



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2011

## ART

### Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Higher Level

100 marks are assigned to this paper, i.e. 25% of the overall marks for Art

**3 – 13 May**

**Morning, 9.30 - 12.00**

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Friday, 8 April**

### Instructions

You may work in colour, monochrome, mixed media, collage or any other suitable medium. However, the use of oil paints or perishable organic material is not allowed. You are not allowed to bring aids such as stencils, templates, traced images, preparatory artwork or photographic images into the examination.

Write your Examination Number clearly in the space provided on your A2 sheet. Write the title – ‘Imaginative Composition’ or ‘Still Life’ – immediately below your Examination Number.

If you wish to work on a coloured sheet, **the superintendent must sign this sheet before the examination commences** stating that it is blank. Maximum size of sheet: A2.

## Choose one of the following:

1. Make an **Imaginative Composition** inspired by **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D. Your starting point and the rationale for your Imaginative Composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.
2. Make a **Still Life** work based on a group of objects suggested by, or described in **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D. You are required to bring relevant objects to the examination centre for the purpose of setting up **your own individual** still life composition. **This must be done in time for the commencement of the examination.** Your starting point and the rationale for your Still Life should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.
3. Make an **Abstract Composition** inspired by and developed from **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D. Your starting point and the rationale for your abstract composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet, indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen. State clearly whether your Abstract Composition is following 1 above – Imaginative Composition, or 2 above – Still Life.

## Descriptive Passages

### Passage A

Summer is the time when houses are abandoned for life elsewhere: for mobile homes, for rented cottages, for B&Bs, hotels or trips away. Houses are locked and left. They begin their vigil until occupants return them to life and functionality...

A house, a home, is a personal place, a special place. It holds the energy of its occupants when they are gone. It minds each room, the unmade bed, the shampoo fallen sideways on the bathtub, the discarded toothbrush, the robes on the door, the silent shower and perfumes stilled, distilling their scents into the quiet air.

Clocks measure time, tick by tick by tick, into the silence until the occupants return.

Downstairs lies the post, avalanched inside the front door. There are letters and brochures and cards from other people who have also left their homes alone this summer.

The house is silent. Day and night enters its windows. Magazines lie open, images and words fixed on the page. The books on the shelves wait for the hand that loves them to lift them down again, read them and return them to their own places. In the meantime they stand together holding, untouched, the thoughts, emotions, and aspirations of those who wrote them.

Family photographs smile into the emptiness. Toys are forsaken and dolls lie with staring eyes. The house devoid of people is a quiet, a calm, a tranquil and enveloping place, dormant, anticipating its occupants return...

In the shed, bicycles rested in the warmth of timber. Tools have waited for a craftsman's hands. Pots of paint have sat in rows with telltale streaks from lid to base betraying the colours underneath their unsealed lids.

The lawnmower has been ready to cut the grass that grew exuberantly outside during its reprieve. In the garden, weeds have sprouted thickly. Some ivy has sneaked into the shed. The kennel is cold. The bird feeder is empty, and disappointed wild life are glad to see the occupants of the house return. There is a new puddle where the gutter has dripped, the water barrel is full, flowers have bloomed and the geranium pots hold some blackened soggy petals among their vibrancy. The Montbrecia are in flower and robust. Rosemary has claimed more space. The grass is high and hedges are waving outwards over the garden wall. In contrast to the tranquil patience of the house awaiting its owners return, the garden has run wild while the owners were away...

Adapted from *'In Silence, a house awaits your return'* by Marie Murray from the Irish Times, August, 2009.

### Passage B

After the third bridge, a little causeway on your right leads to a small island. Walk onto this and follow its shoreline around in an anti-clockwise direction. In summer it is full of wild flowers and grasses such as the yellow hawksweeds, purple mints and tall fescues, and is very reminiscent of the old hay meadows that existed before the advent of modern intensive farming. Thus it attracts a lot of butterflies that are common in the Gearagh, especially the whites, tortoise-shells, peacocks and meadow browns, which can occur in such large numbers during peak reproductive periods that the meadows shimmer with their movements. This is why it is nicknamed 'butterfly island' by local children.

The walk around this wild meadow also brings you very close to the many islands that are crowned with grotesque shapes of twisted and blackened oak stumps. In between lie deep, muddy chanel, choked with white lily cups and their plate-like leaves, and underneath the streams are filled with the treacherous tangle of abandoned branches left behind after the forest was felled. These chanel now provide the ideal hiding place for gigantic pike, some reaching lengths of 1.5 metres. But you are more likely to see the many grey herons that stand sentry-like on the stumps, watching for the shoals of minnow and stickleback that inhabit the shallows. If you have time, this is an excellent place to hide amongst the tall grasses to watch for kingfishers, grebes and duck that ply up and down along the many channels. In the late evening you may be lucky enough to see an otter.

Adapted from *West Cork Walks* by Kevin Corcoran

## Passage C

It was midnight in ankh-Morpork's Royal Art Musuem.

It occurred to new employee Rudolph Scattering about once every minute that on the whole it might have been a good idea to tell the Curator about his nyctophobia, his fear of strange noises and, he now knew, his fear of absolutely everything he could see (and come to that, not see), hear, smell and feel crawling up his back during the endless hours on guard during the night. It was no use telling himself that everything in here was dead. That didn't help at all. It meant that he stood out.

And then he heard the sob. A scream might have been better. At least you are certain when you've heard a scream. A faint sob is something you have to wait to hear again, because you can't be sure. He raised his lantern in a shaking hand. There shouldn't be anyone in here. The place was securely locked; no one could get in. Or, now he came to think about it, out. He wished he *hadn't* thought about it.

