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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 6010/01
Drawing and/or Painting from Still Life

General comments

On the whole, candidates had prepared themselves well for this paper and the standard attained was mostly quite high. The questions had been set so that one still life was composed of a large number of natural objects and the other was entirely of manufactured ones. The majority of candidates chose to work from **Question 1**.

Mostly the work had been carried out using colour of which watercolour was the most favoured, but gouache, coloured pencils and pastels were also employed, and sometimes in combination. Monochrome work was largely carried out in soft lead pencil but charcoal was also used in some instances.

In the first assessment objective the Examiners look for the candidate's ability to recognise and portray the form of objects. This is often an area where some candidates do least well as not enough consideration is given to the lighting which falls onto the group as a whole.

The second assessment objective awards marks based on the quality of the organisation of the objects in space and their relationship one to the other. Much will therefore depend on the arrangement of the group in the first place. A well composed group will provide the opportunities required and assist candidates in the overall design of their composition.

Thirdly a candidate's drawing ability is assessed. Thus shape, proportions contour and the portrayal of surface is important. The broad understanding of perspective and the making of ellipses is essential to most compositions.

The fourth assessment objective searches for the candidate's choice and use of colour and tones depending on whether colour or monochrome has been used.

Lastly the individual qualities which the candidate has brought to their work is evaluated. This could be in the mastery and experimentation with technique, sensitivity shown towards colour, tones and textures. Or perhaps the imaginative approach found in the organisation of shapes and their adaptation to the requirements of the work.

In many Centres the work had quite exceptional qualities. Particularly where candidates had produced large, freely painted watercolours with beautifully modulated tones and the translucent use of colouring.

Some aspects where less able candidates had trouble were perhaps to be expected. The perspective of the chopping board and the ellipses of the bottles presented problems for the uninitiated. More complicated shapes such as the leaves of the radishes or lettuces could be seen without structure and became an ill explained network of lines without any meaning. Many had difficulties when attempting to sit the objects together in space and on the same picture plane and consequently ill related objects could jump wildly in space. The least successful submissions were little more than the simple portrayal of flat shapes which totally ignored all subtleties.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A group consisting of a bowl, a chopping board, a knife and a bottle of oil. A salad is in preparation with some of the following ingredients, a lettuce, radishes, a cucumber or peppers, some of which may be cut or sliced, already in the bowl.

Most candidates had taken trouble with the grouping of the required objects so that on the whole compositions were well balanced and sat well on the paper. Backgrounds of all types featured but the best were those which were sympathetic to and enhanced the quality of the subject matter.

The best submissions, whether in colour or monochrome, were seen when candidates had not only exhibited a full knowledge of the requirements of still life work but had been able, through experience, to add their own individualities. There were some most beautifully and freely painted watercolours. Here candidates had used that particular transparency of the watercolour medium and brought to it thoughtful and sensitive colour combinations. Some pencil work was not only well composed but was seen to be most knowledgeable in the use of tones and mindful in finding and expressing surface quality.

Aspects of the work which the middle ability candidates found most troublesome were in fact quite usual. The most obvious was in the poor use of perspective in the portrayal of the chopping board. Many also had a weak knowledge of how to construct the ellipses of the bowls and cylindrical bottles. Many were unable to relate the bowl, bottle and vegetables to the flat surface of the board and table. Sometimes objects appeared to be 'bouncing' in space without any anchor. Many ignored the advantages of cast shadow when creating depth to their pictures. However, in this middle range, it was found that most candidates could make thoughtful use of colour and were able to express the rotundity of spherical and cylindrical objects.

At the lowest end of the scale candidates seemed unable to evaluate correct shapes or employ contour. Colours here could be brash and thoughtless. There could be little sense of depth or the establishment of relationships of one object with another. There was usually no exploration of surface textures. This scarcity of knowledge did not help in the personalisation of the outcome.

Question 2

A group made up of a hat placed on a rucksack next to a pair of boots. These are on an opened up map, part of which is propped up against a wall which forms the background.

Once again the best work could be quite outstanding. It was rewarding to see the quality and amount of work which could be produced in so short a period of time. It was also interesting to see the different methods of attack used in the wide field of countries from where the work came from. Some of the best compositions were of well formed and boldly coloured items which were made to fill the page area. Rucksack and sturdy boots were made to fit snugly into the opened up map seen to curve against a wall while the whole was topped by a curious individuality of the hat.

