

This paper should be handed to candidates on 12 June 1998

ART**IMAGINATIVE COMPOSITION AND STILL LIFE - HIGHER LEVEL**

FRIDAY, 19 JUNE - 2.00 - 4.30 P.M.

100 marks are assigned to this paper.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write your Examination Number clearly in the space provided on the drawing paper. Write the title of the paper - "Still Life" or "Imag Comp" - on the drawing sheet immediately below your Examination Number. You may work on the reverse side of the paper if you wish. The use is allowed of tracing paper, coloured papers, texturing materials or other materials normally required to answer the question. A candidate who selects Still Life is required to bring appropriate objects of his/her own selection and set up his/her own group in time for the commencement of the examination.

DESCRIPTIVE PASSAGE

Containing Starting Points.

Change was a long time coming to Bridge Street; now, every day its pace accelerates, and the old makes way for the new. Urban renewal policies are changing the look of this long curving street in the oldest part of town. At one end of the street there is now a roundabout giving access to several traffic-congested streets in the city's commercial centre. At the other end is the old three arched bridge. The whole area has been pedestrianised as the bridge could no longer safely take heavy vehicles. Crowds of shoppers throng the once quiet neighbourhood.

The facades of the restored houses have been painted smart colours. They contrast with the last remaining as-yet-untouched old house in their midst. Its roof is almost totally gone and over the years an elder tree has grown up through the roofspace. In spring, its green leaves shelter sparrows and blackbirds. In summer it produces a profusion of large creamy blossoms, and in autumn clusters of shiny black berries attract big noisy flocks of starlings. It is now summer and, in the evenings, the scent of elderflower wafts down the street. This is not likely to happen next summer as there is a large "For Sale" sign nailed to the house's rotten door, on which the peeling layers of paint record the colour fads and fashions of a hundred years. A doorknocker of a human face stares unblinkingly into the street, the face of some ancient Roman guardian of home and hearth made useful again in Georgian Ireland, a relic of the past in the urban jungle.

Most of the old shops have been refurbished and changed into different sorts of businesses. A fashionable restaurant has recently opened. Tom often meets Anne there for lunch. Today he's late, so she looks around at the interior. The Chef's Specials are scrawled in coloured chalks on a blackboard over the gleaming stainless steel espresso machine. Little cups are stacked on glass shelves. Beside the cash-register is an arrangement of dried flowers, foliage and grasses combined with artificial flowers. Beside a bowl of mints is a plate of coins, left as tips. A pineapple is centred in a fruit bowl, surrounded by grapes, bananas and pears. A wine bottle and several long-stemmed glasses are on a tray with a corkscrew and a rolled-up check cloth.

A mirror gives a strange angle on the restaurant. A baby in a buggy stares enthralled at all the colour and movement while his parents are giving their order to a waitress. A waiter rushes by, bringing a tray to diners at a corner table - mussels in a glossy black pile on a painted plate, pasta with a tomato sauce, cut-up bread rolls. Ice cubes glisten in water glasses, and there is a dainty rosebud and a sprig of greenery in a little vase on every table. The places are set with knives, forks, soup and dessert spoons. The crisp cloth napkins at every place setting have been decoratively folded into either a fan or a peaked form. The placemats have a colourful design on them. On the wall is a mural, showing a river valley in perspective through an open window. It has all the ingredients of an ideal landscape and Anne spends a while admiring the painted view. Glancing at a big wall clock designed to look like the sun and its rays - still no sign of Tom - Anne takes a magazine from her bag and flicking through it, reads the following:

Sometimes life is like geometry. This boat. That rock. The line of twisting white water between them. As our raft accelerates towards the bus-size rock that splits the water, I realize the river's physics are in complete control. There can only be one outcome, so I stop paddling. Everyone else in the boat is hanging on, grim-faced in anticipation of the impact. Our river guide tries in vain to steer us away from disaster. The snub nose of the raft dips towards the rock. Thunk! We all shoot forward, our belongings and supplies strain from their moorings, the raft rolls over like a fat, lazy whale and suddenly we're all in the cold, white torrent.*

Michael, Tess and Alan are finishing their coffee and are looking through some of Alan's holiday photographs before they hurry back to the office. Apart from the usual beach scenes there are snapshots of a ruined tower on a cliff, a vineyard, a crowded street market, a horse and foal under an apple tree in blossom, a smiling face, and skateboarders going down a hill. These little pictures are spread out on the tablecloth or are overlapping each other among the cups, saucers, glasses and crumpled napkins.

