



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2012

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Higher Level

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

Monday, 30 April – Friday, 11 May

Morning, 9.30 - 12.00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Tuesday, 17th 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

We were biking through the Jaffa flea market when we found ourselves in a narrow alley, threading our way past vintage clothing, stacks of Oriental rugs and a life-size neon likeness of Marilyn Monroe.

It was the eve of a holiday and the sidewalks were crowded with shoppers – uniformed soldiers on leave, families with children darting about. My 14-year-old had just missed knocking over a vendor selling jewellery. Then my friend Judy shrieked: a driver who had parked on the sidewalk started reversing out of his spot.

I was beginning to wonder whether this expedition was a wise idea, but an hour later, as we glided through downtown on a broad, shaded sidewalk, I couldn't imagine seeing this bustling, seaside metropolis any other way. And for tourists, biking offers a more intimate glimpse of real life here.

I rented bicycles at a shop near our hotel, and over the course of three days, cycled along the beach, through residential areas and the business and cultural centre. We also cycled north of the city on a trail that hugs the Mediterranean, stopping to sample artisanal cheeses and baked goods at the farmers' market by the old port just north of the city.

The morning we took the coastal route, the beach was quiet. There were no signs of the plastic chaise lounges that had covered the sand the day before. We rode along the broad boardwalk, the sound of our tires startling the pigeons off the walkway. On the vast public beach, the sand had been shaped into gentle scalloped peaks by the night winds. Two surfers in wetsuits were already wading into the blue Mediterranean with their boards. A few dog owners were running their labs on what locals call the "dog beach" - a stretch of sand where dogs are allowed. It was getting hot, so we parked our bikes at the Park, right along the shore, and took long swigs from our water bottles.

When we got to the bustling outdoor food market, we stowed our bikes and fought the crowds to bargain for T-shirts. We purchased spicy olives and a kilo of apricots and tasted fresh-squeezed pomegranate juice for the first time. Then we headed back to our hotel, where we started to plan the next day's ride.

Adapted from *Journeys in the Fast Lane, Biking in Tel Aviv* by Caryn Rabin from the *The New York Times*, 2011.

Passage B

The signs in Dublin Airport were boldly bilingual, every indicator from "Exit" to "Ladies" printed in both Gaelic and English.

The city's transformation into a cosmopolitan European capital has been well documented by now. But the advance press hadn't prepared me for the international mix I encountered on Dublin's streets during the four days I spent there. Dublin's youth and hipness mean it is easy to find a good cappuccino in cafes north or south of the Liffey, the wide, brownish river that slices the city in half. Another upside to cosmopolitanism is that Ireland now boasts the same smart and stylish accommodations you would expect to find in any European capital. Twin beds with lush russet velvet comforters and Italian silk pillows awaited as I collapsed with an unusually severe case of trans-Atlantic jet lag. Around the block was Grafton Street, Dublin's pedestrian shopping area, where browsers parade, flower sellers ply their trade, and street musicians with guitars sing Jimi Hendrix and Dylan songs for loose change. Later I joined the lunchtime stroll

of shoppers and ducked into a café. Inside the 19th-century building with its giddy faux-Egyptian details, I found a table on the second floor by the window overlooking the street and ordered potato soup, brown bread and coffee while checking my map and getting my bearings. Over the next couple of days, I covered both sides of the Liffey, crossing and re-crossing the pretty little white wrought-iron Ha'penny footbridge. The things I wanted to see weren't more than 20 minutes or so from my hotel or from one another, and I enjoyed exploring on foot. The weather wasn't too bad – a friend who lives in the city was raving about the unusual spell of sunshine – and getting lost was not a problem, because wrong turns eventually led to a familiar landmark.

I spent an hour over tea and cakes and champagne in the swagged and mirrored victorian-style lounge of the Shelbourne Hotel, watching ladies in sweaters and pearls chat over copies of the Irish Times. I braved the narrow streets of Temple Bar early on a Saturday night. Temple Bar – nicknamed "Temple Barf" by locals – is the Dublin neighbourhood where collegiate partying reaches Olympic levels. Every other storefront seems to house a pub, and all have the same doorway decoration: a large, menacing-looking bouncer with a shaved head, a black overcoat and a cell phone wire plugged in his ear.

Adapted from *'Frugal Traveller; Hip Cafes, Celtic Art and Bargains in Dublin'* by Daisann McLane from The New York Times, 2003.