Candidates who tackled this question mostly did well although there was always the problem of making the map into some kind of ordered perspective and not putting too much emphasis on the details contained within it at the expense of the rest of the picture.

Some candidates lost the aspect of depth in their work and sometimes not quite enough thought was given to the drawing of structural detail such as in bootlaces, or straps and buckles on the rucksack.

Not many of the submissions were weak in the response to this question. A few were very small and lacking in character. Perhaps this was because these candidates had little experience in the study of well known historic examples of still life work.

Paper 6010/02**Drawing and/or Painting from Observation****General comments**

Questions 1, 2 and 3, the studies from natural or man-made objects, received an equal number of responses. **Questions 4 and 5**, the subjects for working out of doors, were rarely attempted.

Water colours, soft pencil and pastels were the most commonly used media, with evidence of considerable expertise and proficiency in most of the work seen. Some work, however, was carried out on very dark paper, creating extra difficulties for candidates and leading to obscured results. Teachers are, therefore, asked to advise candidates against such choices in the future.

A few Centres did not check that soft media, such as pastels, had been properly fixed before despatch and this led to smudging on other candidates' work. There were fewer cases of Centres wrapping each candidate's work in tissue paper, a practice which causes damage to submissions when such coverings have to be removed before assessment.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

A pair of sandals or sports shoes.

In the best work the arrangement of the pair in relation to each other, and the point of view adopted for observation, had been thoroughly considered. The most able candidates exploited fully the contours and rhythms of straps, laces and relief features of leather or moulded rubber. Precise definition of intricate structures, such as lace holes, stitching, buckles and the thickness of material was always apparent. At mid-levels of ability the sense of volume or the void left by absent feet was usually well understood. Tone and colour were used effectively to render form and cast shadows, but the observation of contours and edges tended to lack definition or accuracy. In the less able attempts problems with projecting the items in space often limited the potential for exploring form. Sometimes, for example, the items were placed side by side in the same position. Internal spaces were seldom given a sense of volume and the definition of contours was usually very generalised and lumpy. There were fewer very poor submissions for this question, as the sandals or shoes appeared to attract candidates capable of sustaining serious observation.

Question 2

Two vegetables or two fruits with contrasting structures; whole, cut or peeled.

Generally, the choice of specimens offered the variety suggested by the question, although most of the work received focused on fruits rather than vegetables. The most advanced candidates understood how to contrast, for example, the tubular structure of a banana with the spherical form of an apple, creating strong spatial relationships in between by exploiting peeled and cut effects. The aspect from which the specimens were observed also enhanced such qualities. Colour, tone and media were used with expertise to render form, cast shadows and surface qualities, such as the shine of a capsicum, the freckled surface of an apple or the patterned relief of a pineapple. Work just achieving a competent level was often successful in conveying the overall forms of the specimens, through tone and colour, but less confident when attempting to define intricate structures, such as the thickness of peel or the points where stalks and stems grew from the main body. In the less able attempts a lack of distinction between the two specimens was apparent, leading to generalised description and uncertainties about the form and identity of the fruits or vegetables. There were also many poor submissions where heavy lines and unmodulated tone or colour inhibited the development of any sense of form or structure.

Question 3

A carpenter's or a mechanic's hand tool, such as a plane or an adjustable spanner.

Although the question did not suggest electrically powered tools many of the most able submissions focused on such items in order to exploit the potential of flex and plug in relation to the main body. There were also many expert renderings of more basic hand tools where detailed structures, such as ellipses screws and sockets and metal edges, were defined sharply. At the mid-levels of achievement some incongruities were apparent in the spatial relationships of surfaces on hammers and planes or the ellipses on screwdrivers and spanners. However, the sense of overall form was usually satisfactory when suitably enhanced by tone and colour. In the less successful work problems arose when candidates attempted to define contours and edges or make distinctions between wood, metal and plastic materials. As with **Question 2**, the weakest submissions were simply descriptive with a limited use of line, tone or colour which inhibited the ability to sustain observation.

Question 4

Trees and/or shrubs casting a shadow against a wall or fence.

Only a few candidates chose this question to achieve competent, though undistinguished, results.

Question 5

A path or track leading to a gate.

No submissions were received for this question.

