

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level Art and Design (7020)

June 2005

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ART AND DESIGN 7020, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General Comments

The number of candidates entered for this examination was similar to last year and there was little change in the pattern of entry.

The majority of candidates were entered for Main Paper 1 and Subsidiary Paper 3. Painting and drawing are still the main areas of study for most centres. Main Paper 2 continues to be a popular alternative with a wide response to the choice offered in this section.

Once again it must be pointed out that the Subsidiary Paper, being half the time allotted to the Main Papers 1 & 2, demands a different approach and time plan. If the work submitted is incomplete then candidates will not be able to achieve high grades.

The Examiners welcomed evidence of improving standards this year. A greater number of centres have understood the changes that have occurred with this syllabus in recent years and therefore more candidates have emphasised contextual studies in their work. The candidates work reveals this in a greater awareness of Art in its widest context. The more successful candidates can link their approach to known artists and designers, give evidence in their preparatory studies and relate this to their own creative work.

Weaker candidates fail to demonstrate evidence of this approach.

Stronger candidates, in contrast, show evidence of personal development, make comparisons between different artists, absorb information and then interpret ideas that influenced their own work. This is the approach that anyone working to obtain a higher grade must follow.

Paper 1: Work in Two Dimensions

SECTION 1: Human Figure

There was a reasonable response to this section. A wide range of examples from pencil, chalk and ink to full colour were seen by Examiners.

Relatively few candidates included previous figure studies or evidence of the work of other artists in their preparatory studies.

Examiners expect a candidate choosing this section to have studied how the figure has been a central feature of previous artistic development.

SECTION 2: Still Life and Natural Forms

The response to this section was equally divided between all four topics and proved popular.

(a) Reflective Surfaces

Candidates who had closely studied the work of suggested artists, were inspired and motivated to produce some excellently observed work.

(b) Natural Forms

There are still candidates who fail to make "a series of studies" as requested. This is not a still life group. Some candidates worked from downloaded images of crystal structures and textured rocks. The syllabus clearly states that candidates should develop skills in observing and recording from **actual** objects.

(c) Sports Clothing

There were some excellent pieces of work where candidates demonstrated their enjoyment of exploiting the range of contrasting colours and patterns. Many of the best results stemmed from research into the suggested artists which then developed into a more abstract approach rather than a conventional still life.

(d) Pale or White Objects

It was gratifying to see how many candidates had studied the work of Giorgio Morandi before producing a sophisticated range of well executed and sympathetically produced pictures.

SECTION 3: Composition

Once again the highest standards came from candidates who had researched the suggested artists and demonstrated these influences in their own completed work.

(a) Fabrics and Dressmaking

This topic produced some excellent results of well observed figures in colourful surroundings.

(b) Water

A popular topic, usually well researched with a wide range of images and sources.

(c) Eating Outdoors

Manet's infamous painting inspired many successful interpretations of picnicking family groups. These pieces of work were a pleasure to mark.

(d) Abstract Composition

Too many candidates appeared to become excited by the brightly coloured sweet wrappers and they therefore produced still life groups which ignored the true content of the topic. Others enjoyed researching a group of painters who exploited colour and in consequence their response to this topic was lively and stimulating. We were surprised to see several images which owed more to Cubism than Fauvism.

(e) A Description

There were many adventurous approaches and compositions here. Candidates gained a great deal from researching a wide range of artists.

Paper 2: Graphics

Printmaking

The take up of printmaking is still low but the examiners were pleased to see a competent response to the set topics.

Calligraphy

For this topic there were a wide range of standards and, in spite of the possible rich variety of visual images, some candidates failed to include suitable illustrations as requested.

Lettering

A limited selection of examples but Examiners were pleased to see some clear and colourful designs which showed some sound teaching.

Packaging

More candidates chose this topic than usual and there were some novel constructions which showed that the topic had captured their imagination.

Bookjackets

This was a popular section and many candidates produced work of an extremely high standard. The work revealed a mature understanding of the design process that is required in order to combine lettering and images in an eye catching format.

Posters

The more able candidates produced bold attractive posters which celebrated the characteristics of their own country.

Paper 3

Any comments for Main Paper 1 apply equally to this paper. Please note the reference under "General Comments" for this paper.

Conclusion

Centres are structuring their courses and enabling candidates to submit preparatory studies which show an understanding of the artistic process through a knowledge of other artists. The few candidates who failed to submit evidence of this approach limited their chances of obtaining a higher grade.

Candidates should read through the topics with great care, or have them fully explained by the Superintendent. A "series of studies" is requested and not a still life group. Similarly, attempting the abstract composition without looking at any Fauvist work will place candidates at a serious disadvantage.

Performance levels are higher from centres where the teaching strategy enables candidates to develop a greater awareness of art in its widest consequence.

Examiners were pleased to note that there was an overall improvement in the quality of work submitted in all areas this year.

ART AND DESIGN 7020, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	69	57	46	41	35

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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