

This paper should be handed to candidates on 7 May, 1999.

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

FRIDAY, 14 MAY - 9.30 - 12.00

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****N.B. STARTING POINT MUST BE STATED ON REVERSE SIDE**

After their college examinations are over the students take summer jobs. Some have travelled abroad, while others have found work locally. Among these are Alan, Sally and Eoin.

Sally and Eoin have got jobs at Ballycloudmore Castle, which is open to the public all year long, and as guest accommodation during the summer. It's situated on a low hill overlooking a small lake. It's a mixture of architectural styles, which give it great visual charm, but the predominant look is that of the Gothic Revival. Turrets, spires and towers were added long ago to a plain Georgian box. This picturesque place attracts visitors like bees to a honeypot, partly for the period decoration of its rooms, partly for the culinary delights of its restaurant and partly for the beauty of its park, gardens and forest walks. As you turn the corner at the end of the long avenue, the castle appears among the trees like a picture in a child's book. Sally often thinks that it has everything: the spaciousness and elegance of the past combined with modern comforts.

Only the grand formal rooms of the castle are open to visitors. The private apartment of the owners is decorated in a simple, modern style, much more suited to family life than huge rooms filled with valuable antiques. In the public rooms, ancestral portraits line the walls - rakes, puritans, sages and fools stare down from their gilt frames. In the private part of the castle there are abstract paintings and also non-naturalistic paintings based on buildings, and on the human figure.

At Christmas the clock tower is decorated with coloured light-bulbs that make the castle even more dream-like. From the dark, nearby woods you can see the jewel-like colours of these distant lights which suggest festivities, parties, music and dancing, or a harp recital in the Chinese-style drawing room. A ghost hovers at midnight in the Great Hall.

Sally and Eoin do various jobs, often working together. Guided tours take up much of Sally's time. The garden also keeps them busy. Keeping the luxuriant growth of the wet Irish summer in check is back-breaking work. All day, every day would not be time enough to keep the weeds cleared from the vast formal flower beds, or the topiary neatly trimmed. Today Eoin is up on a high step-ladder, cutting back a laurel hedge that runs along a gravelled path towards the lake. Because there were fewer visitors than is usual on a June day, Sally and Eoin spent a few hours scuffling weeds from this path. Later that afternoon they raked the gravel into an even surface. They put extra gravel where the constant passage of feet had thinned out the surface cover, causing silvery puddles to form on rainy days.

At the gates of the walled garden, a pair of sphinxes carved from stone and surrounded by ivy, guard the entrance from their shoulder-high pedestals. Eoin has left his wheelbarrow, full of hedge trimmings, underneath one of these sculptures, and he feels slightly dwarfed by these splendid creatures, a fantasy of the ancient world. He pushes the gate open, and enters the enclosed world of the walled garden, pushing the heavy wheelbarrow ahead of him. A long avenue of dark tall yews create a pattern of dense shadow and bright sunlight on the avenue. To the left is an apple orchard, to the right vegetables in neat rows, bordered by little box hedges. There are flowers too, the tall ones staked neatly and the small ones glistening after being watered. He dumps the leaves on a huge compost heap behind the greenhouses.

Then he goes into the tool shed to hang up his hedge clippers. In a corner is a still-life of flowerpots. Some are very large and some are tiny. Some are stacked, some are lying on their sides. There is both order and disorder in the arrangement of these plastic and terracotta pots. There is one decorative one amongst all the plain and functional ones, a few of which are cracked and one of which is broken into shards. The bright sun streaming into the shed adds a high light-dark contrast to everything near the windows.

Just as Sally considers the castle to be perfect, Eoin is of the opinion that the garden has everything. It is both beautiful and productive – just look at those strawberry plants, that huge vegetable marrow, those gourds, cucumbers and tomatoes. In some features of the garden, nature has been tamed by human effort, and left unchecked elsewhere, as in the forest walk. Ancient, almost-crumbling greenhouses still shelter the vines, whose thick and twisted branches produce grapes every year. A fountain plays endlessly, its huge gush of white water coming from the stone mouth of a carved water-god, ugly-faced and angry looking. At the end of the formal garden, where obelisks and statues create a sense of perspective, a rustic gate made from gnarled branches leads out into a forest walk. There, as you walk, your trainers or wellingtons sink into the damp moss. Foxgloves, heavy with pink and white blossom stretch outwards toward the sunlight which dapples and patterns the forest-floor with streaks of gold and green. You often see a pheasant here, or late in the evening, a fox. Right now a blackbird is beginning to sing high up in an immense oak: then it stops abruptly, flies under a crooked branch, and disappears. Shafts of light pierce the shady forest, illuminating ferns, bracken, briars and scrub on the forest floor.

Meanwhile, Sally has just brought a group of visitors around the castle. She has pointed out what is beautiful and unusual. In the Great Hall, the paintings, the antlers mounted on the wooden panelling and the huge mask-decorated table with its veined marble top have aroused most comment from the visitors, who usually take photos as they go. On this table is a flower arrangement of summer's choicest blooms – roses, daisies, sweet-pea, lilies, peonies, mixed up with ferns and other greenery. On another table is a group of at least four sporting trophies of different sizes. The sun, streaming in through the high gothic windows, catches the highly polished smoothness of the metal trophies. In the vast, vaulted kitchen there are copper pans hanging on whitewashed walls, old black iron cookers, and deep square sinks. All these picturesque features are impractical nowadays and visitors notice that a modern kitchen, complete with microwave and food processor has been inserted into what was once the servants' dining room. On a drainingboard beside the stainless steel sink is a draining rack on which two or three mis-matched plates are standing, along with a striped mug, a dainty jug and some cutlery. A bottle of wash-up liquid and various brushes and scrubs completes this everyday still-life.

Alan has found himself a job on a farm, which he likes, despite the early morning start. He helps Peadar the farmer with the milking of a huge herd of cows. Shortly after six a.m., when the countryside is silent except for the chorus of the birds he makes his way to Peadar's modern milking shed where the cows are milked by machine. Already these large black and white animals are walking in a long line under the beech trees towards the buildings. They make their way, slow and unhurried, into the stalls where the machines are attached to their full udders. Soon, the milk is flowing along the tubes into the waiting containers. Hygiene is all important and Alan spends a lot of the time cleaning and sweeping. After all that hard work, it's breakfast time. In the kitchen, he has breakfast with the family. They have tea, toast and a fry-up, after juice and cereal. The table is crowded with glass, crockery and cutlery.

Baby Tony is sitting up in his high chair. On the worktop are his feeding bottles, teats, little dishes and spoons. Margaret, his mother, prepares the baby's food. When Peadar has finished his own breakfast, he feeds the child. The baby's spoon seems very small in Peadar's large hand.

Margaret soon starts to prepare lunch. An oven-ready chicken sits on a plate. Beside it are some onions, a pepper-mill, a grater, bread and breadcrumbs. On a saucer is a lemon, cut in half. There is an open tin of sardines on the table and oranges and bananas in a bowl. There are two thermos flasks and a lunch-box on top of the freezer. On the window-ledge is a fancy, very brightly coloured glass (or china) vase into which Margaret has put a single spray of fresh green leaves. In this simple arrangement, the natural and man-made are contrasted very effectively.

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.