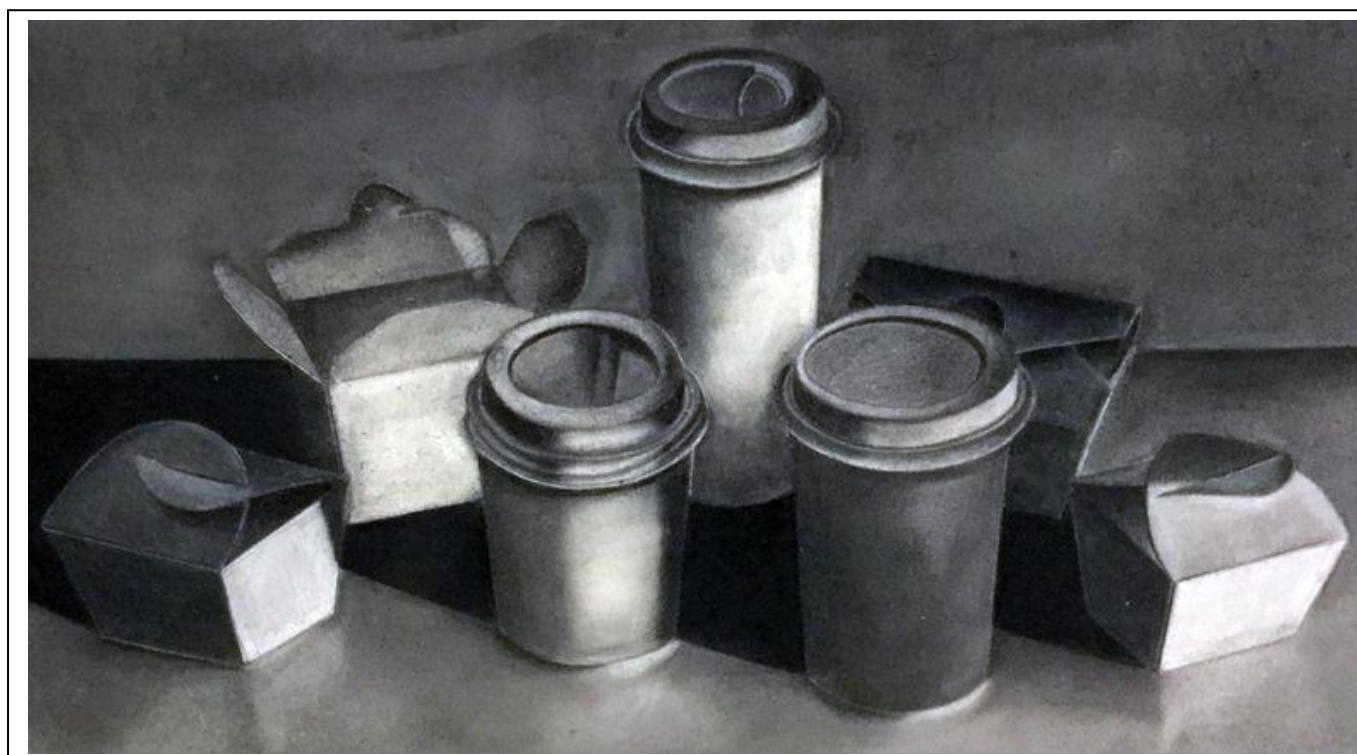# GCE

Art and Design

Advanced GCE A2 **H600-H606**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

About this Examiner Report to Centres
This report on the 2017 Summer assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future examinations

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.
Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.
The report also includes:

- An invitation to get involved in Cambridge Assessment's research into **how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges**

- Links to important documents such as **grade boundaries**

- A reminder of our **post-results services** including Enquiries About Results

- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme

Understanding how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges
Researchers at Cambridge Assessment[1] are undertaking a research study to better understand how the current reforms to AS and A levels are affecting schools and colleges.
If you are a Head of Department (including deputy and acting Heads), then we would be very grateful if you would take part in this research by completing their survey. If you have already completed the survey this spring/summer then you do not need to complete it again.
The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes and all responses will be anonymous.
To take part, please click on this link: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KP96LWB
Please note that this research is voluntary and is separate from other work you may be doing for Cambridge Assessment. It is not conducted by the sales & marketing teams. It is not intended to replace the usual customer care lines of communication.

---

[1] Cambridge Assessment is a not-for-profit non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge, and the parent organisation of OCR, Cambridge International Examinations and Cambridge English Language Assessment

Enquiry About Results

If any of your students' results are not as expected and University places are reliant on them, you may wish to consider one of our Enquiry About Results services. For full information about the options available visit: http://ocr.org.uk/administration/stage-5-post-results-services/enquiries-about-results/

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other assessments, can be found on Interchange.

Enquiry About Results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our Enquiry About Results services.

For full information about the options available visit: http://ocr.org.uk/administration/stage-5-post-results-services/enquiries-about-results/

Supporting the move to linear assessment

This was the first year that students were assessed in a linear structure. To help you navigate the changes and to support you with areas of difficulty, download some of our helpful resources: http://ocr.org.uk/qualifications/beta/as-a-level-gce-art-and-design-h200-h600-from-2015/planning-and-teaching/

Further support from OCR

Active Results offers a unique perspective on results data and greater opportunities to understand students' performance.

It allows you to:

- Review reports on the **performance of individual candidates**, cohorts of students and whole centres
- **Analyse results** at question and/or topic level
- **Compare your centre** with OCR national averages or similar OCR centres.
- Identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle and help **pinpoint strengths and weaknesses** of students and teaching departments.

http://www.ocr.org.uk/getting-started-with-active-results

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear exam feedback directly from a senior assessors or drop in to an online Q&A session.
https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk

GCE: Art and Design

OCR AS in Art Craft and Design: H600/01and H600/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Fine Art: H601/01and H601/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Graphic Communication: H602/01and H602/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Photography: H603/01and H603/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Textile Design: H604/01and H604/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Three-Dimensional Design: H605/01and H605/02

OCR AS in Art and Design, Critical and Contextual Studies: H606/01and H606/02

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Education

Art and Design (H600 – H606)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

General Comments

Moderators reported that the feedback received in Centres in respect of this A Level qualification was universally positive.

Teachers welcomed the many possibilities offered by the new GCE specification not least liberation from the necessity for candidates to produce assessable work from the outset of the A Level programme. Indeed teachers reported they very much welcomed the time created for them to provide teaching and learning opportunities without the pressure to submit all the work produced for assessment. It was clear that the majority of Centres whilst retaining the strengths of previous programmes had adopted a more focused approach to delivery of the two components to be assessed. Many teachers commented favourably on the opportunities to deliver skills across disciplines and the scope for candidates to gain skills based knowledge.

As with the AS paper the GCE Externally set task paper was considered more appealing than its predecessors. Described as 'user friendly', the paper provided for 'more accessible routes towards innovative interpretation' of the themes and encouraged candidates to work more independently.

Candidates were said to be more creative, motivated and less likely to be apprehensive about the task to be undertaken.

Although timetabling the supervised period of the Externally set task may have placed a small additional burden upon teachers because of the February 1st start date, the shorter timeframe seemed to focus candidates. This may well have contributed to the many examples of high achievement in this year's submissions.

Despite the on-going difficulties attached to the organisation of 'offsite' activities the inspiration candidates derived from field trips to the 'art capitals' of Europe, sometimes even further afield and visits to more local museums, galleries and collections was immense.

'Onsite' workshops and increasingly artists in residence were another valuable source of enrichment. Such exemplary practice frequently strengthened the more successful submissions by adding the weight of personal involvement and evidently the old adage about 'there being no substitute for experience' and 'seeing things first-hand' still rings true.

