

**C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2011**

**VISUAL ARTS  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the first examination based on the revised syllabus in Visual Arts. The examination requirements for the revised syllabus are as follows:

- Two Production Papers based on two expressive forms chosen from the eight forms
- A Reflective Journal based on Theory, Process and Practice of Visual Arts related to the expressive forms chosen
- A School-Based Assessment consisting of six pieces of work based on the expressive forms chosen (three pieces for each expressive form)

The eight expressive forms from which candidates can choose to study are as follows:

### Two-Dimensional Expressive Forms

- Drawing
- Painting and Mixed Media
- Graphic and Communication Design
- Printmaking
- Textile Design and Manipulation

### Three-Dimensional Expressive Forms

- Sculpture and Ceramics
- Leather Craft
- Fibre and Decorative Arts

The Production Paper, the Reflective Journal and the School-Based Assessment are compulsory components of the examination. Hence, all candidates must submit each component in order to qualify for a grade.

Eight thousand one hundred and thirty pieces of work for the 8 expressive forms and 4,074 Reflective Journals were marked. Entries for the following expressive forms were small: Leather craft, Printmaking, Sculpture and Ceramics, and Fibre and Decorative Arts. There were some very outstanding responses in all the expressive forms, however, the examining committee believes that a higher standard of work is possible and that teachers should attempt to motivate students to do even better pieces.

## DETAILED COMMENTS

### Reflective Journal

Generally, the journals were well done. There were some outstanding responses which displayed a high level of creativity and ingenuity. Some very interesting and culturally relevant themes and concepts were identified such as 'New portrayals of Caribbean Culture', 'Living Things', 'Nature', 'Heritage', 'Identity', 'Agriculture', 'Sports' and 'Religion' to name a few. A full range of styles and approaches to the Visual Arts were presented. Many candidates utilized good research skills and analytical competence and employed a variety of data collection strategies. The use of the computer and other electronic media in the preparation and presentation of the journals were also quite significant.

On the other hand, many journals showed a lack of cohesion and organization. Instead of being a record of the work done over the final two years of secondary school, they seemed more like a one-time submission. Many candidates did not fully understand how to journal their classroom projects. Instead, they presented a personal diary of their daily activities. The following are comments on the different areas required for the journal.

#### Visual Presentation of the Cover

This aspect of the journal was moderately represented. Most of the covers lacked the kind of impact that would allow them to be considered aesthetically pleasing. Lack of knowledge of the elements and principles of design was evident. In addition, many of the designs were neither relevant nor appropriate for the selected themes. Some of the glaring problems included lack of a title or theme, poor designs, poor layout, poor lettering.

#### Visual Presentation of Journals

Some very interesting approaches were revealed but innovation was lacking.

The use of the principles of design was not reinforced in the presentation of the journals. Little attention was paid to neatness in the design of the pages as well as the general construction of the journal.

In many instances, the visuals were too far from the related texts, so that the relevant associations were difficult to make.

#### Presentation of Visuals

The presentation of visuals in some journals was excellent. They were properly labeled and mounted with relevant captions, and were put in sequential order. However, many others were devoid of captions and labels which made it difficult to make a decision as to whether they were related to the chosen topic or theme. In many cases, candidates stuck photographs of works which were unrelated to their theme, or gave the impression that the images were of their own work when they were not. Many of those images, especially those copied from the Internet, were blurred and of a poor quality.

#### Samples of Artists' Work

Some candidates had good samples of artists' work that were relevant to their concept or theme. Based on the responses, it was obvious that candidates are still not aware of or have access to the vast amount of information available. In some instances, the selected artist/artisan had no bearing or relevance either through concept, process or theme, to that of the candidates' work. The candidates did not state why they selected the particular artist. Many visuals were of an inferior quality and the number stated in the syllabus was not presented.

### Samples of Candidates' Work

The response in this section of the journal ranged from no relevance to core concepts to proficient in choice of materials, processes and concepts. In many instances, there was a clear and logical lead up to the completed project along with detailed preparatory studies.

It was obvious that many candidates/schools misinterpreted the requirements of the journal for this component. Hence, the number of candidate's samples was inadequate in many instances. *The syllabus requires that the journal be based on both expressive forms*, but some candidates only presented on one. Additionally, samples were not properly labeled and identified. *There was also little critique of their work so that there could be a better understanding of what the candidates, work was about.* This critique is essential as candidates are to develop their analytical skills which will assist them in gaining the marks allocated to this section. The knowledge of and use of the elements and principles of design cannot be overemphasized.

