



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2012

# ART

## Imaginative Composition and Still Life

### Ordinary 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, 17 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, E. **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, E. 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, E. **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

When Claude Monet lived in his Normandy farmhouse in Giverny, his personal contemporary art collection—which included Renoirs, Manets and a dozen Cézannes—was arranged on the walls of his bedroom upstairs, and his colourful Japanese woodblock prints hung in rooms throughout the house. For the painter, the views of his adored garden from both salon and bedroom rivalled the masterworks inside. For the visitor today, they still do.

Dazzling drifts of colour greet the eye in the flower garden, which Monet called Le Clos Normand. Depending on the season, the kaleidoscope of hundreds of hues includes pansies and crocus, violets and forget-me-nots, daisies and anemones, tulips, poppies and peonies, chrysanthemums, spears of foxglove and snapdragons, towering gladioli and hollyhocks. Both simple country posies and rare exotic blooms colour the garden in pre-ordained harmonies.

In spring, decorative Japanese cherry, apple and apricot trees are thick with blossoms. In summer, nasturtiums run riot across the path of the central *allée* in all their gold and vermillion glory, roses clamber across arches or—like Monet’s favourite climber, the yellow Mermaid—race up the walls to his bedroom window and perfume the air with their heady fragrance. In autumn, foliage flames scarlet while red and orange dahlias, violet asters, and saucer-sized sunflowers take centre stage. Winding paths curl around the serpentine curves of two ponds, past bamboo thickets and under weeping willows. The banks are planted with rhododendrons and azaleas, climbing roses and tree peonies. In autumn, the shrubs and ponds glow golden in the haze of the setting sun.

Adapted from ‘*How Monet’s Garden Grew*’ by Jean Bond Rafferty

## Passage B

We are flying out across the silvery waters of Galway Bay to Inis Meáin, one of the three long, low, isolated Aran Islands anchored 10 miles out to sea. Depicted by Seamus Heaney as ‘three stepping stones out of Europe’, the islands’ extreme geographical location, barren and bleakly beautiful landscapes, and importance as timeless strongholds of Irish language and culture have given these modest specks of grey, bare, weather-beaten rock an enduring and otherworldly appeal. These are islands of high, labyrinthine dry-stone walls elaborately constructed to provide small parcels of land that shelter stock and crop. Built like lace so that blustery Atlantic winds can blow straight through them, each imposing limestone wall has its own distinctive series of shapes and patterns, like the weave of Aran jumpers, to allow for easy identification of its maker.

They are also isles of winding lanes, storm beaches, sea cliffs, shipwrecks, a light both flinty and reflective and, most impressively, broad and glistening grey limestone terraces and pavements divided by narrow deep fissures that, in spring, sprout remarkable rare and hardy flowering plants. On the largest island, Inis Mór, there is Dun Aengus, an astonishing semicircular prehistoric fort

perched precipitously on a 300ft sheer cliff and once described as 'the most magnificent barbaric monument in Europe'.

The fine restaurants serve dishes that use ingredients mainly sourced on the island: the lobster and crab are caught by local fishermen from currachs, the traditional island fishing boats; much of the meat, vegetables, fruit, herbs and salads is home-grown by the hotel's talented, experienced and likeable owners.

Adapted from *Aran Islands: a rock and a soft place*, by Philip Watson

## Passage C

So I just watch, as Patricia stalks John with cups of tea, and spills out boxes of photos for him after school, blathering on about our ancestors, like she *knew* them or something, like what they got up to was the *least* bit interesting.

She even brings breakfast down to his bedroom some mornings. She clinks through the hall importantly with a tray, a colourful architecture of food rising out of it. There's a stripey bowl of cereal, and a beam of orange juice, there are triangles of toast, made sweaty with butter, overlooked by the dome of an egg. I watch bemused from the top of the stairs, as I trudge across to the bathroom.

I don't know much about what they have in America, but I know what they don't have by the pictures John takes with his camera. They don't have crumpled cottages with flowers growing out of their roofs, or lanes with runners of moss colouring their middles, they don't have weather that's upside down – clouds that start on the ground and grow upwards, in mists that blur the countryside into a fairytale. And they don't have grannies, well, like Granny – ones who wear fat woollen skirts, and thick shoes laced up to the ankle.

John is fascinated by Granny, by how *authentic* she is. I see him watching her in the evenings, marvelling at the nooks and crannies of her face, and the knots of her legs; the veins that wriggle blue routes out under the gleam of her tights.

But what John really loves about Ireland is the history. He loves the tragedy of it, all of the things that nearly happened.

Adapted from *Sightseeing in Louth* by Bernadette M. Smyth

## Passage D

I have little room to move. The garden shed is crammed with old paint cans, broken patio chairs and snarls of rusting metal. It used to be Dad's workshop. He ran a bike 'clinic' here on summer weekends and in winter he built furniture. When I was a kid I was never interested in helping out but since I've come back and found his bike in need of repair I've decided to take it on as a project. I've stripped away the useless parts and cleaned the gunk from the frame, raided the spare parts boxes on the shed shelves and plundered Robert McGrath's bike shop in Balbriggan. Sitting now in a box by the door are a new leather saddle, a set of chrome hubs, a brushed steel headset and stem as well as some stubby brake levers and chrome callipers and the most expensive chain set I could afford. It all waits for me to finish installing the star nut.

I swing the hammer-*pock!*- and feel a pleasant shudder in my wrist, but when I lift the wood the nut falls to the floor and rolls to rest by my heels. I set everything up and swing the hammer again, but this time miss the centre of the wood and lodge the nut at an angle. When I try to prise it out, it splinters in the hammer's claws.

I fish for it and end up slicing my fingers. Swearing, I lean the bike back against the wall but because nothing is bolted the back wheels fall out and the frame keels over with a clatter. I stand for a while sucking my fingers and looking at what I have done. Then I pick my way back up through the garden to the house.

Adapted from *A Man Should Be Able to Do Things* by Andrew Fox

## Passage E

The comet's tail spread across the dawn, a red slash that bled above the crags of Dragonstone like a wound in the pink and purple sky. The master stood on the windswept balcony outside his chambers. It was here the ravens came, after long flight. Their droppings speckled the gargoyles that rose twelve feet tall on either side of him, a hellhound and a wyvern, two of the thousand that brooded over the walls of the ancient fortress. When first he came to Dragonstone, the army of stone grotesques had made him uneasy, but as the years passed he had grown used to them. Now he thought of them as old friends. The three of them watched the sky together with foreboding.

The master did not believe in omens. And yet . . . old as he was, Cressen had never seen a comet half so bright, nor yet that colour, that terrible colour, the colour of blood and flame and sunsets. He wondered if his gargoyles had ever seen its like. They had been here so much longer than he had, and would still be here long after he was gone. If stone tongues could speak . . . *Such folly*. He leaned against the battlement, the sea crashing beneath him, the black stone rough beneath his fingers.

Adapted from *A Clash of Kings* by George R.R. Martin

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