In stark contrast to the majority who investigated a more richly varied range of practitioners and contexts than ever before some candidates persisted in downloading contextual source material from the Internet that was only superficially connected to the directions taken in their practical work and achieved little in showing genuine commitment or sponsoring a meaningful development of ideas.

A minority of candidates produced large volumes of work but in their responses to the chosen theme did not alwaysdevelop their ideas in sufficient depth. No specific guidance is given in respect of an ideal quantity of work. Indeed the most successful submissions unfailingly provided evidence of a cohesive creative journey which was **carefully selected** before **presentation for assessment**. In such cases candidates were fully conversant with the demands of the Assessment Objectives and thoughtfully considered the extent to which their initial concepts were explored, refined and realised as the work progressed.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Written material should provide evidence of how knowledge and understanding will impact on the creative directions

The Internet enables candidates to access the work of an ever-widening range of artists, designers and craftspeople. Candidates need to be critical and selective when using materials and must guard against simply re-constituting existing texts

However, teachers and lecturers should be vigilant in checking the websites used by candidates to ensure material is appropriate.

All Centres had downloaded the marks through Interchange and forwarding the corresponding documentation to moderators by the May 31 deadline. Those Centres that expedited administrative procedures by the early submission of marks are thanked for their cooperation and efficiency.

The use of the interactive Assessment Summary Form is strongly advocated as this assists in the avoidance of arithmetical error.

The Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) is a mandatory requirement and the completed copy should be retained by the Centre not sent to the moderator as required in previous sessions.

Generally Centres proved adaptable and encountered little difficulty when using the changed Marking Criteria for both components and the revised maximum mark totals for the purposes of internal assessment. Orders of Merit were generally accurate and reliable.

As illustrated in the accompanying images the majority of Centres clearly take much pride in ensuring that candidates' work is displayed to the best advantage for moderation. Moderators universally praised the time and effort that Centres invest in this vital aspect of the assessment process. Typically submissions were exhibited vertically on walls or display boards with sketchbooks or other supporting studies adjacent in quiet and private areas. Often the work was carefully labelled, thoughtfully 'mapped' and, of vital importance, in rank order. There are still a small number of Centres that do not conform to this norm and this cannot be conducive to good practice for either Centre or Moderator.

The increase in the amount of work undertaken in a digital form is welcomed but Centres must facilitate appropriate access by which the moderator can readily make comparisons between the performances of individual candidates.
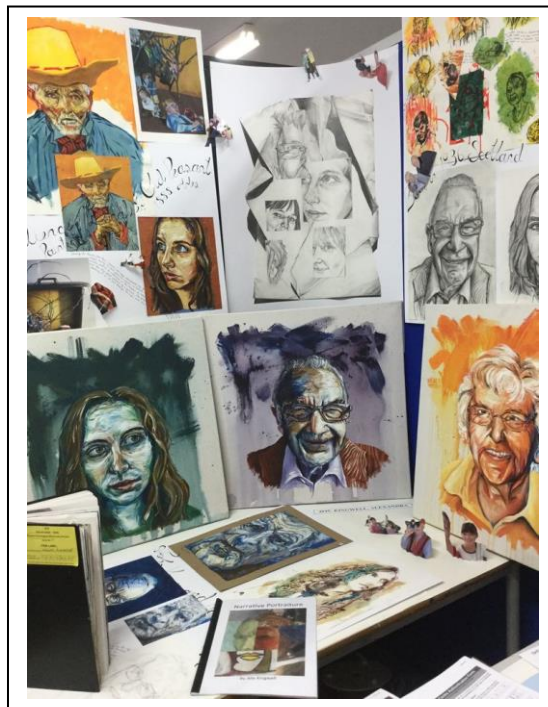
Centres are reminded that Additional Samples if requested should be available within the moderation area but not displayed with the main body of work.

It was clearly evident that most candidates possessed the self-assurance, independence of mind and concentration that would underpin responses to the GCE Externally set task that were truly indicative of individual knowledge, skill and technical ability. Nonetheless, there were a small number of candidates whose time management could be improved. . These candidates did not take full advantage of the preparatory period available and consequently were unable to use the formal fifteen hours of supervised time effectively. Correspondingly their submissions had a marked imbalance in terms of meeting the requirements of the Assessment Objectives and were unable to culminate in appropriately resolved outcome(s).

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates must select and present for assessment.

Digital sketchbooks were in the main well-presented and displayed candidates' critical thinking and development of personal outcomes effectively. Presentation in this form was in marked contrast to weaker sketchbook work which lacked annotation and , in which thinking was often confused and lacking in direction.

Personal Investigation: Component 01

In this first year of the H600-H606 qualification moderators praised the, creativity, originality, ambition and skills employed in many of the submissions for A Level. Many of these demonstrated a highly individual response and significant intellectual or critical content. The levels of engagement, critical understanding and technical accomplishment were often impressive. Indeed moderators reported that '*there seemed to be a significant improvement in the work submitted from the previous qualification'.*

The majority of A Level themes are usually negotiated on a 'one to one' basis with the individual candidate. When appropriate advice and guidance was given and an ongoing dialogue occurred between teacher and candidate the submissions presented were frequently mature or confident in nature.

2017 continues to see much innovation in the approaches adopted by candidates. Digital technology continues to grow in all the Specialisms. Clearly this is making an impact with more exciting departures into 'moving image', 'Web based applications', 'sound and vision' and 'digital art' being seen.

Some candidates' submissions focused on work of a more conceptual nature, sometimes with expansive installations as outcomes, however for a small number of candidates the supporting studies did not always reveal convincing levels of technical ability or understanding of the concepts involved.
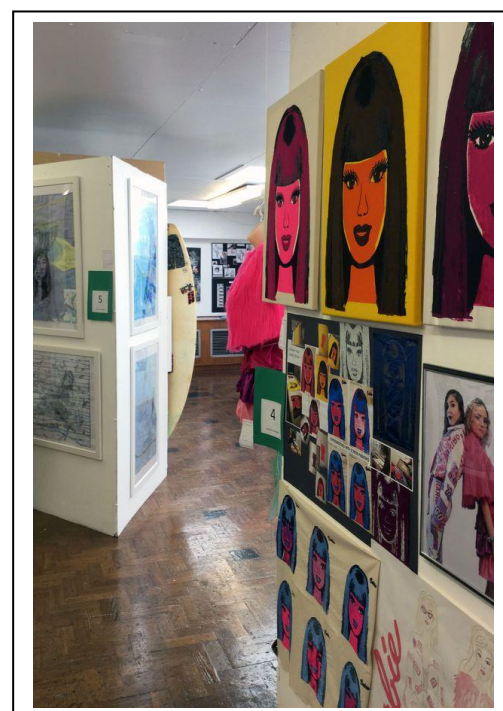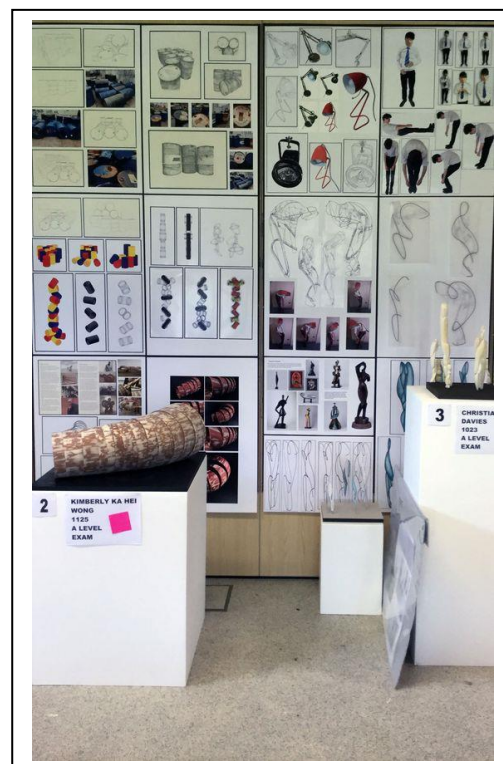
Once more it is important to stress that at A2 individually negotiated programmes of study appear to be a successful model in which candidates review and reflect on their work and identify their strengths.

