centres are urged to package work appropriately.

Again in 2015 centres are thanked for their co-operation in making visit arrangements. Other aspects of administration were generally equally efficient. Most centres met the May 15 deadline for the despatch of mark-sheets to OCR. Similarly, the majority correctly forwarded the Assessment Summary Form (GCW930) and the Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) with the MS1s to the moderator. Nonetheless, the Centre Authentication Form was frequently completed for each unit rather than the qualification overall. It was gratifying that the advice given in respect of the interactive Centre Authentication and Assessment Summary forms had been taken. The use of the latter resulted in the incidence of arithmetical or transcriptional error being reduced significantly.

Orders of merit were generally dependable. However, the levels of assessment, although generally more reliable than 2014, could on occasion prove unreliable and were consequently adjusted to meet the OCR national standard.

Centres' staff again accepted that moderators could not give verbal feedback at the conclusion of the moderation and looked forward to receiving this written report with its accompanying photographs in September. Centre reports should be read in conjunction with this overarching final report.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Download and use the Assessment Summary Form GCW930, which is available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks, thus avoiding arithmetical errors.

Display the Portfolio and Set Task in two 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.

Art and Design Portfolio

In 2015 the majority of work seen was for the Art and Design A110 and Fine Art A111 units. The other areas of study were also represented with Critical and Contextual Studies A116 and Applied Art and Design A117 being well supported. Once again this year new entries are evident in 3D Design many of which are Design and Technology Departments entering candidates in the Art and Design Suite of qualifications. Photography is universal and expanding across all endorsements apart from being a well-subscribed endorsement in its own right A113. Likewise digital approaches continue to flourish at a significant rate. Work in three dimensions is often a feature of Unendorsed, Fine Art and Graphic Communications submissions, which reflects the multi-disciplinary approach adopted by many candidates.

Centres often made good use of local cultural sources and resources, resulting in strong, personal development. External resources and cultural references were often really well used in centres that encouraged the candidates to engage with their local environment, leading to really interesting and individual investigations into local museum collections, architecture, landscape as well as local events.

In most centres the approach to the Portfolio was usually thematic, focused and well-sustained with the requirements of the assessment objectives been met in equal measure.

In keeping with recent years the use of worksheets, rather than sketchbooks, for preparatory studies continues to be prevalent. This approach may assist greater selection in the choice of work presented for assessment. Certainly weaker candidates were less inclined to substantiate submissions by including superfluous material. Now, irrespective of the means of presentation, with the emphasis on **'quality rather than quantity'** this tendency appears to be in decline. Moderators reported that digital sketchbooks are increasingly used by candidates.

As in previous years most candidates made excellent use of sketchbooks, journals and diaries but it is still evident that some candidates became somewhat obsessed with presentation and the decoration of pages. Inconsistency of achievement within the submission can be detrimental to accurate assessment. In this respect, centres are reminded that the purpose of moderation is to assess the best of candidates' achievement using a selected sample, which will determine the outcome for all candidates.

Centres encouraged and supported candidates to produce individual portfolios. In the best examples it was evident that candidates benefited from a course structured so as to ensure coverage of the assessment objectives without becoming too prescriptive. However, some centres encouraged engagement with the objectives in too rigid a manner, which did little to promote the full review, modification and consolidation of ideas as the work progressed towards final outcomes.



Once again and regrettably moderators continue to report that some candidates in their portfolio submissions had presented sketchbooks filled with collage and magazine 'cut outs'. This practice inhibits genuine involvement in a creative subject.

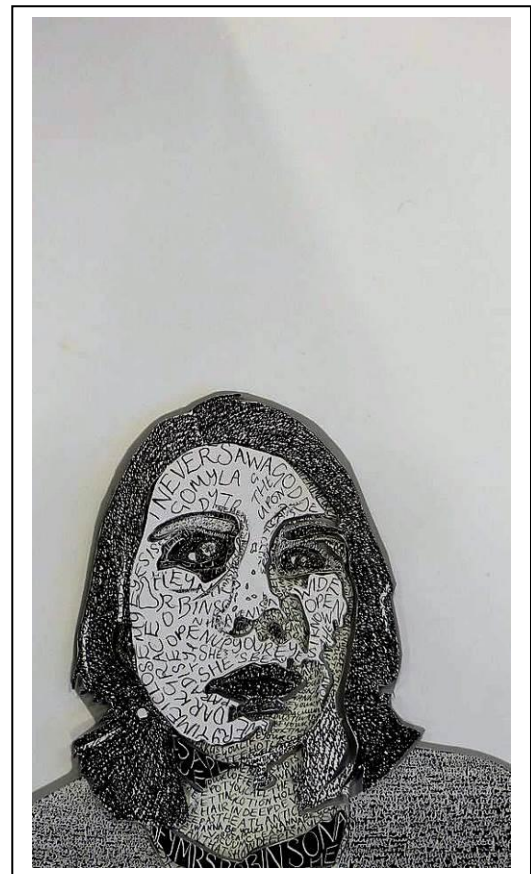
It is pleasing to report that even more submissions show candidates, under the guidance of their teachers, selecting and presenting their work for assessment. Some candidates produced large quantities of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. Candidates should always be guided by their teachers and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are selected and presented in their submissions. Successful candidates provided evidence of a creative journey undertaken with a genuine sense of purpose. Less accomplished work was often fragmented and poorly executed.

