

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2009

VISUAL ARTS

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GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Generally the pieces submitted for the examinations were not of a high standard. As in 2008, it was quite difficult to find outstanding work for all options. There continues to be little evidence of preparatory work and adequate guidance from teachers. Craftsmanship and selection of appropriate materials and techniques were poor. The pieces gave the impression that a large number of candidates did not possess the requisite knowledge and skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Production Papers

OPTION A – DRAWING

Drawings were fair overall, with some outstanding responses.

Question 1

Seated figure

This was the least popular question. The question demanded a basic understanding of the human form with emphasis on the face, neck, shoulders and hands. Responses ranged from outstanding to weak. Outstanding responses showed that candidates possessed a good grasp of the human anatomy, and how light plays on the form. This enabled them to capture the facial expressions as well as the textural and tonal qualities of the hair and clothing. Weak responses did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of basic proportions, anatomy or the effects of light on the human form. Drawings therefore appeared flat and most were distorted. The dominant drawing medium was graphite.

Question 2

Detailed study of fruits in basket

This was the most popular question. The responses demonstrated the candidates' interest and excitement in the varieties of fruit and basket selected and the way in which they were arranged in compositions. This question required that candidates explore a wide variety of organic and man-made forms including the baskets with intricate weaving patterns. Emphasis was to be placed on careful observation, tonal and textural values.

There were many outstanding pieces which demonstrated accurate observational skill as well as geometric forms. The less successful pieces demonstrated difficulties with observational skill, composition, tonal and textural values. The most difficult aspect for weaker responses was the handling of the intricate weave structures of the baskets and the play of light and dark. A wide variety of drawing media and processes were explored. Many candidates used bright colour to disguise their inadequacies in other areas.

Question 3

Collection of shells

This was the third most popular question. This question required an understanding of the basic geometric structure of the shells, and an understanding of line, texture and tonal values.

Some candidates produced outstanding work and successfully created the illusion of form and depth on a flat surface.

The weaker candidates were not able to adequately demonstrate depth with tone and their drawings appeared flat and focused on lines and patterns.

This question encouraged an exploration of various media. There were some unusual interpretations of the theme such as a composition composed of coconuts, some opened to expose the shell.

Question 4

Book bag with books

This was the second most popular question. This question required an understanding of cuboids represented by books placed in varying angles emerging from a bag. This encouraged the candidates to demonstrate skills in creating texture and tonal values and the organization of the graphic details found on printed materials. It also required them to demonstrate contrast in the shape and the materials of the bag against the shape and materials of the books.

The outstanding work demonstrated a firm grasp of geometric forms and perspective. This, combined with an acute sense of observation, produced some exciting compositions. The weaker candidates in contrast produced pieces which were not visually interesting.

Candidates explored a wide range of media including graphite, pen and ink, pencil crayons and oil pastels. In some cases although the candidates did not demonstrate skill in handling the media their drawing skills were evident.

OPTION B – IMAGINATIVE COMPOSITION

This was clearly one of the most popular options this year. The responses were of a fairly good quality overall. Again, there was not much evidence of preparatory work being done. Candidates often selected media and materials which they could not manipulate well. Many pieces lacked innovation, exploration and creativity. The instructions for this option clearly state that pieces **MUST** be done in colour and many were not.

Question 1

Dance of the dragonflies (complementary colours)

This was the third most popular question. This was perhaps an indication that candidates lacked the knowledge of complementary colours. The responses generally lacked creativity and innovation. There was little evidence of preparatory work.

Question 2

The vendor (collage)

This was the least popular question. It was evident that candidates lacked an understanding and knowledge of a collage. Designs and compositions were weak. Generally the pieces did not demonstrate a good understanding of the elements and principles of design. They lacked an understanding of depth and perspective on a flat surface.

Question 3

Birds of a feather

This was the second most popular question. Interpretations were varied. Candidates used their imaginations and thought 'outside the box'. There was an attempt to create depth and perspective, and compositions were well thought out.

Question 4

Red

This was the most popular question. Interpretations were varied. Most of the outstanding pieces from this option were responses to this question. The pieces utilized a variety of media and demonstrated a high level of skill in using the media. Compositions were generally fair.

OPTION C – GRAPHIC DESIGN

Candidates explored a variety of media in relation to the requirements of this option. Interpretations were varied and interesting. It was evident that at some centres candidates copied each other's style, concept and approach to specific questions, and this should be discouraged. Generally work was of a high standard.