Less successful submissions tended to be simply descriptive rather than showing sustained critical analysis. Candidates would be better advised to pay attention to the analysis of their own work and that of others by providing insights into their intentions and progress.

The work produced in response to this new Specification indicates clearly that the aims which the qualification set out have been achieved in terms of candidates being able to show:-

- intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive capabilities

- investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement

- independence of mind in developing, refining and communicating their own ideas, their own intentions and their own personal outcomes

- an understanding of the inter-relationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate

- knowledge and understanding of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures

- an interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of art, craft and design.
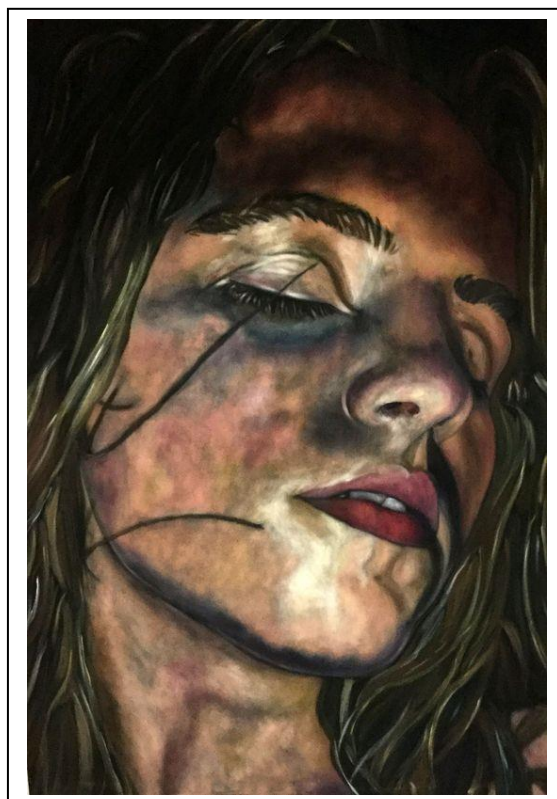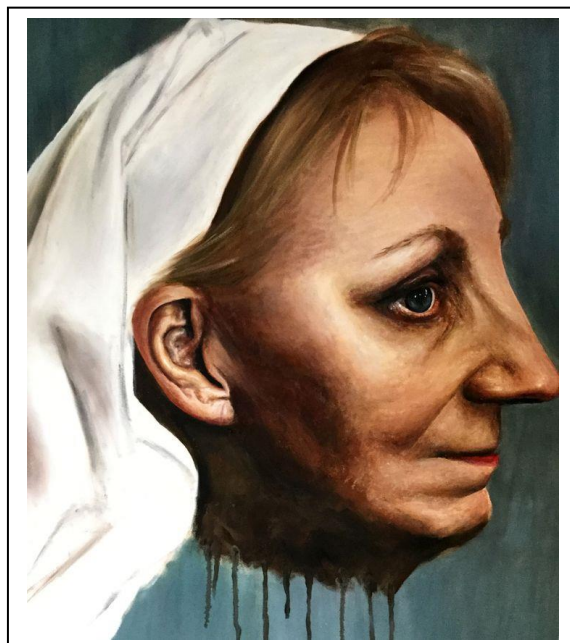
Related Study: Component 01

In 2017 the Related Study became a separate element of the new Personal Investigation component and this allowed candidates to create genuinely exciting studies in relation to the context of their Practical Portfolio. It was encouraging to see a variety of approaches, with some candidates focusing on the traditional taxonomy of art whilst others considering the wider context in which their practical work exists. There were many examples which demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of individual artists and designers in relation to the context surrounding them. Biographical detail is important in placing practitioners within a historical context but basic 'cut and paste' from the Internet can never be a feature of successful submissions.

A broad approach to the Related Study can make it difficult for candidates to produce the focused and sustained analysis necessary for achievement at a higher level. Some candidates find it easier to write analytically when they compare the approach of different practitioners. Centre's should be mindful of this and encourage candidates to investigate a range of related sources. An analytical approach when looking at Art, Craft or Design is not an innate skill for many candidates and Centres can support their learners by adopting appropriate teaching strategies.

The Related Studies were presented in a number of exciting ways. The use of printed booklets and illustrated essays were popular, which allowed for detailed and informed analysis of selected works. Some candidates produced digital presentations, which included online interactive links to practical work such as self-produced animations. Other approaches included using sketchbooks with relevant practical work, PowerPoint presentations, study sheets and information panels.

It is essential that candidates understand the distinction between the study of context to support the development of practical work and the role of the Related Study

The inclusion of a bibliography is a requirement of the specification. In addition all source material used for research should be clearly identifiable and acknowledged in work presented for assessment.
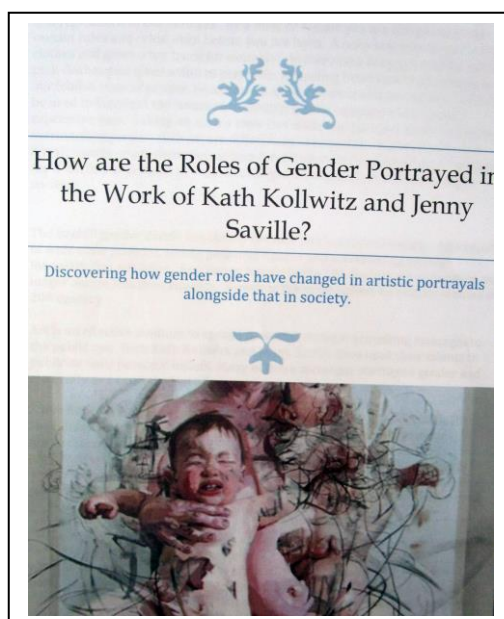
Assessment Objectives

AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

Candidates' ability to develop ideas was a vital aspect of the most adept submissions and impacted directly on success in the other Assessment Objectives.

Cultural understanding and critical analysis were demonstrated in both visual and textual forms. Written work often gave insight into candidates' understanding and decision-making but for the less successful was cursory and did not add cohesion to submissions or clarify intentions. Candidates should not overlook the importance of carefully conceived, well- crafted prose in which meaning is not obscured by illegibility.

Moderators praised the breadth in the work of practitioners identified for research. The range of both historical and contemporary artists, designers and craftspeople was wider than ever. Nonetheless, the reservation was expressed that some candidates should be more discerning in their selection and reject reliance 'on random or poor quality web based artist research.' Some candidates persisted in using 'bolted on' research and including irrelevant biographical details. In contrast, stronger candidates use the Internet for initial research and then reinforce this with reference to books and other authorative printed sources. Bibliographies are an effective method of acknowledging sources and avoiding plagiarism.

In terms of contexts many aspects of popular culture, including cinema, dance, fashion, literature, music and the press led to a meaningful development of ideas.