Some centres are still not supporting the principle of selecting and presenting for assessment however they are a very small minority of the whole. When all the work produced throughout the course is submitted, invariably it results in inconsistency in levels of achievement as well as showing the development of skills over time and this will be responded to in the moderation process.

Once again in 2015 centres are reminded to impress upon candidates the importance of distinctly acknowledging reference material. Candidates may utilise research, quotations and other evidence in their submissions but they must identify their sources. It is also important that candidates differentiate between their own work and that of other practitioners.

Centres are also reminded to impress upon candidates that when they are communicating in writing they should ensure that text is legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar accurate so that meaning is clear. Furthermore, centres are reminded that candidates are required to present information in a form that suits its purpose by using an appropriate structure and style of writing.

Once again in 2015, the exploration of practitioners' work and mind mapping of themes remained a purposeful activity. However, some candidates are encouraged to go to great lengths to present worksheets about a wide variety of often very disparate artists, without evidence of how this connects with or informs their own work. Similarly, when researching themes candidates sometimes generated much visual investigation but failed to consider appropriately how they might select and develop specific ideas.



Assessment Objective 1 – Develop

Candidates showed strong emphasis on developing ideas by the investigation of images, objects and other contextual source material, which was evident in the work sampled. Many candidates showed independent, well-informed investigations. The stronger presentations were approached confidently, displaying perceptive cultural understanding, often in a strongly visual manner with less need for written forms which tended to be more the case with less confident explorations.

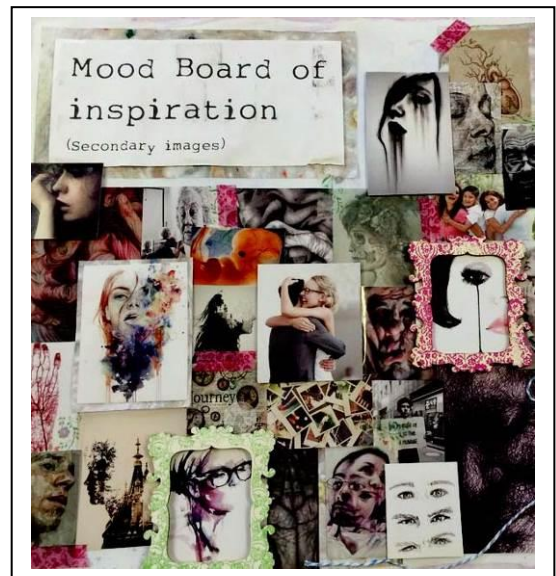
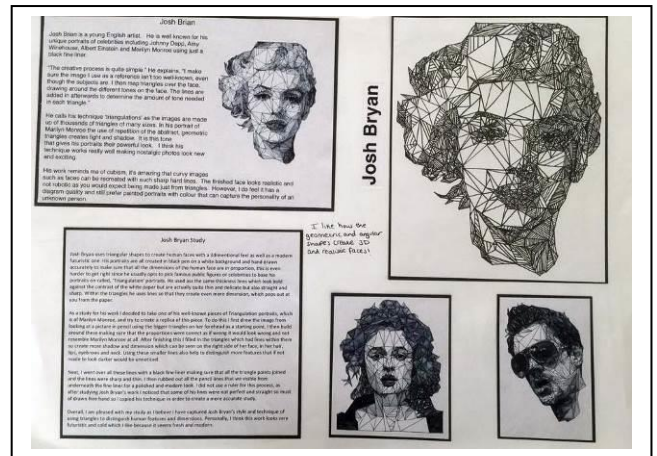
In the best work, candidates produced highly thoughtful and analytical annotation, often researching contemporary practitioners, which demonstrated true engagement with the work of others and a clear understanding of how this informed their own practice.

Once again in 2015 ethnic themes were founded on the study of a variety of sources, including once again the ever popular Aboriginal Art, African masks, Indian miniatures and Japanese prints.

Sources and inspirations varied from exploring aspects of portraiture or candidate's home locality, to inspiration from the Internet; others related to personal explorations into an aspect of work from a range of artists, craftspeople or artefacts. The majority of candidates clearly identified artists and cultures and understood the need to make them relevant to the outcome while the weakest explorations tended to be thinly based on basic biographical information and “bolted on” rather than engaged with in any meaningful way.

It is candidates’ responses to artworks, in which critical evaluations are made and appreciation of context shown, that positively informs the development of ideas.

As in 2014, Banksy and other graffiti artists again proved popular to a small number of candidates; however the work showed superficial understanding with obvious and predictable interpretations.



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. At the core of much of the most successful work, across a range of endorsements, was the development of drawing skills as a means of researching and investigating, and developing ideas. In some cases drawings were successfully presented as final outcomes.