<p>Paper 6010/04 Composition in Colour</p>
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General comments

Questions 2 and **3** attracted the most responses, with **Question 1** the next most popular. Fewer candidates offered work for **Questions 3** and **5** and only a very small number chose **Question 6**. Over a third of the work received achieved the upper levels of the mark range and there were slightly less very poor responses compared with previous years.

Most work was carried out in water colours but pastels and acrylic paints were also used widely. The fewer submissions using pencil crayons varied between strong modulation and gradations to very weak application of this media, leading to rather faded results.

While the receipt of the question paper one week before the examination period enables candidates to engage in preparatory studies, Centres should be aware that this work is *not* required for assessment. Sending preparatory work to Cambridge is therefore an unnecessary expense and can cause confusion if it gets mistaken for the examination work. Centres must also be aware that unless work in soft media such as pastel, is properly fixed it inevitably smudges onto other candidates' work during the marking process. A similar problem also arose this year because some Centres had encouraged candidates to mix sand and other 'glitter' effects with their paint. These materials seldom remain fixed to the paper and defile Examiner's working areas, other scripts, as well as the mark sheets. Fewer Centres despatched work with each script tightly wrapped in tissue paper, having noted previous comments that the work invariably gets damaged when such coverings have to be removed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Climbers

Most interpretations focused on mountaineering, insects or animal activity with a few more distinguished compositional ideas relating to steps and stairs in an urban or domestic setting. The majority of the work received was of a competent level, with the positions of climbing figures usually well considered or effectively studied during the preparatory period. Rocky landscape depictions were often enthralling with atmospheric effects of space and distance evoked by the use of tone and colour. Insect or animal ideas were also well conceived in terms of the surrounding space or particular environment. Even the less able responses showed imagination in presenting dramatic scenes, but the weakest work submitted was very literal in interpretation with poorly drawn figures scattered evenly across the picture surface.

Question 2

Dreaming

The question was one of the two most popular and inspired work of all levels of ability. The most advanced interpretations made excellent use of atmospheric effects, conjured from suggestive colour and textures to convey extraordinary fantasies or nightmares. Some more 'realist' paintings, depicting people in a state of reverie, achieved an outstanding portrayal and characterisation. At the mid-levels of achievement visual ideas abounded, but tended towards cluttered compositions, when further consideration and selection could have led to a greater sense of focus. Weaker attempts were based on literal interpretations and often depended heavily on copying from comic books or other secondary sources.

Question 3

Running for cover

Although this question was not popular most work received was of a high level. Burning buildings following a conflagration were the most often undertaken interpretation, leading to strong colour and atmospheric effects with suitably studied figures to convey panic. Some lively ideas arose from extreme weather conditions, with wind and rain affecting huddled and slanting figures as they sought shelter. The fewer weaker responses received offered simplistic buildings with a burst of flame emerging from square windows.

Question 4

Waterside

This question was the second most popular and work submitted covered the full mark range. The most able compositions were firmly rooted to a particular time of day in a particular place. Bathing, fishing, washing, sport and leisure activities were all depicted with expertise. Many candidates demonstrated an excellent control of media to convey light shimmering on water ripples or foam from crashing waves or water cascades. Mid-level achievements showed a competent ability to create spatial depth in the landscape through the rendering of trees and shrubs in the foreground and subtle effects of the sky merging into the distant background. However, the placing and poses of figures often lacked the same accomplishment. Less able work usually evoked some sense of space through the use of colour and tone but foliage and figures tended to be generalised and repetitive. The poorest work seen made use of horizontal lines for space and placed most elements symmetrically within the picture space.

Question 5

Roadworks

This question was one of the less popular choices but was still interpreted very evocatively in the best works, which were very ably composed to give a sense of jumble, disorder and inconvenience. This was achieved by careful selection and the adoption of a point of view whereby some larger element in the foreground partly hid the activity behind. The poses of figures at work had clearly grown from thorough research. Mid-level responses offered a good sense of activity in an urban environment, although there was a tendency to spread everything out within the space established. The fewer weak submissions struggled to convey any idea of upheaval of figures with tools or machinery.

Question 6

Extracts from 'Mister Johnson'

Although only a few candidates attempted to interpret the scene described of people with cattle sitting round a camp fire, most compositions were of a high standard. The sense of evening light affecting the smoke from the fire and the huddled animals and people was usually conveyed with a subtle sense of atmosphere.