Some candidates chose to focus attention on challenging, controversial and thought provoking contexts both of global consequence, such as ecological, economic, environmental and equality issues as well as social problems.
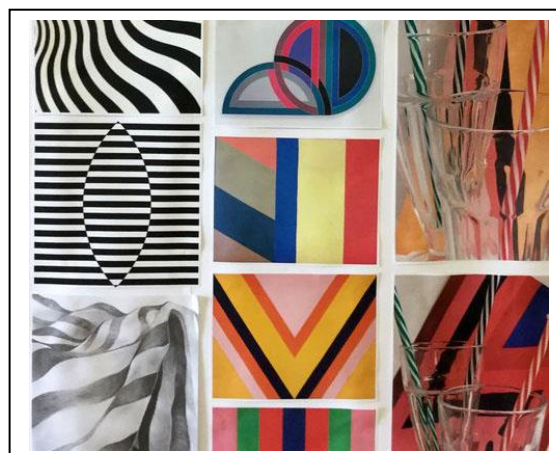
AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

In establishing courses that supported the requirements of the new A Level specification, Centre's clearly placed much emphasis on providing candidates with opportunities to explore the qualities of a frequently extraordinarily diverse range of materials, processes and techniques. Whilst this was especially true of the Photography and Textile Design specialisms, moderators also reported that choice within Fine Art, Graphic Communication and Three-dimensional Design could sometimes be quite conservative and being less expansive than in the past correspondingly limited the exploration of ideas. When exploring a theme, candidates should be suitably prepared to give fluent expression to the review and refinement of their ideas. They should also recognise that appropriateness in the selection of materials, processes and techniques becomes immaterial if these are employed without skill or relevance to intentions.

A number of candidates did not always grasp this essential aspect of meeting the requirements of Assessment Object 2. Exploration is not simply 'an end in itself'; it must have purpose and genuinely assist in the development of an idea towards intended outcome(s). In some cases, extensive exploration had occurred but subsequently candidates merely reverted to reproducing initial imagery and therefore the potential benefits of earlier review and modification were lost. Exploration should be meaningful rather than repetitive as the use of photocopies or straightforward colour variations do little to progress the refinement of ideas.

The expansion in the use of digital media continues unabated in all of the specialisms. Nonetheless, the spontaneity of the technology can be disadvantageous to candidates if evidence of exploration fails to be explicit or is narrow and shallow.
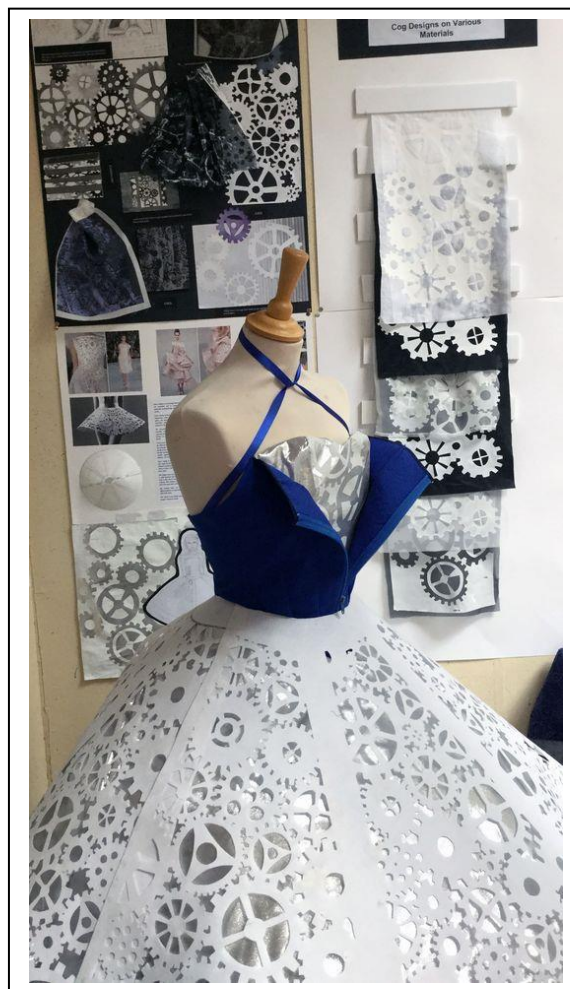
AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

Recording is for many candidates synonymous with drawing and photography. However, the value of recording through 'making' and the written word must not be overlooked. For some candidates recording processes were highly skilled and showed an ability to reflect critically on work in progress.

As a principal method of recording across many specialisms the emphasis candidates placed on drawing varied considerably. Whilst much strong observational drawing was witnessed equally some draughtsmanship seen was of variable quality. Reference to secondary sources or the candidate's own photographs is a perfectly legitimate recording practice but some seemed unaware that accuracy in transcription is at a premium. Successful candidates often demonstrated versatility using a range of both established and more experimental media when recording whilst others stuck with more traditional pencil drawings. s.

Photography, sometimes with mobile 'phones and tablets as well as digital cameras, was commonly used as a recording medium. Some Moderators commented positively on improvements in recording by this means whilst others found raw photography to be not as strong in comparison to alternative media, with candidates failing to fully demonstrate control and understanding of the fundamentals of taking good photographs which are fit for purpose.

Recording through 'making' is a vital element in many submissions but perhaps especially those of Textile and Three-Dimensional Design candidates.

Much written work was well conceived and crafted with candidates carefully explaining their thought processes and decision making and forging perceptive links to practitioners and cultural influences. Nevertheless, some candidates perceive virtue in volume rather than meaning and although their written work was copious needed to ensure that written commentary was relevant and analysis critical and reflective.
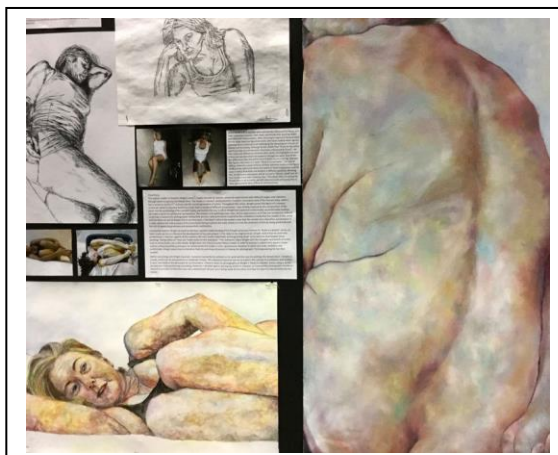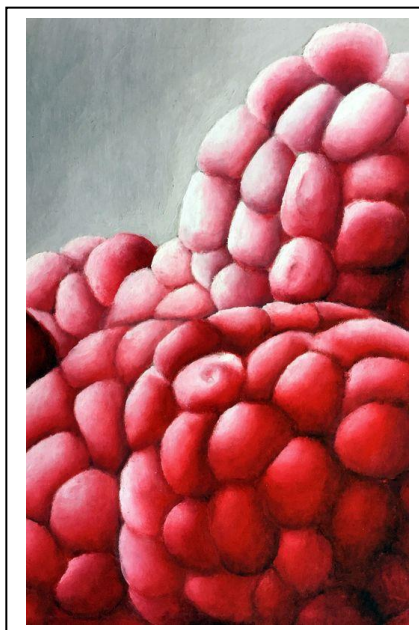
AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Moderators reported that the submissions presented were 'more sophisticated and mature than much of the A2 legacy work'. Certainly there was consensus amongst moderators that the work was generally 'sustained', 'selected' 'reflected upon', and 'personal' with the themes chosen evolving into an independent theme with 'a creative and engaging narrative'. It was said that 'the inspiration drawn from the Externally Set Task paper showed a more "confident and interpretive" response to the themes'.

Feedback from Centres indicates that candidates were proud of their responses and felt that they had selected and presented to the best of their ability. Even so, some presented their entire output because they did not appreciate this was unnecessary and the mixture of work of an inconsistent standard potentially disadvantageous.

A small minority of candidates would have benefited from better time management both during the preparatory and formal phases of the Externally Set Task as shortcomings in meeting the requirements of Assessment Objectives 1, 2 and 3 clearly resulted in unresolved final outcomes.