Assessment Objective 2 – Experiment

The purposeful and considered refinement of ideas through a consistent and sustained ability to experiment using a wide range of media and materials was evident in much of the work sampled. A strong and consistent ability in selecting resources independently and using them thoughtfully and systematically with an on-going review and modification of work was evident in the stronger, more successful realisations sampled.

In some centres candidates were prompted to experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques at the expense of selecting and refining. This objective was at its best when candidates were encouraged to link it closely with AO1 and build on investigations into the working processes and approaches of the practitioners studied.

In Photography some candidates engaged with some very exciting contemporary photographers' techniques and approaches, including experimentation with projecting and printing onto unusual surfaces, which gave a highly expressive effect. Regrettably other used popular filters as the only means of experimentation.

While candidate's use of an ever-wider range of facilities and resources has clearly expanded opportunity for very unusual interpretations and explorations, some of the most successfully developed work sampled was produced by skilful investigation through the use of a selective range of tools, processes and resources.

Once again printmaking was undertaken widely. Textiles candidates, as always, employed a diversity of techniques and media and demonstrated a keen and well-informed interest in designers.

Critical and Contextual Studies candidates continue to show not only sound research skills but the ability to be experimental and selective when refining ideas towards practical outcomes.

Applied candidates displayed creativity in resolving design problems and presented convincing practical solutions when responding to vocationally orientated or commercially orientated briefs.

Regrettably, in less successful work, the basic skills of handling materials or techniques failed to be developed making it difficult for candidates to explore successfully or refine ideas and fully realise their intentions.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Make the most of local resources:

- 1. Museums or galleries.***
- 2. Botanical gardens, parks and zoos etc***
- 3. Artists and designers***
- 4. Community Arts Centres***
- 5. Workshops or artists in residence***
- 6. Exhibitions or studio visits***
- 7. Carnivals, fairs and parades***

Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent journey, with a genuine sense of purpose.

More successful candidates demonstrated that not only that they had learnt from the work of others but also simultaneously developed their own visual language.

Assessment Objective 3 – Record

Again in 2015 many candidates displayed a strength and consistency in their ability to record ideas, insights and observations and this was central to their art studies.

Considerable focus and attention had been given by centres to working from observational recording. While a very significant amount of direct observation along with photographic source material was evident from the work sampled, there was also, although entirely permissible, an increasing amount of secondary source material, which could have instead been worked from primary observational resources.

For some candidates the advancement of observational skills is a neglected aspect of their studies and those who substituted thoughtful recording with poorly selected collections of images from magazines and elsewhere were sadly misguided.

Many other candidates go to a great deal of trouble to obtain good quality and exciting source material for recording. In contrast weaker candidates still tend to be over reliant on secondary sourced material.

When 'found' imagery is gathered from the Internet or elsewhere candidates must acknowledge their sources.

Photography, particularly digital, continues to be a major method of recording across all endorsements.

For many candidates observations were well linked to intentions but for others the discrete approach to AO1 and AO2 prevented candidates exploiting fully the knowledge and skills gained from development and exploration to expand their methods of recording.