### Appropriateness of Title

Many of the journals lacked a title and those that had titles were not exactly appropriate to the selected theme.

### Communication of Information

Many candidates did an excellent job of communicating information using the correct artistic jargon. Other candidates displayed poor language and grammar skills and were unfamiliar with the correct vocabulary and jargon.

### Legibility

Many candidates utilized technology, so the fonts and text selected were clear and legible. Handwritten journals tended to be untidy and illegible.

### Content

Many journals had the relevant supporting historical, cultural and contemporary data and comprehensive concept development with relevant supporting information. However, there were instances where the concepts presented were neither explained, explored nor illustrated.

The content gives the journal its body, so there must be supporting historical, cultural and contemporary content.

### Data Gathering Processes

This aspect of the journal was poorly represented by most candidates. Most candidates relied solely on the Internet for information, and the information they downloaded and presented lacked substance. Candidates missed the whole idea of constructing their own knowledge. In many instances, the information was totally unrelated to the concept or theme. The organization of the information was not coherent and the number of listed sources was not reflected in the journal. The bibliography was often used for acknowledgements.

### Critical Analysis

This was the most poorly done section in the journal. There were some candidates who offered good interpretations of information gathered and these were properly organized. Most candidates simply described the steps they used to complete their work. It was obvious that the majority of candidates lacked the tools necessary to critique works of art. This aspect of the syllabus is critical for the addition of insight and new meaning to art.

## **Production Paper**

### **Two-Dimensional Expressive Forms**

#### **Expressive Form A – Drawing**

This was one of the most popular expressive forms in the examination. All questions were attempted. The drawings were generally of a high standard.

#### Question 1

Candidates were required to draw a composition made up of a washbasin, scrub brush, a bottle of bleach and a bar of soap arranged on a surface.

This was the most popular question which demanded an understanding of line and geometric structures. In addition, the question demanded that candidates create the effects of light and dark on objects, thereby revealing their textural qualities. Compositions were exciting and the folds in fabric were handled very well. Generally, candidates' work displayed a high level of confidence and skill. There was a wide range of responses, varying from outstanding to moderate.

Generally, the number of weak responses declined this year. The weaker responses had problems with executing the folds in the cloth, the ellipse of the basin and bottle. The more successful pieces showed that candidates displayed a greater understanding of design and composition. They utilized the space (A2 paper) effectively and created some outstanding compositions, especially those in which the washbasin was placed on its side. The brush and bar of soap were outstanding in most compositions, with correct perspective and foreshortening. A variety of media were explored including pencils, charcoal, coloured pencils, oil and chalk pastels. In the more successful pieces of work, these were handled with skill and sensitivity.

#### Question 2

This was the least popular question. The question required candidates to draw a male or female model reclining on cushions.

This question demanded some understanding of the human form and the use of foreshortening. The question also demanded an understanding of the word 'reclining'. A few candidates concentrated on the bust of the figure and the facial features, instead of a figure drawing. Some drawings had the figure seated upright instead of reclining. The majority of the drawings had difficulty with the foreshortening of the legs of the figure, which in most cases, was a female. There were two outstanding samples produced for this question.

Some very good responses demonstrated a good grasp of human anatomy, with a well developed knowledge of how light plays on the figure to capture facial expressions as well as the textural and tonal qualities of the hair, skin and clothing. Good responses explored a range of media and techniques to create the illusion of mass, volume and textural qualities.

Moderate and weak responses were few. These responses did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of basic proportions or anatomy and figures appeared flat and in some instances distorted. It was evident that some candidates drew from a photograph and not from life.

### Question 3

This was the second most popular question which produced two outstanding samples. Candidates were required to draw a variety of four twigs with leaves arranged in and around a shallow basket. Two of the twigs had to be dried.

The question was designed to test candidates' ability to use their knowledge of cylindrical and geometric forms to construct a basket. At the same time, they were required to keenly observe and record the structure of organic forms including leaves and twigs, living and non-living, all arranged in a basket. This was a study in textures, especially in contrasting the texture of the basket with that of the leaves and stems of the plant.

The most popular drawing media was the coloured pencil, and candidates used it with great skill and understanding of form. In general, the stronger responses fulfilled most of the conditions stated above and produced aesthetically pleasing compositions. The weaker candidates, at times, were unable to complete the compositions and experienced difficulties with the renderings of the leaves and twigs. They also lacked skill in creating baskets which showed depth and understanding of light and shadows.