Correspondingly some Centres were inclined towards generosity and disproportional marking in the assessment of this Objective 4. Consideration must to given to the whole submission and not just the outcome. It is highly improbable therefore that under achievement in responding to the demands of Assessment Objectives 1, 2 and 3 will produce greater success in respect of Assessment Objective 4. Attainment in Assessment Objective 4 is primarily contingent upon performance in the preceding studies and not just the final piece(s).
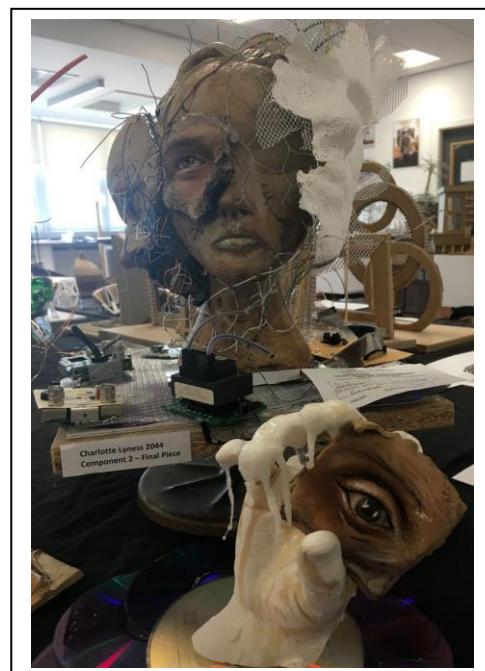
GCE: Externally set task. The Themes

Theme 1: Paired

A popular theme with candidates across the specialisms with all five options well subscribed.

Option (a): sponsored many interpretations with those involving portraiture, figurative work and reflected images much in evidence.

Option (b): encouraged diverse connections, especially to 'pairs', such as candlesticks, earrings, eyes, gloves and shoes and rather less predictable combinations, including keenly observed bisected fruit, bacon and eggs, salt and pepper and strawberries and cream.

Option (c): the quotation from the Qur'an inspired some thoughtful responses, often intricate geometric designs or floral patterns with strong links to Islamic Art and Calligraphy.

Option (e): amongst the practitioners listed Vincent van Gogh's studies of boots and shoes led to investigation into footwear whilst the work of Diane Arbus and Kate Malone were especially favoured respectively by Photography and Three-Dimensional Design candidates. The work of an admirable diversity of alternative practitioners, including Francis Bacon, William Blake, Caravaggio, Eugène Delacroix, William Eggleston and Nan Goldin, was also selected for study.
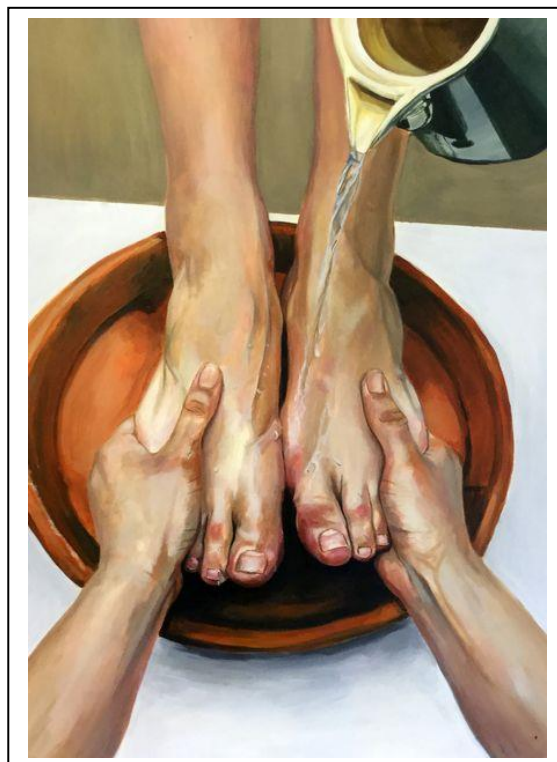
Theme 2: Humour

A less well subscribed choice across the specialisms with *Options (a)*, *(b)* and *(e)* the most frequently chosen. Study of William Hogarth's social satires led to investigation into the work of other historical caricaturists, such as George Cruikshank, James Gilray and Thomas Rolandson. Abundant reference was made to the output of bygone cartoonists, including Hank Ketchum, Roy Raymonde, William Heath Robinson and Ronald Searle as well as a host of contemporary practitioners, for example, Steve Bell, Jim Davis, Martin Rowson and Ralph Steadman. Connections with the moving image were also frequently seen with much reference to slapstick silent films, The Walt Disney Company and Aardman Animations. Neither were the Fine Arts neglected with links to Francisco Goya's 'The Disasters of War' and the work of Jake and Dinos Chapman underlining many candidates' predilection for the grotesque. Despite the wealth of contextual material it was noticeable that some candidates' responses to this theme showed either a lack of appreciation of the subtleties of their chosen genre or the technical abilities for ideas to be appropriately realised.
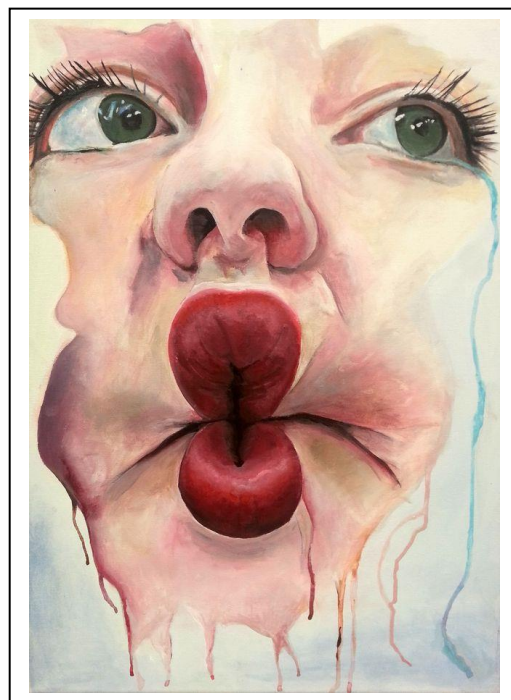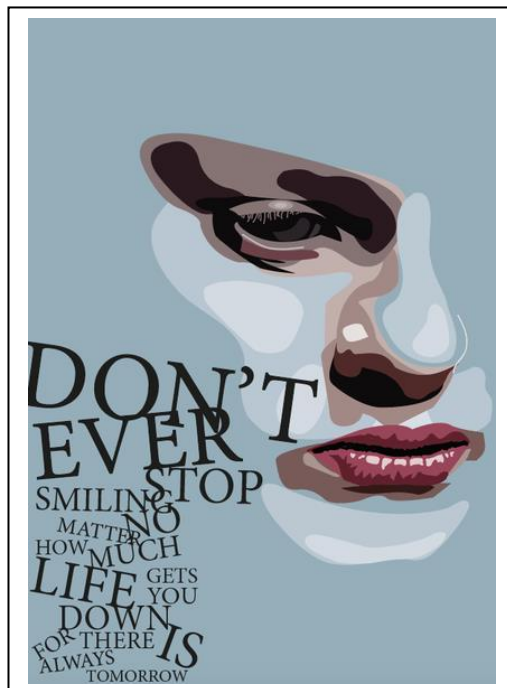
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Cross standardisation across Specialisms is essential to the successful completion of the marking and moderation process.

Theme 3: The Sun

A less popular theme, especially in respect of Options (c) and (d), that, nonetheless invoked a number of imaginative and experimental approaches.

Option (a): some interpretations of the theme focused on strong sunlight, deep shadows and shielding the eyes from glare. There was an emphasis on portraiture with bold chiaroscuro effects especially in the work of Fine Art and Photography candidates with reference being made to the work of historical artists and photographers ranging from Caravaggio, Gerrit van Honthorst, Rembrandt and Joseph Wright to Bill Brandt, Dorothea Lange, Robert Mapplethorpe and Irving Penn. Amongst the contemporary practitioners that had a significant influence on the directions taken were Alberto Alicato, Marcos Beccari, Jo Fraser, Marc Olrem-Leclef, Tal Shpantzer and Joanna Yates.