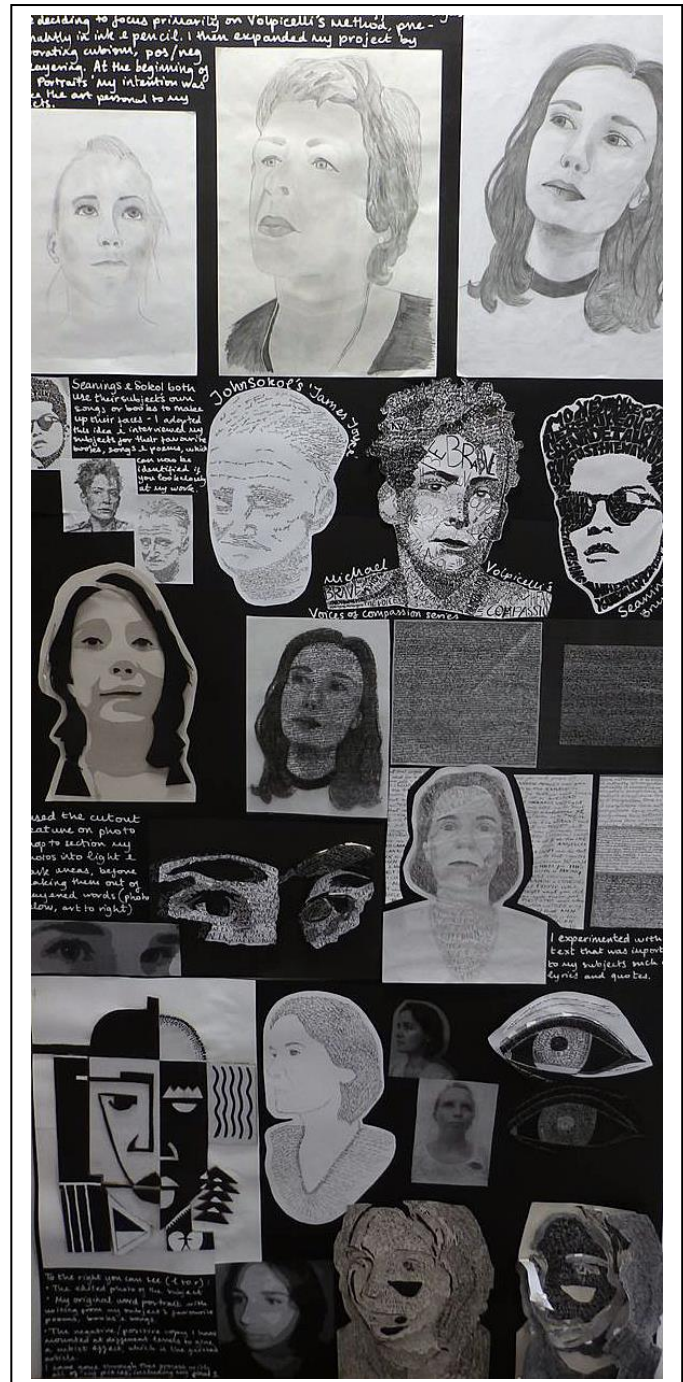
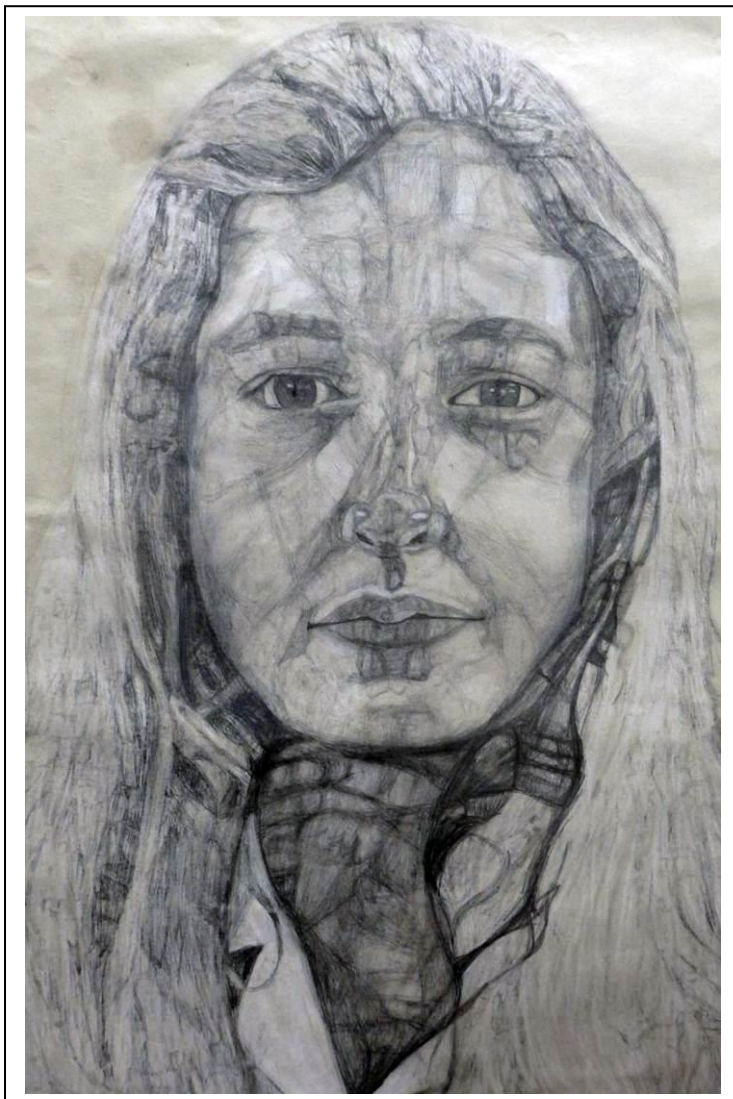


Centres are reminded that candidates may record their ideas, feelings, insights and observations in any way that is appropriate to intentions and this is not the sole domain of drawing and photography. Indeed, successful candidates often record their thought processes, opinions and responses to experience in a range of different ways.

Again in 2015 centres are reminded that the quality of written language is important. Moderators reported with some concern:

“Again in 2015 the frequency of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation was alarming.”

The quality of recording invariably impacts throughout all the assessment objectives and in the best submissions candidates ensure that the standard of work produced remains consistent throughout.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Present the work in a way that shows clearly the creative journey through the assessment objectives.
Empty plastic bottles, cans, packaging and other throwaway items are just some of the free materials used by centres in respect of AO3.

Assessment Objective 4 – Present

Candidates successfully planned, reviewed and developed their work to present some strong and personal responses in their outcomes. The wide range of artistic and cultural influences where the candidates had made contextual connections was varied and frequently very personal. The great majority of candidates' work sampled had developed creative outcomes through taking elements of the styles, character or techniques they had found in their cultural/contextual influences or their chosen artistic influence and used them to good effect in their own work.