Question 1

Caribbean Film Festival (poster)

This was the second most popular question. This question required that candidates design a poster to promote a Caribbean Film Festival to be held in their country. Responses ranged from fairly good to good. There were a few outstanding responses. Many candidates did not understand the characteristics of a poster much less the features of an 'events' poster. The basic elements in some instances were lacking. Pieces demonstrated poor layout, and included too much information to be easily read. An events poster includes information such as: name of event, date, time and venue. Jumbled, poor quality and crowded imagery overwhelmed some posters. Outstanding responses were well laid out, creative and impacting. Some candidates ignored the size specifications.

Question 2

Jollijuice (flyer)

This was the least popular question. Candidates were required to produce a flyer to promote a new health drink which was made from local fruits or vegetables. This question demanded an understanding of and the use of the computer in terms of using the appropriate software to produce the design. A few candidates clearly misunderstood the question and produced a label instead of a flyer. Other responses were done manually instead of using the computer. Many candidates did not submit preparatory work on a CD or other digital device. Candidates who submitted preparatory work showed stage-by-stage planning on CD and also presented the stages on paper to demonstrate clearly how the final piece was developed. Outstanding

samples were found in responses to this question, which demonstrated good lettering, use of space and illustration.

Question 3

Logo for agricultural organization

This was the third most popular question. The question demanded that candidates use creative typography to produce a logo for a local agricultural organization. They were also required to demonstrate how the logo would appear on the organization's letterhead and envelope.

Most responses did not demonstrate the concept of a logo. Logos must be structured, clear and impacting. Some responses showed multiple logos as one. Others were weak in terms of design and illustration. There were others which did not submit all the requirements of the question, including the letterhead and/or envelope. In other instances, some elements appeared on the letterhead or envelope which did not appear on the original logo design.

Question 4

Caribbean story book cover (The Enchanted Tree)

This was the most popular question. The candidates were required to design the front cover of a Caribbean story book, entitled 'The Enchanted Tree'. The question also required that the first letter in the title be illuminated. There was an overwhelming response to this question. Candidates used their imaginations to produce some highly interesting and successful results. It demonstrated their ability to think 'outside of the box'. The more successful responses were of a high standard and demonstrated mastery of lettering and illustration.

A variety of media were explored. A few were able to manipulate watercolours effectively to bring out the pictorial aspects. A variety of lettering styles were also presented. Many responses completely ignored the requirement to illuminate the first letter of the title. There were other instances where the size requirements were ignored.

OPTION D – PRINTMAKING

Responses were for the most part well below the expected standard for this examination. The examination requires that candidates produce limited edition prints of three. Most candidates, however, elected to pursue a nontraditional approach which did not result in an edition for submission. In addition there was an absence of experimentation in traditional print media and a lack of understanding and use of the principles and elements of design. It is obvious that many candidates lack skill in design and image-making, making of plates or blocks and preparing the plates or blocks. The use of stencils, which so many candidates employed this year, cannot result in editions (three of the same). Colour proofs can be achieved through multiple blocks and reduction in relief printmaking, serigraphy, colour intaglio and lithographic printing. Only a few lino prints were submitted. Many of these were from over-inked blocks resulting in filled lines and over-inking marks on the surface of the prints. There was an abundance of simple lino cuts using a single colour. One-colour prints depend on a variety of lines and textures for success. There also needs to be strong contrast in terms of positive and negative shapes.

Printing for this option is to be done on paper and not fabric. Prints on fabric come under the option, 'Surface Decoration'.

Question 1

Underground

This was the third most popular question. The topic was not widely explored. Simple principles such as perspective, balance, emphasis and use of space were not adhered to. Responses were generally weak.

Question 2

Shellfish

Responses were generally moderate in quality. Although a variety of shellfish was evident the subject was not adequately explored. There needed to be more exploration of texture, variety of lines and of positive and negative areas.

Question 3

Machinery

There were very few outstanding pieces. The term 'machinery' was treated as a single item in most instances and not as complex activity. The pieces therefore were uninteresting and showed disregard for the principles of good design.

Question 4

Contrast

A variety of concepts were not explored. Candidates used colour to portray contrast. Pieces were generally moderate to fairly good.

OPTION E – 3-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

The responses ranged from weak to good. It was obvious that for the weak pieces no preparatory work was done, there was poor choice of materials used and candidates did not fully utilize the six hours allocated for this paper. Generally, little thought was given to design and composition. Good pieces were well thought out with emphasis on good design, composition and choice of materials used. Candidates were able to demonstrate the full range of competencies while exploring three-dimensional media and at times combining media for unique presentations. Papier mâché was the most popular medium of choice, and this was finished with a bronze patina.

Question 1

A hunched figure

This was the most popular question. Pieces were moderate to fairly good. Figures were generally well done. Many were 'humped' and not 'hunched'. Proportions were off in some instances. Papier mâché was the medium of choice.