Option (b): in particular interpretations of Esther Bubley's 'Sunbathers on the Sidewalk' photograph were transmuted into beach and poolside scenes whilst 'King Akhenaten offers liberation to the Sun God Aten' inspired a more mystical approach with much reference to Egyptology and the solar deities of other ancient civilisations.

Option (e): whilst the work of Edward Hopper and J M W Turner are perennial favourites as inspirational sources across the specialisms that of Sally Hersh and Olafur Eliasson had an positive impact on the creative directions taken by candidates working in three-dimensions and especially those whose interests were of a more conceptual nature.
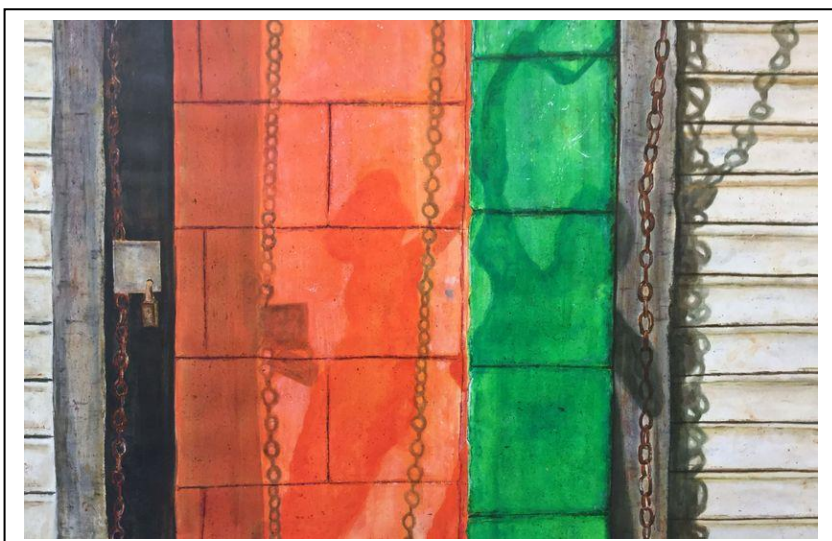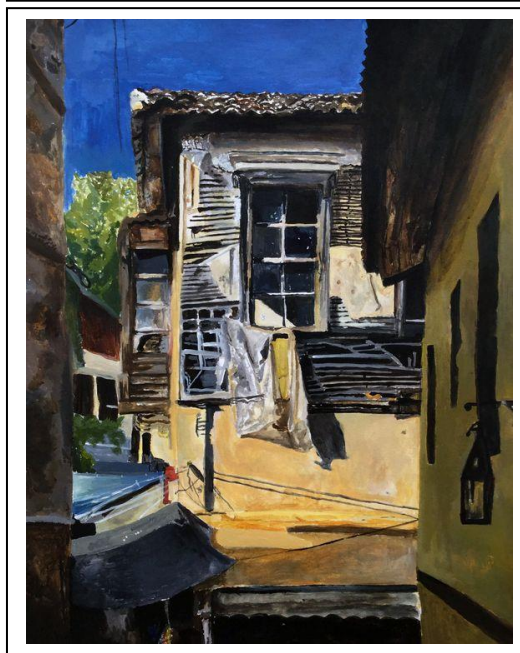
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Provisional entry lists submitted to OCR in the Autumn Term generate the dispatch of papers to Centres.

Theme 4: Vertical Structures

Along with 'Boxes' and 'Translucent' this was one of the best-subscribed themes across the specialisms and sponsored investigation in many different directions.

Option (a): whilst there were many literal interpretations, with imagery of high-rise buildings, towers and skyscrapers proliferating, it was encouraging to note that investigation was frequently supported by recording from direct observation of sources either visited on field study trips or within the immediate area of the Centre. Lateral thinking candidates investigated 'stacked', sometimes of everyday objects such as tea-cups, and drew inspiration from artists, such as Olga Antonova, Choi Jeong Hwa and Cathleen Renfeld. Still life responses, featuring items with pronounced perpendicular qualities, were also often evident.

Option (b): in particular the totem pole sponsored some lively, vibrant responses. For Textile Design candidates the bold colours and carving combined with an appreciation of the symbolic and spiritual stimulated some memorable mixed-media work.

Option (c): Research into Robert Delauney's celebrated depictions of the 'Tour Eiffel' led to investigation into other similar structures, such as radio masts and pylons.

Option (e): Berenice Abbott's striking images of New York were understandably a preferred starting point for many Photography candidates. Creations by a healthily broad miscellany of additional practitioners, both historical and contemporary, were also chosen for investigation. Notable amongst these were artworks by Charles Demuth, Janet Edmonds, Fernand Léger, Eduardo Paolozzi, John Piper, Sunga Park, Ruth Reeves and Charles Sheeler.
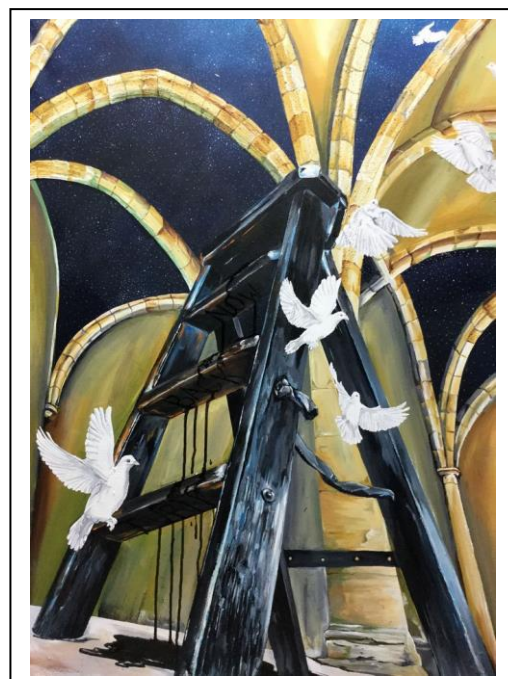
Theme 5: Boxes

This well-subscribed theme stimulated both predictable interpretations and those that were especially thoughtful and innovative. The latter ranged from studies of figures confined in enclosed spaces to social issues relating to stereotyping and discrimination.

Option (a): prompted a considerable number of responses, such as a pictorial essay on telephone kiosks and the superimposition of imagery onto rectilinear forms.

Option (b): the image of Andy Warhol's 'Brillo Pads Boxes' gave opportunity for candidates to consider multiples, packaging design and the culture of consumerism. For some the connections were superficial and the Pop Artist's famous quip 'Art is what you can get away with' taken at face value.

Option (e): promoted some fascinating submissions, across the specialisms. Interestingly installation artist, Chiharu Shiota's work attracted both Fine Art and Photography candidates. That of Georges Braque encouraged candidates to take a fresh look at Cubism whilst Louise Nevelson's opened avenues for creativity in three-dimensions.
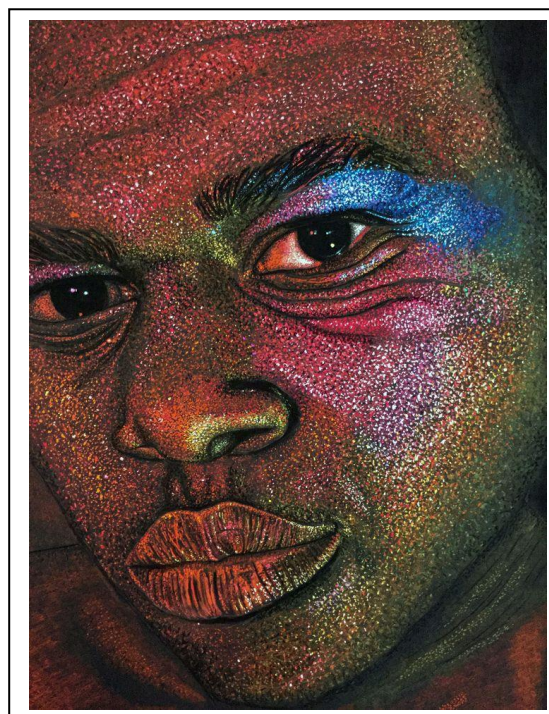
Theme 6: The Information Age

Inevitably this theme won adherence across the specialisms from those who sought to expand initial ideas digitally.