Moderators reported again in 2015 that there are unfortunately still some instances of candidates presenting all of their coursework for assessment whereas being discriminating would have been more advantageous in terms of meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4.

The strongest candidates continue to produce exceptional outcomes, which impressed with the sophisticated use of detail, colour, scale and technique. These candidates made connections with contexts and the work of other practitioners that demonstrated insight and sound critical and analytical understanding.

Conversely in some instances candidates simply transposed an image from the preparatory phases and, although sometimes well executed, this did little to disclose the narrative of the creative journey.

Moderators reported that submissions are at their best when there was a 'journey' leading to an edited presentation of work, which evidenced clear and insightful connections between elements, but also imaginative and personal expression.

Some centres still seem to be presenting 'the course', rather than guiding candidates to select and present work, which best evidenced not just their skills but strengths through the assessment objectives.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

In the OCR-set Task candidates should avoid using unfamiliar materials or techniques in the production of the final outcomes, especially during the ten hours supervised period when guidance by the teacher may not be given.

OCR-Set Task

The 2015 OCR-set Task paper promoted responses that were almost invariably lively and well intentioned. Moderation confirmed that the range of starting points provided a platform for all candidates to display their individual creativity and technical skills to the best advantage.

Most teachers previewed the paper upon receipt and were thus well primed for its distribution to candidates early in January. Candidates largely took advantage of the extended preparatory period and consequently most submissions were well sustained throughout the assessment objectives.

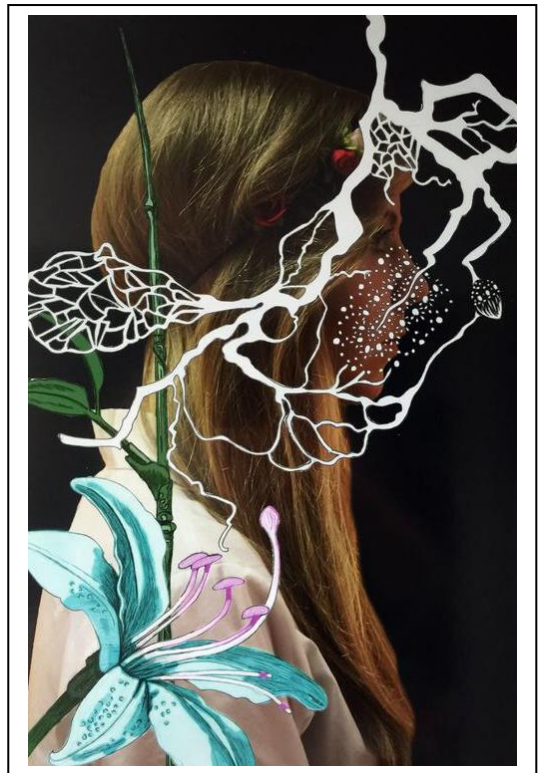
It was reassuring to see candidates in the lower mark range showing fewer tendencies to select predictable solutions, such as the direct copying of secondary sourced material with insufficient emphasis on development and exploration. However, less successful candidates could be ambitious and produce a significant quantity of work but lacked the technical abilities to fully realise their intentions.

As usual, many centres supported candidates well by guiding them to build on the experiences gained during the portfolio unit.

In Photography submissions much of the work had been produced digitally, it could be difficult to distinguish what had been achieved in the ten hours of supervised time.

‘Imagine’ - a popular starting point that generated many different approaches and the use of a considerable range of materials. The Surrealists were a popular contextual reference with work inspired by ‘Little People’ by Simkachu and video artists such as Hiraki Sawa, Liv Bolin and Nick Mobbs. Other more predictable responses were based upon the work of the Surrealists such as Salvador Dali, Man Ray, Rene Magritte, Vladimir Kush, Hannah Hock and Gilbert and George.

‘Jumble’ - proved popular with candidates with work based upon images of collections of household objects, jumble sales, collections of personal belongings such as make-up and piles of clothing. Responses to the work of Pop Artists were in evidence, along with connections being made to the work of Michael Craig Martin, Tony Cragg, Kate Dickinson and Tracey Emin.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Teachers should open the paper when it arrives in the centre to enable them to prepare teaching and learning resources to support the candidate in the preparatory period.

The Set Task paper is generated from the provisional entry lists submitted to OCR by the centre in the autumn term.

‘Text’ – Examples included investigations of packaging labels and inspiration from artists such as Johannes Wessmark and Andrea Bealieu. Lettering was explored and work ranging from symbolic images to calligraphy, where poems or children stories were illustrated, was produced. Candidates responded to the work of contemporary artists who use text in their work as well as illuminated manuscripts such as the Anglo- Saxon Chronicles and text from magazines and newspapers.

‘Hands’ – this starting point attracted a more literal and observational interpretation encouraging some detailed anatomical observational studies. Candidates explored the work of Leonardo Da Vinci, Donatello, Auguste Rodin and Albrecht Durer along with studies of drawings of Cath Riley and Henry Moore. Some responses utilised the theme by utilising digital photography to create hand images or gestures, which were then converted into large paintings.

