Statistics

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General comments

The concept for the 2013 examination was *Fragility*.

Candidates demonstrated a considered response to the visual stimulus presented in Paper One and generally used visual language to analyse and justify ideas in response to artworks in Paper Two.

All candidates designed and created resolved artworks in response to the concept, but further development of compositional and technical skills is required for candidates to use visual language to effectively communicate their understanding of art elements. Most candidates described and interpreted artworks to give an opinion of the artworks presented. Some candidates needed to demonstrate greater use of language to analyse and validate interpretations when evaluating meanings and justifying positions.

Paper One: Making (Practical response)

Candidates were required to respond to one or more of the three focus areas by completing and ‘resolving’ an artwork or artworks in any predominantly two-dimensional medium (e.g. painting, drawing, collage, assemblage). Candidates were to visually communicate their understanding of ‘Fragility’ (literally, representatively or conceptually) based on their interpretation of one or more of the focuses developed from the concept.

The provided stimulus consisted of a range of artworks reflecting various interpretations of the concept. This allowed for responses such as:

- literal representations of social stories (Focus 1)
- symbolic or metaphoric interpretations that identified and depicted representations of impermanence to communicate social and cultural instability (Focus 2)
- abstract or non-representational interpretations that dealt with highly personalised responses to our existence (Focus 3).
Most of the visual responses to Paper One were literal interpretations that used one of the stimulus items suggested. Candidates were allowed to use materials (e.g. preliminary sketches, painting, collage/assemblage items) that they had collected or developed and brought into the examination room as the basis of their response to the concept. Some candidates appeared to have limited source materials for use in the examination. Further developed ideas, compositional plans and use of materials may have resulted in responses of a higher standard.

The most common stimulus used by candidates was ‘Existence’ (Focus 3). There was a correlation between achievement in the Application criterion and the Visual Literacy criterion, with candidates using sound drawing and, to a lesser degree, visual problem-solving and compositional skills to communicate ideas and intentions.

Prospective candidates should ensure that they understand how work developed during the year can be used to relate to examination stimulus material. Use of past examination papers would foster this understanding.

Teachers could also develop practice examination papers, enabling candidates to gain more experience in developing a response under examination conditions based on previous work. Strategies for candidates to complete a resolved artwork in the time allocated would assist in the development of compositional and technical skills.

Paper Two: Appraising (Written response)

Candidates generally responded at a high standard to Part A of this paper, demonstrating strong links to ‘Fragility’ and interpretation of the meaning of both works. All candidates used visual language to demonstrate limited, sound or high level analysis, although candidates did not clearly link to the cultural and historical context of the stimulus artwork. The information provided with each artwork was effectively considered in most candidates’ response when justifying artworks or validating interpretations of each artwork.

Part A (Question 1)

Candidates responded at an A or B standard to Question 1. The stimulus artworks representing the focus concept displayed contrasting sculptural artworks by two artists. The subquestions required candidates to analyse the subject matter, media and context of each sculpture in a short response to each artwork. Those candidates who responded at an A standard were able to provide insightful interpretations of the artist’s depiction of the concept in context. Candidates attempted to analyse the symbolic meaning of each artwork but were not always able to clearly articulate the meaning created by the artwork in their written responses.

Part B (Questions 2, 3 and 4)

Candidates were required to write an extended essay of 400–600 words in response to one of three questions. Two candidates responded to Question 2; one to Question 3 and one to Question 4.

To achieve highly in this part, candidates were required to analyse each artwork using a high level of language to communicate their interpretations of the compositional arrangement and meaning depicted.

Question 2 provided candidates with three artworks that drew the viewers’ attention to the fragility of each artwork within a social context. Each artwork is three-dimensional in form and
representational of a deliberately selected media to reconstruct memories and explore the concept of fragility. This question required candidates to analyse and interpret the compositional arrangements of each sculptural work.

In Question 3, candidates were required to describe the common elements in three sculptural works that explore the impermanence and threads that tie relationships between people and places. Each work was conceptual in nature but provided visual cues in each of the low relief, installation and sculptural works. The challenge in this question is that the candidate must show evidence of their understanding of how meaning can be interpreted using scale and media selected by each artist.

In Question 4, candidates were provided with three artworks that used objects to explore fragility and represent personal expression and feelings that explore our existence. Candidates were required to compare and contrast these three artworks using visual language to justify and evaluate how effectively each artist has explored the ‘fragility of existence’. Candidates would benefit from having a broader understanding of contemporary art issues and practices to formulating their response to this question.