### Question 4

This was the third most popular question. Candidates were required to draw a composition of the following items: two boxes of different sizes, a lamp, a small table and a large, leafy vegetable. The lamp and the vegetable were to be arranged on the table, the two boxes were to be placed on the floor next to the table.

This question required knowledge of geometric and organic forms and perspective. There were many aesthetically pleasing responses. The most successful ones resolved the technical issues and created the strong illusion of form and depth in space. The weaker responses had problems with perspective and compositions were weak.

## **Expressive Form B – Painting and Mixed Media**

### Question 1

Candidates were required to produce an imaginative piece based on the topic 'View From Above'. This was the least popular question.

There were some outstanding responses which explored a variety of media and demonstrated a good knowledge of perspective both with lines and colour. These responses were successful in creating the idea and atmosphere of looking down from above, in many instances, from an aircraft. The unsuccessful responses lacked interest, aesthetic appeal and knowledge of the elements and principles of design.

### Question 2

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were required to produce a piece based on the topic ‘Spirit of the Caribbean’.

There were some outstanding and creative responses which demonstrated a lot of research and a high level of skill. Several pieces were mixed media with collage. The weaker responses lacked craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal. Candidates must pay more attention to researching the topic, key words in the question and doing preparatory sketches. More attention must also be paid to good design.

### Question 3

This was the most popular question. Candidates were required to produce a piece based on the topic ‘Submerged’.

Many successful responses demonstrated a high level of skill in manipulating the media. Though, in many instances, there was very little originality with students from the same school depicting very similar themes. Research and preparatory studies are very important to the success of these expressive pieces.

### Question 4

This was the third most popular question. Candidates had to produce a piece based on the topic ‘Shadows’.

Overall, the responses to this question were fairly good. There were a variety of interpretations of the subject. Many abstract responses were attempted and reflected candidates’ innermost thoughts and feelings. However, the evidence showed that more research could have been done.

## **Expressive Form C – Graphic and Communication Design**

### Question 1

This was the second most popular question. The question required candidates to produce a poster to promote ‘Caribbean Fashion Week’.

The more successful responses displayed a high level of creativity and evidence of thorough research and planning. There was a good understanding of the elements of an events poster and the results were quite professional. Candidates at some centres utilized the computer for this question and these were of a very high standard. The outstanding manual and computer generated pieces displayed good craftsmanship. They were aesthetically pleasing and design and composition were creative and innovative. The pictorial composition and text were well manipulated. There were ten outstanding pieces from this question.

The weaker responses showed a lack of the prerequisite knowledge and skills. Many posters were presented on paper that was less than the required size. Many responses were generic in nature and demonstrated little or no evidence of comprehensive research. There was no innovation in the use and development of concepts, media, techniques and the principles of design. They lacked unity, information was jumbled and difficult to read. In too many cases, the poster was crammed with a lot of text with little organization. Some candidates used only one font size and type for all written information. The name of the event seemed insignificant to some candidates. Others had the name of the event and little else.

A number of candidates failed to submit preparatory work to show evidence of the process by which they arrived at the final production piece. They therefore were not awarded the marks allotted for preparatory work.

### Question 2

This was the third most popular question. It required candidates to design a signboard for a sanctuary of an endangered species.

The general quality of the entries was fairly good. Candidates who achieved positive results conceptualized and developed excellent designs with good layout. The signboards were aesthetically pleasing and impactful. In the weaker responses, it was evident that candidates misunderstood the word 'endangered', so the message on the signboard was not clear. Some research would have helped candidates to develop a list of endangered species in the world. Also, many candidates did not understand what a signboard was. They experienced difficulty with the elements and principles of design. The selection of effective fonts was also a challenge.

### Question 3

This question required candidates to design a CD cover for a Caribbean jazz artist. This was the most popular question which generated overwhelming responses from a wide cross section of candidates.

A high level of experience and research was evident and exceeded the conventional standards. In most of the successful pieces, craftsmanship was of a high standard and candidates experimented and manipulated the media well. The variety of colour schemes created impact and the writing styles were creative. The concepts were original and interesting. Various areas of Caribbean culture and history were used to add a Caribbean flair to the work. The pieces showcased a variety of musical instruments and other images to portray the theme. There were a few computer-generated designs and these were successful.