‘Time’ – a popular question across all endorsements allowed for individual interpretations, ranging from the realistic to the conceptual or imaginative. There were many examples of compositions using time-pieces to more abstract versions of time passing. Links with Surrealism in this starting point proved popular.

‘Hair’ – was a popular question for Textile and Applied Art candidates. There were examples of a range of textile applications using machine embroidery. Applied Art candidates designed and created hair ornamentation. This starting point resulted in some carefully observed pieces inspired by the work of Lisa Milroy and Gustav Klimt.

‘Leaves’ – proved a popular choice for candidates working with three dimensional materials and techniques. Work inspired by Joan Hardie, Jennifer McCurdy and Lit Smith was presented. A further popular reference was the Green Man folklore, the leaf art of Lorenzo Silva and nature photographs of John Shaw, Tony Howell and Ansel Adams. Henri Rousseau and Henri Matisse were the more obvious choices.

The Section 2 Visual Starting Points; were inviting with **‘Figures in Motion’** and **‘Perspective’** equally winning much attention.

Critical and Contextual candidates undertook all Section 3 starting points.

Section 4 ‘Applied’ with subsection ‘C’ being very popular amongst submissions including visits to local stables for research which facilitated interesting interpretations in response to the brief.



Critical and Contextual Studies

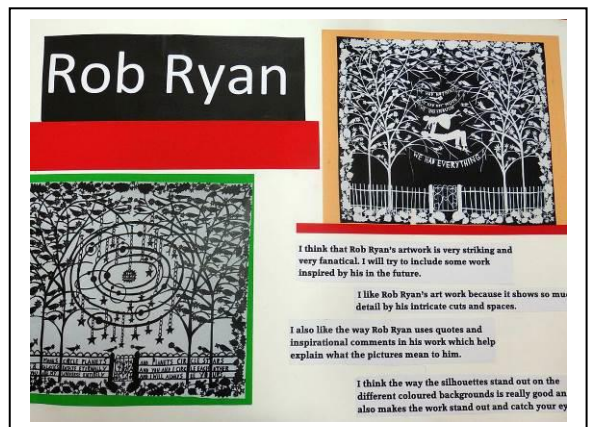
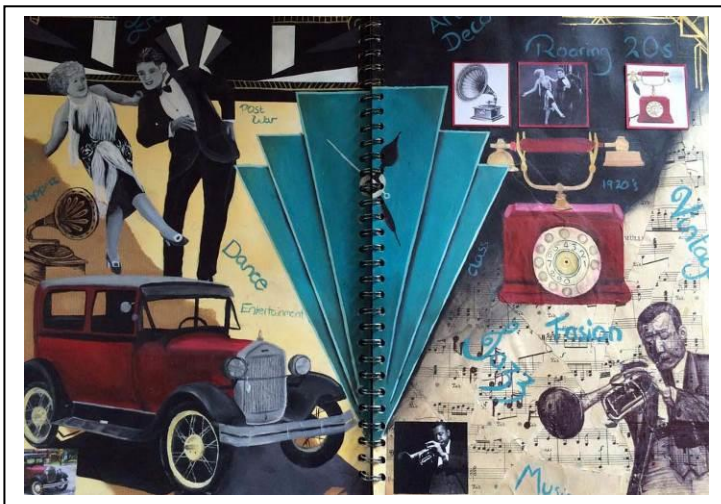
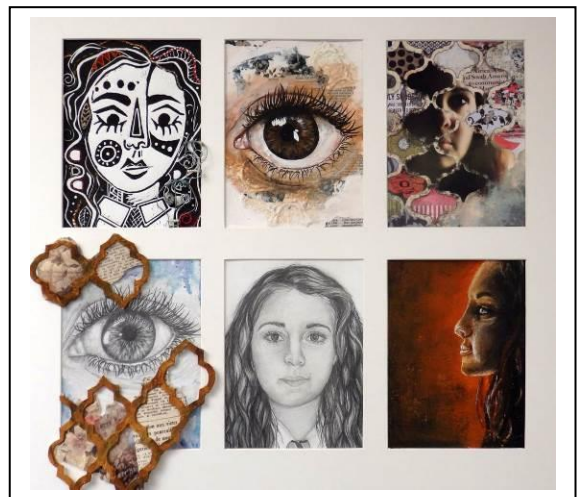
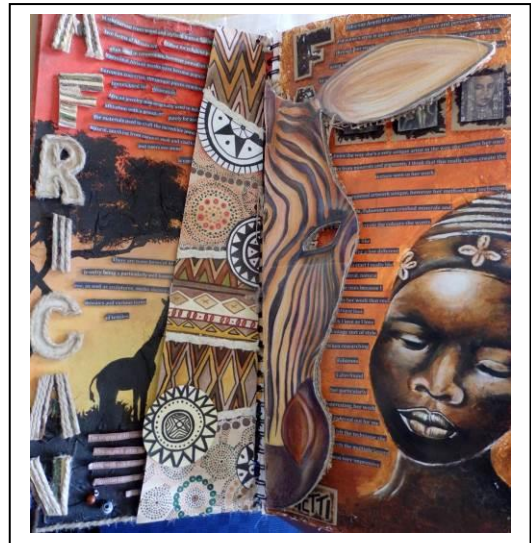
This endorsement continues to attract a good following especially from centres wishing to offer their candidates the opportunity to follow a course that is underpinned by contextual research, reference and finding practical solutions.