Question 2

Metamorphosis

This was the least popular question. In many cases there was a misinterpretation of the theme. The choice of media was inappropriate in many cases.

Question 3

Tenement

This was the second most popular question. There were some unusual and original interpretations of the theme of communal living. Choice of materials, design and construction were good for the most part.

Question 4

Intertwined

This was the third most popular option. The feeling of being intertwined was not seen or felt in many pieces. Some designs had elements which just overlapped each other and construction was poor.

OPTION F – FIBRE ARTS

Generally the work submitted for this option showed that the majority of candidates lacked the requisite knowledge and skills to respond to these questions. Teachers need to help candidates to identify areas and skills that they can master, based on readily available and suitable materials.

Question 1

Free-standing table decoration

This question was fairly popular, but the responses were poor. It was obvious that many candidates were not familiar with the ‘coiling’ technique. Many candidates incorporated man-made insects into their designs instead of creating their own. Materials selected for these pieces were inappropriate. Generally the results were of an inferior quality. Weak design and construction also contributed to the poor quality of the pieces.

Question 2

Basket with two handles

Not many candidates attempted this question. However, the pieces submitted were fairly well done. There is some evidence that the availability of suitable materials still poses a challenge to some schools. Many of the bottles used as armatures were too large and unsuitable, and baskets only exhibited one weaving technique.

Question 3

Woven wall hanging on the theme, “Earth and Sky”

This was the least popular question. However, some of the pieces were well done. There was some evidence of confusion between the techniques, ‘macramé’ and ‘weaving’. Those who utilized macramé were not able to follow through with the theme and therefore submitted a non-woven wall hanging. Candidates had difficulty with the selection of suitable materials as well as techniques.

Question 4

Elaborate ceremonial dress

This was the most popular question. There was evidence of preparatory work and research being done for the more successful pieces. The quality of work ranged from excellent to poor. The weaker pieces were often as a result of unsuitable materials, poor design and construction. The concept of ‘elaborate’ was completely overlooked. Generally the interpretation was below the standard expected for this examination.

OPTION G – SURFACE DECORATION

Generally the standard of work in this option has deteriorated. Most responses were below the standard expected for this level. Candidates need more guidance in their research and preparation for this examination. Pieces demonstrated a lack of mastery in required skills. Candidates’ performance was weak in the areas of craftsmanship, composition and originality.

Question 1

Wall hanging – “A Meeting of Jellyfish”

This was the third most popular question. The responses to this question were disappointing. The combination of techniques lacked cohesion and creativity. Most candidates simply glued fabric to fabric rather than stitched. Embroidery stitches in most cases were very basic and messy in presentation. The use of design elements was not evident.

Question 2

Rectangular scarf with all-over print

This was the most popular question. Pieces demonstrated a lack of understanding of the term, ‘all-over’ pattern. In many instances the strong tie-dyed background overpowered the printed design. Generally the registration of the printed elements was weak. Candidates need more practice in pattern planning and registration.

Work was generally messy and below the standard required at this level.

Question 3

Cape for a theatrical production, “Flaming Fury”

This was the least popular question. The pieces were of a very poor quality. The designs were generally weak in creativity and relevance to the topic. Most of the candidates who responded to this question did not explore the required techniques. Most of the applied shapes were stuck and not stitched to the cape. There was very little evidence of embroidery and printing techniques.

Question 4

Circular floor cushion with tie dye and batik

This was the second most popular question. Most candidates found the question challenging. The combination of tie dye and batik lacked cohesion, skill and creativity. Some candidates spent more time completing the cushion rather than fulfilling the required techniques and design.

OPTION H – CERAMICS

Pieces ranged from moderate to outstanding. Ceramic pieces were not properly packaged and this resulted in a high percentage of the pieces being damaged or broken beyond recognition, hence the importance of photographing each piece before they are fired and submitting the photographs with the pieces. Candidates are also being encouraged to engrave their registration and question number on the base or other area which is not so visible. Labels must be securely fastened to the pieces.

Question 1

Ornamental teacup and saucer

This was the most popular question. There were some outstanding submissions. The teacup design was based on a flower and the saucer on a leaf. In the weaker responses the flower was simply used as a motif to decorate the teacup and some engraved lines decorated the saucer to represent a leaf. Many pieces did not reflect fully the requirements of the question. There were issues with creativity, construction and design. In many pieces there was no depression in the saucer to hold the teacup.

Question 2

Napkin holders with design based on “Cockerel”

This was the least popular question. The pieces showed a general lack of creativity and design. Many were not balanced and did not adhere to the techniques required. There were many interpretations of this question. Some candidates produced napkin holders and others produced napkin rings. In many instances the rings were not functional.