Option (a): even so, some candidates' approach was to ridicule the way in which obsession with mobile technology and social media causes detachment from the physical world.

Option (e): the 'FashionTech' of Anouk Wipprecht enthused a number of Textile Design candidates. Investigation into the contrast between reality and knowledge in relation to technology led to links with the work of practitioners, like Maurizio Anzeri, Man Bartlett and Antoine Giger.
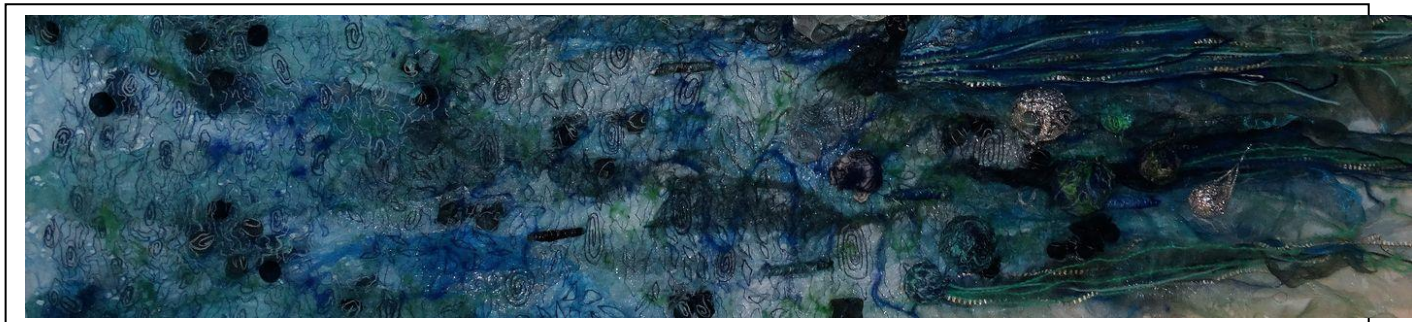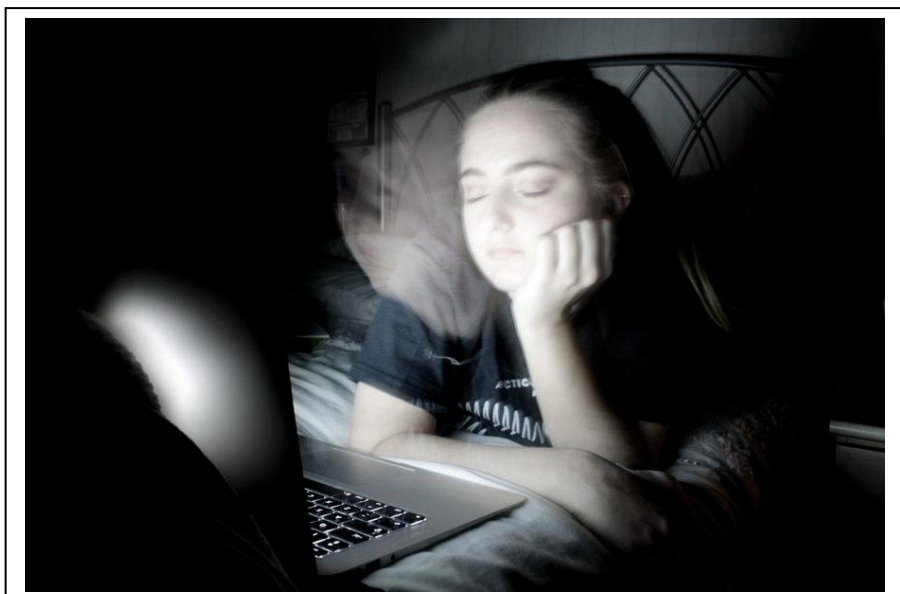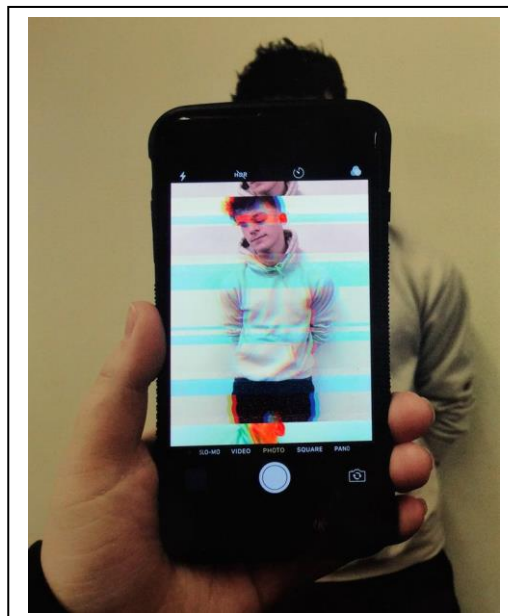
Theme 7: Translucent

This was probably the most popular theme across the specialisms and sponsored investigation in many different directions.

Option (a): responses included superimposed portraits and observations of the human face and body using liquids, often mixed with other elements, as filters. Connections with the work of historical and contemporary practitioners were manifold and included that of Colin Chillag, Marcel Duchamp, Diarmuid Kelley, Gustav Klimt, Frans Hals, Alyssa Monks, Sue Rubira, Gino Severini, Linnea Strid and Rogier van der Weyden.

Options (b) and (c): the images of 'A Lady with Fly Whisk and Flower' and 'Gloria Swanson' together with the Bill Viola quotation stimulated investigation into the concept of 'veiled'. In this context purposeful connections were made with the work of Mike Dargas, John William Godward, Frederic Leighton and Imme van der Haak.