He was in the basement, which was not among the most scary places on his round. It was mostly just old shelves and drawers, full of the things that were almost, but very definitely not entirely, thrown away. Museums don't like things to be thrown away, in case they turn out to be very important later on.

Another sob, and a sound like the scraping of...pottery?

A rat, then, somewhere on the rear shelves? Rats didn't sob did they?

'Look, I don't want to have to come in there and get you!' said Scattering with heartfelt accuracy. And the shelves exploded. It seemed to him to happen in slow motion, bits of pottery and statues spreading out as they drifted towards him. He went over backwards and the expanding cloud passing overhead crashed into the shelves on the other side of the room, which were demolished. Scattering lay on the floor in the dark, unable to move, expecting at any moment to be torn apart by the phantoms bubbling up from his imagination...

The day staff found him in the morning, deeply asleep and covered in dust. They listened to his garbled explanation, treated him kindly, and agreed that a different career might suit his temperament. They wondered for a while about what he had been up to, night watchmen being rather puzzling people at the best of times, but put it out of their heads...because of the find.

Mr Scattering then got a job in a pet shop in Pellicool Steps, but left after three days because the way the kittens stared at him gave him nightmares. The world can be very cruel to some people. But he never told anyone about the gloriously glittering lady holding a large ball over her head who smiled at him before s/he vanished. He did not want people to think he was strange.

Adapted from *Unseen Academicals* by Terry Pratchett. Courtesy of Corgi Books, 2009.

## Passage D

Harvey Broad owned four mobile phones, three of which he kept neatly suspended, at his hip, in his 'builder's buddy' (a kind of construction worker's gun holster) which was fashioned out of expensive sandy-coloured leather...

Also dangling from this heavy-duty charm bracelet were a torch...A protective face mask...A pair of wrap-around sunglasses...A little hammer, a set of screw-drivers and some pliers. A toy truck-a Monster Truck; a Dinky; 'Bigfoot 7', to be precise-neatly fashioned (by his own hand), into a key-ring for his customised Toyota.

'Bigfoot 7 was originally (he told a bemused Elen) an F250 Ford Pick-up with a 540-cubic-inch engine which had been painstakingly fitted with four, huge wheels to enable it to perform a series of stunts (chiefly – so far as she could gauge- to drive over a line of old cars and lay waste to them. She wasn't entirely sure why this was a good thing, and she didn't dare ask. It just *was*, apparently). He had astonishingly clean hands. Elen had quietly observed as much during their initial encounter. And he was always immaculately turned-out; had a very distinctive 'look';

appearing to hold a particular strand of pseudo-American combat-style apparel in especially high regard...

His colour palate ranged through the bright whites, rich creams and pale olives (not, you might think, especially *practical* tones for a labourer); the sage-coloured, high shine, front-zippered puffer jacket being his most essential garment (his closely shaven, well-tanned head sticking out through its neat, Chinese collar like the stalk of an apple, jutting defiantly, from the sumptuous, swollen mound of its surrounding flesh).

Harvey spent over two hours a day at his local gym ('I used to body-build competitively –back in the late seventies...'). He wore earrings in both ears; thick, gold hoops...

Contrary to all her expectations, thing'd started off well enough. Almost as if sensing Elen's misgivings, Harvey had arranged for the scaffolding to arrive not merely on time-but a whole day early.

Isadore had been ecstatic ...But his ecstasy was short-lived.

While a third of it went straight up (during a brief frenzy of activity on that first afternoon), the following morning, at around eleven (with no explanation or prior warning), the scaffolders packed away their tools, jumped into their truck, and headed off.

Where, Isadore knew not (*where* didn't matter). What mattered was that they never came back...

The house (which'd looked fairly bleak prior to this new development-with its sagging sills, mouldy fascia and muddy garden) now peeked out, disconsolately, from beneath its perilous-seeming exo-skeleton like a sadly neglected poodle in an ill-fitting muzzle. The small garden...had all- but disappeared under an unsightly pile of poles and planks.

Both Elen and Isadore became preoccupied by the idea that someone might try to steal these paltry remnants ...Isadore left Harvey countless messages to this effect...

Two days after leaving his fifth or sixth reminder, Isadore came home to discover that a couple of small chains and padlocks, had been applied to the 'excess' scaffolding in order- he presumed- to render it more secure. He was relieved...but this wasn't entirely the result he'd been hoping for. A week after the advent of the padlocks... the boy suddenly arrived: Lester; didn't look a day over fifteen.

Lester had a delinquent air about him (the base-ball cap, the unfocused gaze, his skin a bright, purple white- the approximate tone of an under cooked chicken thigh bone). But his tracksuit bottoms...were exceptionally dirty, and that had to be a good sign...

Lester (it soon became evident) 'lacked direction'. It was a full-time job just to keep him working. And there was always some good reason why he might suddenly feel the urge to slip away again: a missing tool, a parole appointment, breakfast-eaten on the stroke of ten-lunch- at twelve-and tea- at three- none of which did he ever opt to bring along with him, but mooched off, mid-task, in a bid to track them down.

There were no fast-food emporiums in the local vicinity...There was only Tesco's at the – *ahem* - 'Community Centre', where Lester was now a permanent fixture at the delicatessen counter. He'd developed a strong antipathy for 'the vicious old witch' working there, who'd made him take a ticket - and wait to be called - even when it was obvious that he was her only customer.

Adapted from *Darkmans* by Nicola Barker. Courtesy of Harper Perennial, 2007.

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