Question 3

Lamp based on the theme – “Reptiles”

There were many good responses. There was evidence of preparatory work and creativity of design. Some designs were non-functional and did not sit properly on a surface.

Question 4

Rectangular honey jar

The responses ranged from weak to good. The application of designs was generally weak. Many did not utilize both decorative techniques required by the question. However, the construction of the jars was fairly good.

OPTION I – LEATHERCRAFT

The responses ranged from moderate to good. Many of the same problems are still being encountered in responses to this option. Candidates continue to use leatherette and other man-made materials instead of leather. There is evidence that some candidates are not at all familiar with leathercraft tools, techniques and materials. Many pieces were painted heavily with varnish which resulted in surface crackling. The aesthetic appeal of many was sadly lacking.

Question 1

Cylindrical container with a lid

This was the least popular question. Responses were generally weak. Lids were not properly affixed to the container and some candidates even used tape to complete this task. Generally candidates adhered to the form and dimensions that were required. Most designs were very simple but were not complemented by good craftsmanship.

Question 2

Front cover of a folder-“Regatta Sunday”

This was the most popular option. There were some outstanding pieces. Unfortunately, however, there were some weak pieces in terms of craftsmanship and design. It was evident that some candidates were not at all familiar with modeling techniques. Therefore, responses had designs that were predominantly stamped, but this was not done in an organized manner.

Question 3

A lady's overnight bag

This was the third most popular question. There were not many good responses to this question. The question was very specific in its requirements for the use of natural leather and the natural colour and texture of that leather. Most candidates ignored all or some of the requirements of the question. Man-made leatherette was used and leathers were painted or dyed. The design and craftsmanship were generally weak. It was obvious that very little preparatory work was done.

Question 4

Wall plaque-“Tropical Garden”

This was the second most popular question. There were some good samples which demonstrated good design, good craftsmanship and originality. Many attempted successfully to paint on the tooled leather to depict a tropical garden. The question specified an organic shape. Many pieces were geometrically shaped. Candidates did not demonstrate a high level of skill in the stamping and carving techniques.

OPTION J – DECORATIVE CRAFT

There were some excellent examples. The weaker examples fell below the acceptable standard in design and craftsmanship.

Question 1

Convert a pair of old shoes-“Sea Creature”

This was the least popular question; however, there were a few outstanding pieces. Many candidates merely decorated the shoes by painting them instead of converting them. The outstanding responses managed to transform the shoes in ways which made them difficult to be identified as such.

Question 2

A child's pull toy

There were some excellent examples. This was the third most popular question. Some candidates made the toy in the shape of a dragon, while others decorated it with designs based on dragons. Some demonstrated good design and construction and others were poorly executed. Some pieces fell below the acceptable standard because of inappropriate choice of materials and produced soft toys.

Question 3

A crown for the winner of “Best Garden”

This was the most popular question. However, most candidates demonstrated poor designs, and inappropriate choice of material and techniques. Many candidates completely ignored the fact that a crown is an object to be worn and their design did not take that into consideration. Poor choice of materials led to some issues of safety and comfort. The materials used ranged from pins to wires and other sharp objects. While decorative craft offers a wide scope for the use of materials and techniques, many candidates opted to use commercially produced items instead of utilizing indigenous and natural materials and/or creating their own. The use of glitter was overwhelming. It was clear that candidates felt that glitter and other such materials could camouflage the weaknesses in their work.

Question 4

Wall plaque for hanging keys

Generally responses to this question were quite good. There were some exciting and innovative responses. Some candidates placed more emphasis on the gadgets for hanging the keys than the actual design of the piece. The more successful responses were well designed and constructed and created three-dimensional illusions of depth. Correct choice of materials also added to the success of the pieces.

ILLUSTRATED PAPERS

Relevance

Most of the papers had relevant focus areas; however, there was room for improvement in terms of exploration.

Written Material

While most candidates did fairly well in organizing the material, the level of expression fell far below what is expected at this level. There was evidence that many candidates were not adequately prepared for this aspect of the syllabus. Some of the papers were difficult to read as candidates continued to present handwritten scripts in poor handwriting.

Content

Most candidates did fairly well in this area.

Research/Inquiry

There is room for improvement in this area. While use of technology is encouraged, the candidates relied too much on the 'cutting' and 'pasting' of information from existing sources. One of the weaker areas involved the critique and analysis of art work. Most candidates described the work instead of analysing them.

Organization of written material

The performance in this area was fairly good. There was some evidence that candidates understood what was expected. However, in the area of aesthetic appeal more work needs to be done.

Illustration/Photographs

This area was also well represented. However, some candidates presented papers devoid of titles and other required information. The ability of candidates to use information in novel ways is weak hence the need for additional instruction from teachers.