Option (e) Apart from those cited above and within the paper amongst the work of others investigated by Photography candidates was that of Flora Borsi, Laurence Demaison and Nick Turpin. Similarly some Textile Design candidates found inspiration in the watery, submerged qualities in the work of practitioners, like Susan Warner Keene and Carolyn Saxby.
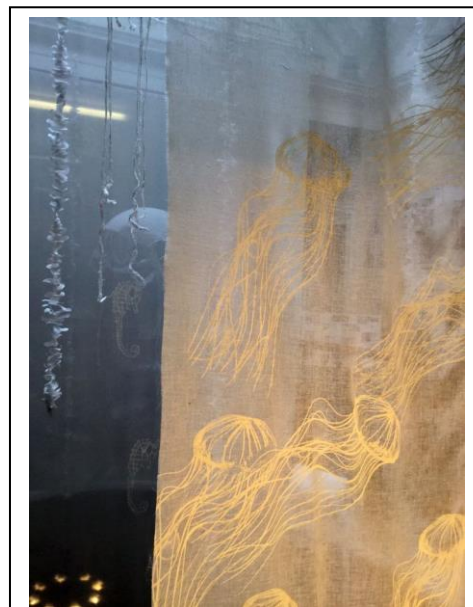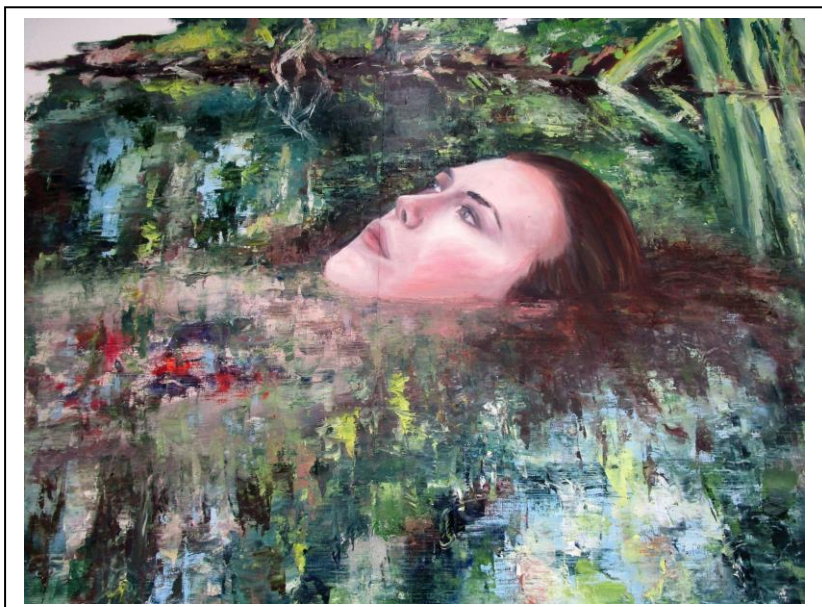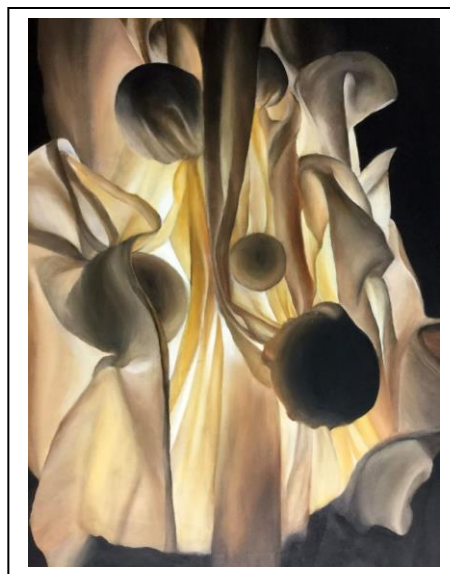
The specialisms:

Art, Craft and Design (H600/01&02):

This is the specialism of choice for some Centres that use this discipline to enable candidates to effectively concentrate on their personal strengths and individualised approach to work. Combinations of 'areas of study' are considerable with Fine Art and Textiles, Printmaking and Photography, 3D reliefs and 2D installations, Fashion and Graphics all employed to explore a variety of ideas. These were predominantly explored through the production of lively and engaged research and the exploration of processes in relation to the chosen themes. Mixed-media interpretations enabled a holistic approach to processes and creative ideas, but recording could become less relevant.

Fine Art (H601/01&02):

Visits to various institutions informed development of ideas with the use of local resources enriching candidates' submissions. Strong submissions demonstrated depth of exploration of appropriate media including, experimental mark-making, etching, collage, ink, pencil, pastel, acrylic, and moving image with candidates often further refining responses to the relevant qualities of their source material, demonstrating a more discerning exploration of media. Moderators noted the resurgence in traditional methods of recording with a broader sustained exploration of the formal elements and a noticeable strength in recording from observation. Moderators also noted a broad range of Architectural studies seen and Portraiture also continued to be a particularly popular genre.


Graphic Communication (H602/01&02):

This year moderators noted a broader range and variety of Graphic approaches including fine art and illustration, digital software, games design, photography and print. Both traditional and contemporary designers and practitioners were considered with political and social content being explored often through a broad appreciation of the relationship of image and text to create a message with a clear impact and purpose.

Photography (H603/01&02):

Photography continues to be an increasingly popular and especially well subscribed Specialism. Moderators noted the enhanced quality in camera skills and photographic understanding resulting in stronger submissions. Some Centres continued to explore the use of traditional darkroom practices including camera less photography, photograms, cyanotypes and pinhole photography, with 'craft' and 'fine art' skills including illustration often combined and resulting in primarily digital outcomes. Moderators also noted the increasing use of moving image including animation with exploration documented through digital presentation methods. Candidates utilised professional publishing software inDesign to create digital publications, eBooks and printed digital publications. Candidates also documented their work as a website or blog with the most successful, sketchbook, eBook and websites submissions being those where 'select and present' had been most effectively demonstrated.
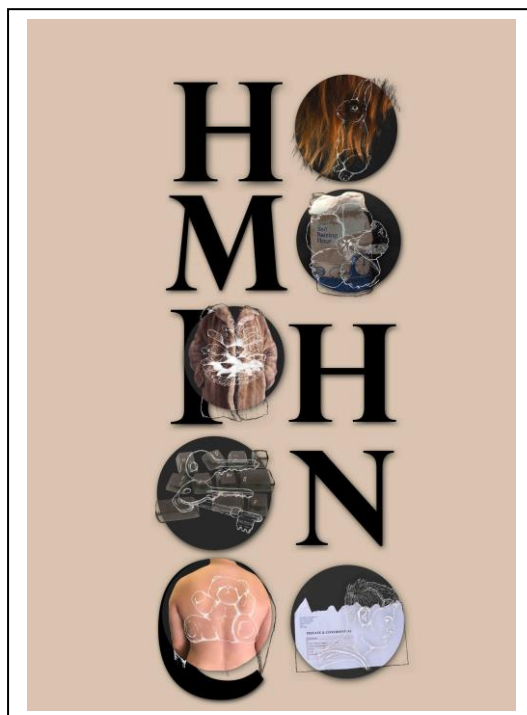
Textile Design (H604/01&02):

Responses to this specialism often divide into two distinctive creative pathways, Textile Design and Fashion. The former is manifested in many guises but especially constructed, dyed, expressive and printed textiles. Commonality is found in the employment of processes and techniques, which included batik, dissolvable and distressed fabric, faux chenille, dyeing, free embroidery, screen and photo-transfer printing stenciling, hand and machine stitching, quilting and weaving. This extensive range won the approval of moderators who commented that candidates were largely more successful in meeting the demands of the Personal Investigation and Externally Set Task by maintaining relevance and focus in the exploration and refinement of ideas.

25

Three-Dimensional Design (H605/01&02):

After a period, which saw entries for Three-Dimensional Design fall, this year marked a resurgence of interest and participation in the specialism. This revival is largely due to the merger and mutuality between Art, Design and Technology Departments. Teachers firmly believed that the new GCE specification offered better scope for candidates to use creativity and imagination to resolve real and relevant problems in a number of areas, such as Product and Interior Design. Centres that have well-established traditions of working in ceramics and mixed media continued to thrive.

Critical and Contextual Studies (H606/01&02):

Critical and Contextual Studies was another area of study that prospered again this first A Level session. The majority of candidates proved most adept at striking a good balance between written and practical work. In making a personal response to artefacts, architecture and artworks the former was usually well conceived, lucid and based on sound research often from first hand sources. Research and developmental work was for some candidates digital with the use of design software to create digital workbooks. Some candidates uploaded their work to secure webpages access with QR code links. Other candidates produced excellent practical studies from the selected specialist area.

Indeed, moderators remarked with enthusiasm that 'Critical and Contextual' submissions readily matched the creativity and relevance seen in the other Specialisms.

OCR wishes to thank teachers for their encouragement which was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the support materials for both candidates and teachers.

Further information regarding professional development for the New GCE Specification 2017-2018 will be available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 851509 or by email to cpdhub@ocr.org.uk in September 2017.

The exemplar photographs in this report show a small selection of the GCE work displayed for moderation in 2017 and they are reproduced with the permission of the Centres concerned. OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.