It was observed that some candidates generated designs directly from the Internet; hence a number of candidates from different centres had the same design. The weaker responses were disorganized with no cohesiveness in the design. There was nothing in the design which reflected the Caribbean.

Preparatory work presented on CDs must be securely attached to the back of the work being presented, instead of all jumbled up in an envelope.

### Question 4

This was the least popular question. Candidates were required to design a billboard promoting a 'Youth Empowerment Organization'.

There were a few good responses to this question. It was evident from what was presented that many candidates misunderstood the theme. Many depicted youth empowerment in some obscure way; other candidates changed the theme and created their own concept. There were many instances where the organization was not identifiable. Some candidates focused on 'Youth Empowerment' and used slogans such as 'Strive for Success', 'Stay away from drugs' and 'Abuse'.

## **Expressive Form D – Printmaking**

### Question 1

This was the least popular question. Candidates were required to produce an edition of prints based on the theme 'Stilt Man'.

There were few responses for this expressive form. The responses ranged from weak to fairly good. Creativity in interpreting this topic was lacking. There was little research and preparatory studies were missing. Attention to proportion of the figure and perspective in the composition were weak. The use of a variety of lines and contrast were minimal in some instances. Generally, the responses lacked aesthetic appeal and interest.

### Question 2

This question required candidates to produce an edition based on the theme 'Wrinkled'. This was the second most popular question.

A variety of concepts were explored. Most responses were moderate. Although this was a popular question, the concept of 'wrinkled' was not effectively portrayed. Inappropriate materials were used in some cases and preparatory work and proofs were missing.

### Question 3

This was the most popular question. It required candidates to produce an edition of prints based on the theme 'Rhythms'.

There were many good to outstanding responses to this question. Candidates related readily to this theme. There was good use of lines, shapes, perspective and contrast.

### Question 4

This was the third most popular question. It required the candidates to produce an edition based on the theme 'Barrier'.

Responses were generally fair. There were some abstract interpretations with a good sense of design. Weaker responses lacked cohesiveness. Candidates had difficulty with creating depth, space and contrast. There are still some centres using stencils and sponging to create prints. This is not a printmaking technique. Many prints in the editions lacked consistency.

## **Expressive Form E – Textile Design and Manipulation**

### Question 1

This was the least popular question. It required candidates to create a quilted panel utilizing the following techniques: smocking, tucking, appliqué and embroidery.

There were some outstanding pieces produced for this question, but most pieces were fair. The most successful responses saw candidates joining the squares to create a quilt after executing the various techniques. The designs on the individual squares were good in most cases.

In the weaker responses, it was obvious that the question was misinterpreted. Many responses were poorly executed especially in attempting the various techniques such as pleating and tucking. It was also evident that the words 'panel' and 'square' created some confusion. Many candidates created the techniques on separate squares and then attached them to another square, sometimes even at odd angles.

### Question 2

This was the most popular question attempted for this expressive form. Candidates were required to print fabric appropriate for beach chairs based on the theme 'Orchids in Bloom'.

The majority of pieces fell into the fairly good category. In general, the dimensions and three colour requirements were adhered to. There was evidence of lack of research as some of the designs did not reflect orchids. There was also noticeable disregard for the 'solid stripe' required in the question. In many instances, the stripes and the flowers were hand painted. In some instances, the choice of fabric for beach chairs was inappropriate. It was obvious that candidates were not familiar with the range of layout techniques when printing on fabric. The majority of pieces were screen printed, although the use of stencils and sponge showed some level of success. Generally, the designs showed some elements of initiative and originality.

### Question 3

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were required to use batik and tie dye to produce a metre of fabric suitable for a lounge dress. Grades ranged from poor to outstanding with the more successful pieces fulfilling all the requirements of the question, including the extraction of the wax. In the weaker responses, although the required geometric shapes were used, the 'interlocking' was not done. Shapes were instead placed next to each other. The principle of unity was lacking in many pieces as the batik border seemed to have no relationship with the rest of the design, either in colour or design. In many instances, the wax was not removed from the fabric.

### Question 4

This was the third most popular question attempted by candidates. It required candidates to produce a wall hanging based on the themes 'Masquerade', with a combination of techniques.

There were many interpretations. Interpretations varied from designs based on 'masks' to 'masquerade'. While craftsmanship appeared weak in some designs, in others it was quite strong as candidates explored the techniques required.