Passage C

Charlie looked at the frog he held cupped in his hands. He knelt gently into the damp, soft cushioned mossy ground and opened his hands. The frog took three long leaps into Tuckers swamp, disappearing with a final plunk under a mat of algae. Wiping his hands on his jeans, Charlie took a deep breath. He loved the smell of this place – loved everything about it for that matter: the great willows with their drooping branches and trunks so big his arms could barely reach halfway around them; the familiar paths – sometimes a narrow strip of solid ground, sometimes no more than a string of squishy hummocks; the shallow pools filled with frogs and salamanders. Most of all he loved the sense of magic that hovered over the swamp, the feeling that something deep and strange here had resisted being civilized.

The buzz of insects filled the air. A mosquito began drilling a hole in his neck. He slapped at it. When he brought his hand away the insect's flimsy body lay crushed in his palm.

He turned to go, stirring up a small cloud of yellow butterflies as he pushed his way through a patch of ferns. Mist curled around his feet. Wisps of it rose before him like beckoning fingers. He shuddered, wishing he had not abandoned his bike and he began to walk faster.

A moment later he found himself standing in front of a store he had never seen before. That wouldn't have bothered him if the store looked brand-new. But this store looked old – very old indeed – and that was a little frightening. Even so, the place was so fascinating that he couldn't resist stepping up to look through its window. That window, divided into many small sections by thin strips of wood, curved out from the front of the store.

A small bell tinkled overhead as he stepped inside. Charlie began to smile. The shop was filled – crammed really – with great stuff. Chains of jewel coloured silk scarves draped gracefully from the ceiling. Every available surface – not just the tabletops and the countertops but the walls and most of the floor as well – was cluttered with paraphernalia. To his right he saw a whole wall of cages. Some held doves and rabbits – for pulling out of hats, he assumed. But the majority of the cages held a weird assortment of lizards, toads, snakes, bats and spiders. He wondered if the guy collected them from the swamp.

To his left was a glass display case that held – among other things – big decks of cards, Chinese rings, bottles and jars of all shapes and colours, various animal skulls and little books that hinted at ancient secrets. At the far end of the case was a human skull labelled THE SKULL OF TRUTH.

Cool, thought Charlie.

At the back of the shop stretched a long counter made of dark wood. A wonderfully detailed dragon was carved into the front. On top of the counter sat an old fashioned brass cash register. On top of the cash register sat a stuffed owl. At least, Charlie thought it was stuffed – until it turned toward him, blinked, then uttered a series of low hoots.

Adapted from *The Skull of Truth: A Magic Shop Book* by Bruce Coville. Courtesy of Aladdin, 1999.

Passage D

When I visited earlier this month, the market was still hung with red banners celebrating the English Queen’s visit. One of her guides was Sheila Fitzpatrick, founder of the Alternative Bread Company, which sells up to 90 different kinds of bread in the market’s Grand Parade.

As we walked through the market, we passed an engaging mix of modern businesses: olive sellers, Irish chocolatiers and old-school butchers and fishmongers who have been in the market for generations. There’s a strong female presence. In Victorian times, vegetable and poultry selling was dominated by women, and a third of the fishmongers and a good number of the butchers were female too.

Kathleen O’Connell started her fish stall in 1962, although it’s now run by her sons Pat and Paul. There are brill the size of turkey platters, lobsters and wild salmon. “I didn’t have to explain the difference between the salmon to the Queen”, Pat told me, sweeping his hand over deep orange wild and the paler farmed fillets. “She knows about that from Scotland”.

We stopped at Kathleen Noonan’s pig stall, founded in 1955 and catering to the Corkish love affair with pork offal and “bodice” – cured spare ribs; and at Michael Herlihy’s for Irish raspberries.

“You can go around a supermarket without making eye contact. Here people pop in after mass in the church across the road for the buzz and gossip,” Sheila explains.

At Ashley O’Neill’s butcher’s stall, in the family since 1926, there are rugby-ball sized beef hearts and pork belly on the bone. Two girls are asking the assistant how to cook drisheen, the Irish black pudding which can only be described as a hard-core delicacy. Next to the pork sausages are kielbasa and coiled boerwors, the South African sausage. Ireland, it seems, once a springboard for mass emigration, is now a mecca for immigrants.

In Donal O’Callaghan’s organic vegetable shop the signs are in French, Arabic, German, Polish, Spanish and Irish.

Back at the ABC stall almost everything has been sold. There are just a few spelt loaves and some local “grinders”, ugly great trolls of bread.

Anything left goes to the community for the homeless. Sheila grins. “I’m told that they used to be grateful for any bread, now they say, ‘Do you have any of that rosemary focaccia”.

Adapted from ‘*The Queen’s visit to Cork’s English Market*’ by Xanthe Clay from The Telegraph, August, 2011.

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