Moderators once again commented positively on the wide variety of subjects and themes undertaken. Predominantly candidates made highly personal responses to art and design works through their own practical work.

Good practice is often shown when practical work is frequently supported by thoughtful written observations that demonstrated commendable levels of critical understanding and appreciation.

Once again it was encouraging to note that most candidates successfully avoided repeating factual information gathered from the Internet and made a genuine attempt to be interpretive and insightful. Not surprisingly candidates' performance in assessment objective 1 was almost invariably strong, impacting positively on the rest of the submission.

Some centres encourage candidates to reduce the amount of historical or factual information gathered and concentrate on documenting, critical analysis and personal evaluations.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Introduce a programme of research using a range of different approaches, from sketching, to photography, to collecting pictures and items. Ask your candidates to edit and annotate their research.

Applied Art and Design

Once again in 2015 an increasing number of candidates are taking this endorsement.

Pleasingly much ingenuity is shown in devising vocationally or commercially orientated briefs, which often established commercial clients and target audiences with whom candidates could readily identify. Working within such parameters far from being restrictive continues to promote the creativity of many candidates who display much originality of thought in resolving design problems and presenting convincing solutions.

Candidates continue to research a broad spectrum of commercial, industrial or design contexts and made connections with a considerable array of practitioners, equally from the fields of Design, Industry and Applied Arts. Although candidates had the latitude to work within the broad areas of study identified by the endorsements the approach was frequently multi-disciplinary with candidates demonstrating much versatility in exploring the potential of an impressively extensive assortment of 2D and 3D media, resources, materials, techniques and processes.

It continues to be common practice in some centres to establish a series of deadlines throughout the year of work for candidates to follow.

Annotation in Applied Art and Design can refer to specific design issues such as materials, structure and alternative approaches to making supplemented by specific fashion, textile, graphic design, architectural or product design terminology.

Candidates should give proper attention to the design process in a vocational context so that the gap between research and final outcome is bridged by developmental stages.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

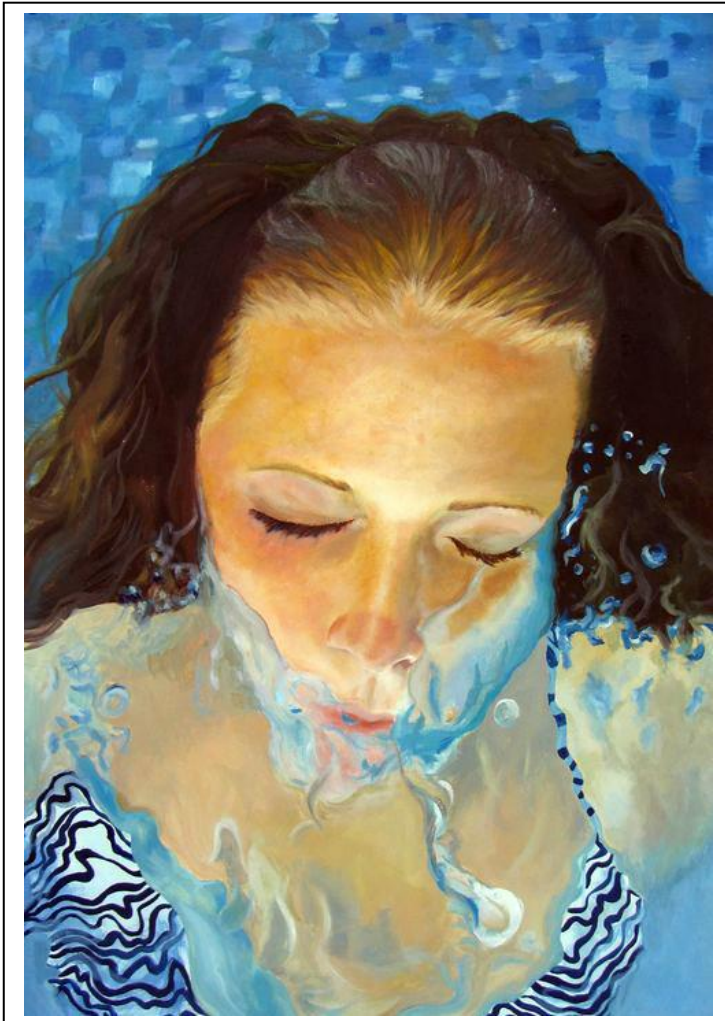
Candidates should remember that the work should be seen 'in a vocational context' and that the 'work must be supported by relevant work of their own'.

Summary and Guidance

All centres should find it significant that this 2015 session clearly showed the OCR GCSE Art and Design specification greatly helped candidates achieve in all the endorsements and make full use of the creative and skills based opportunities afforded.