Tom has been delayed at work, and by the time he arrives a queue has formed outside the restaurant. On either side are newly opened shops. Some have great window displays. A pharmacy has an array of cosmetics displayed as though a girl had been using them at her dressing table. Objects and products are casually placed, some containers open, a little of their contents obviously used up. Colour and shape are the focus of this display. Some interestingly shaped scent bottles are haphazardly placed beside open lipstick, a jar of cream and an aerosol. There are different sorts of hairbrushes and a hairdryer with all its attachments. A wristwatch, a string of beads, a bracelet and some ear-rings add a touch of glamour. Open compacts of eye colour are laid out beside make-up brushes, some small and pointed, others big and soft. Tissues have been half pulled out through the top opening of their box.

Next door, an art gallery displays several abstract paintings behind its plate-glass windows. These works suggest depth and distance in both open and enclosed spaces, using line, stripes, tone and shape.

Further down the street, a kitchen equipment shop has used melons, garlic, root-ginger, onions and other vegetables in its window display. Among the products displayed - and spot-lit to create highlights, reflections and shadows - are a kettle, some pepper-mills and salt shakers, a grater and steel whisks. Behind it all is draped a patterned or striped fabric.

Close by is an art supplies shop. In this window, paint tubes are arranged casually as though someone has been using them. Some tubes are full, others are squeezed out, others almost empty. Beside these is a palette, covered with blobs of paint, and smeared with the remains of mixed-up colours. Paintbrushes are standing up in a glass jar, and little pots of poster colour, a T-square and other drawing equipment are placed beside a container of murky paint-water and a crumpled, paint-stained cloth. Behind all this is propped a half-finished painting. Other art and craft gear is also displayed, and this too gives the illusion that work has been briefly interrupted.

* Adapted from 'Stream of Abuse' by Ed Douglas.

But there never seems to be any interruption in the building work in the Bridge Street area. Derelict buildings have been demolished and a new shopping mall and apartments complex is under construction, of which Phase One is nearly complete. Phase Two has recently begun and things are hectic in this part of the site. A small army of hard-hatted workers go about their business in the construction, plastering, plumbing and carpentry trades. Scaffolding surrounds the newly built parts of Phase Two and from dawn 'till dusk the workers can be seen hard at work. Jason's face is beaded with sweat as he passes large planks of timber up to Patrick. Long chutes allow waste and rubbish to drop into skips at ground level, where there are piles of bricks, concrete blocks and pipes. Lorries have tipped out huge piles of sand and gravel. A tanker of ready-mixed cement is now pulling into the site entrance where a few pre-fab buildings are clustered together. Dave, the foreman is in the site office, looking over architects drawings with Paul, the engineer. Bill and Joseph are having their lunch in another pre-fab; they are glad of a break from the heat, noise and dust of the site.

A temporary wall of heavy plywood surrounds the site, painted red and white. A huge crane dominates the skyline. From the crane Peter has a birds-eye view of the road network of the whole area, and of the river. On the horizon are blue, faraway hills. These remind him of his home in the country - winding lanes, a house hidden among trees, black-and-white cows in a green meadow, or all lined up in the milking parlour.

The visual focus of these buildings is to be a huge sculpture over the entrance archway. It's being installed today, having been transported by truck from foundry to site. The sculpture - of a winged figure representing 'Progress' - has been bound securely with straps and ropes. It's being hoisted from the truck by the crane. Very very slowly it's lowered down 'till it's directly above the granite plinth. From scaffolding around the high arch, a team of workers manoeuvre the sculpture while it's still pendant. Stretching, reaching, pushing, pulling, with great effort they align the sculpture correctly, and finally it's lowered into position. The workers seem very small in relation to the colossal figure. In a few weeks time 'Progress' will have been floodlit and will appear to hover dramatically over the rooftops of what was, only a short time ago, a sleepy, forgotten corner of the city.

ONE QUESTION ONLY TO BE ATTEMPTED

Select a starting point from the above passage.

1. Draw or paint a picture you have in mind after reading the descriptive passage.

or

2. Draw or paint a Still Life group of objects contained in or suggested by the descriptive passage.

or

3. Make an abstract composition suggested by the descriptive passage.