## **THREE-DIMENSIONAL EXPRESSIVE FORMS**

### **Expressive Form F– Sculpture and Ceramics**

#### Question 1

This was the most popular question. Candidates were required to create a three-dimensional object entitled 'The Dancer'. There were some excellent creative responses with good use of shapes, form, lines and movement. Candidates were prepared with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively manipulate the selected materials. The choice of materials was good. Many of the weaker responses were very low relief to the point that they could be considered collage rather than sculpture. In some of the three dimensional pieces, the craftsmanship was very poor and choice of materials less than adequate.

### Question 2

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were required to create a water jug using the human face as inspiration.

There was creative expression of the facial features that were successfully incorporated into the function of the jug. Most candidates, however, paid little attention to the utilitarian aspect of the question. They experienced difficulties with incorrect size, lack of a handle and spout. Many of the pieces were not fired which is a requirement of the syllabus. Other pieces were painted with acrylics instead of glaze, although this was not a requirement. Preparatory studies and other supporting information was lacking for many of the pieces.

### Question 3

This was the third most popular question. Candidates were required to create a three-dimensional object entitled 'Decay'.

There were very few outstanding responses. Many utilized inappropriate materials and techniques. Some of the themes were very graphic, such as the decay of body parts. In some cases, the approach was too painterly and did not meet the requirement of three-dimensional works.

### Question 4

This was the least popular question. Candidates were required to create a relief sculpture entitled 'Trapped'.

Some candidates were creative in their use of assemblage and other sculptural techniques. Various domains were explored including the psychological, emotional and spiritual. Although there were some fairly good responses, many were too low relief to be considered sculpture.

## **Expressive Form G – Leather Craft**

The number of candidates registering for this expressive form has fallen considerably.

### Question 1

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were required to produce a trinket box decorated with a design based on the theme 'Flowering Vine'. There were some fairly good responses to this question. Many candidates ignored crucial requirements of the question including the use of the design elements and a clasp. Instead of dyes, many candidates added colour with acrylic paints. It was obvious that many candidates lacked the requisite knowledge, skills and tools required to produce leather items.

### Question 2

This was the most popular question. Candidates were required to produce four coasters for a gift shop, showcasing a variety of national symbols.

There were some excellent responses which were creative and skilled in their use of tooling and lacing techniques. A variety of national symbols was explored. In the weaker responses, the choice of leather was inappropriate, the designs and craftsmanship were weak. There was excessive use of paints instead of leather dyes.

### Question 3

There were no responses to this question.

### Question 4

This was the third most popular question. It required candidates to create an elaborate neckpiece based on the theme 'Petals'.

There were a few good responses to this question. In many instances, candidates did not respond to all the requirements of the question. The motifs were not joined together and the surfaces were not built up to create a three-dimensional effect. Tooling and finishing skills were weak in many instances.

## **Expressive Form H – Fibre And Decorative Arts**

### Question 1

Candidates were required to produce a pair of woven place mats. This was the most popular question. While many pieces were non-functional because of the addition of three-dimensional objects, they were very creative. There were outstanding designs where candidates explored other shapes besides the traditional square and rectangle. The more successful creations were those which incorporated the bug within the weave. Many candidates also chose to laminate the mats, although this was not required it certainly added to the finish and integrity of the mats. Many responses also had the addition of creative borders which added to the design and completion. The weaker responses took a less labour intensive and less creative route by printing and pasting pictures of bugs onto the woven surface. Most mats were created using either plain weave or tabby weave.

### Question 2

This was the third most popular question attempted. It required candidates to produce a drawstring beach bag using any one or a combination of crochet, knitting and macramé techniques. The more successful pieces adhered to the required colours and techniques. Most bags were done using the macramé technique with very little variety of knots. The selection of the cords was appropriate and many were dyed or painted to reflect the theme. Some were lined. In the weaker responses, the choice of yarns was poor and the weave was inappropriate and therefore non-functional as a bag.

### Question 3

This was the second most popular question. It required candidates to convert a straw hat into a decorative item which promotes one of their country's natural resources.

There were some excellent responses where candidates achieved a total conversion of the hat. Some of the most successful pieces converted the hat by cutting, folding and twisting the straw. Many pieces were designed in the round while others were designed as relief wall plaques. In the least successful responses, the hats were simply decorated with a variety of items.

### Question 4

This was the least popular question. This question required candidates to create a container for a potted plant. While there were some outstanding responses the majority were poor in terms of choice of materials, design and craftsmanship. Several candidates did not use the coiling technique but simply glued the coils together. Some candidates chose to glue plastic bags over a plastic container.