2015 also confirmed that centres continue to take advantage of the number of endorsements offered and candidates' submissions distinctly demonstrated the broadest possible range of approaches at GCSE.

The number of D& T departments entering their candidates in either the 3D Design or Textiles endorsement continues to grow and in 2015 a significant number of new centres entered for this qualification.



Reassuringly moderators reported that informed teaching, well-conceived course structures and appropriate resources ensured that candidates generally performed to their full potential in both units. Teachers in the vast majority of centres achieve this and they are commended for the constructive assistance, support and guidance given to their candidates.

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 15 deadline.

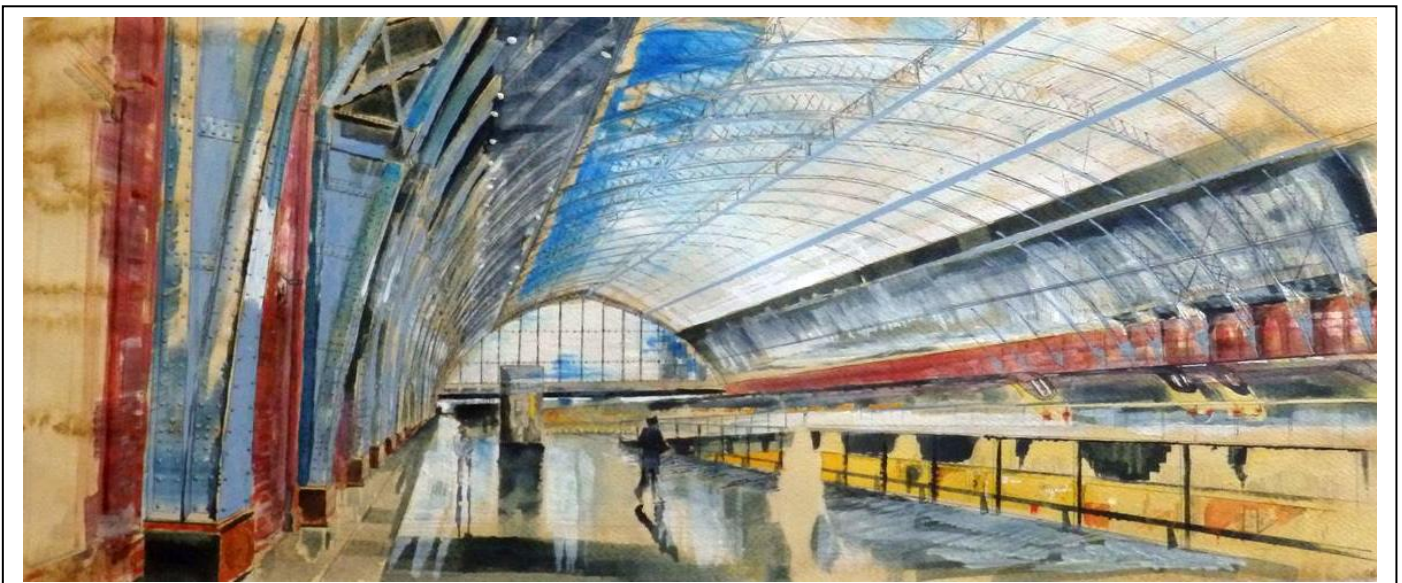
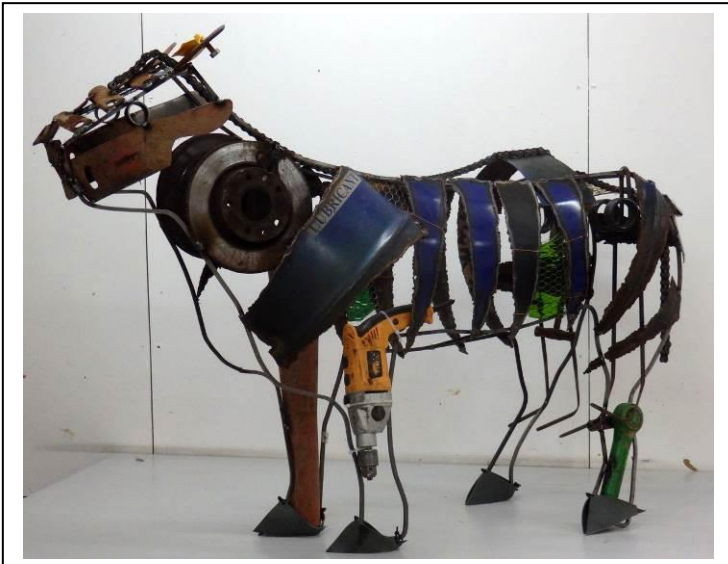
Once again in 2015 the use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet enabled candidates to access the work of a wide range of artists, designers and craftspeople. However, teachers and lecturers need to maintain their vigilance in monitoring the websites used and steer candidates away from inappropriate material.



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 GCSE Specification 2015-2016 will be available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 496398 or by email to cpdhub@ocr.org.uk in September 2015.

The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and they are reproduced with the permission of the centres concerned. OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.



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