

HISTORY OF ART

Paper 8285/01
The Renaissance

Moderator's Report - General Comments

In 2008, 6 Centres entered 88 candidates. This year there were 5 Centres with 57 candidates.

The Question paper for 2009 was well structured; questions were very straightforward, encouraging candidates to respond with well thought out answers. The choice of images was entirely appropriate for the syllabus, and the juxtaposition of images provided plenty of opportunity for thoughtful analysis and critical evaluation.

However, there continues to be two Options in each paper which are rarely attempted. Of the remaining Options, more than 50% of candidates choose both questions from the same Option. In one Centre, all the questions were from Option 3, which would indicate a very narrow base to work from. I should like to endorse the concerns of the Marker who stated "This trend is hugely concerning as it not only jeopardises (their) marks but also narrows the knowledge base and understanding of the development of art ideas".

Most candidates achieved lower marks for their second answer (in both papers): **Section B** Comparative Analysis, and whilst this may be due to poor time management under exam conditions, it is surprisingly uniform across the whole cohort. The purpose of unseen images needs to be re-evaluated, as some candidates are merely presenting similar 'essay' type information as in their previous answer. This is also mentioned in the Marker's report, which goes so far as to suggest the structure of Part **B** needs to be changed in order to reinforce the differing requirements of image analysis.

There did not appear to be the marked difference of achievement between both papers, which had been noted in previous years.

Comments on Specific Questions

The cohort responded to **Section A** of the Question paper as follows:

Option 1: **Fourteenth Century Italian Art**

No candidates. This is a recurring pattern and seems to indicate that this section of the exam is not being covered in the School curriculum.

Option 2: **Naturalism and Science in Fifteenth Century Italian Painting**

This was the most popular Option, with just under half the cohort answering one of the questions. **Questions 4** and **5** were more popular than **Question 6**.

Option 3: **The High Renaissance**

This was the second most popular Option. **Question 8** attracted half of the candidates for this Option (12 responses), **Question 7** saw 9 responses and **Question 9** just 1 response.

Option 4: **The Renaissance in Northern Europe**

8 candidates chose this; with all but one candidate opting for **Question 11**. **Question 12** saw no responses.

Section B

The same pattern was reflected in this Section. 35 candidates chose **Question 14**; 18 chose **Question 15** and only 2 chose **Question 16**. There were no answers to Option 1, **Question 13**.

The most popular questions were **Question 8**: High Renaissance portrait question, and **Question 14**: comparison between Uccello and Piero della Francesca. Most candidates demonstrated considerable familiarity with the art works, but rather than just describing the art works and some of the influences that generated the stylistic aspects, candidates need to be encouraged to adopt a more questioning approach and explore the 'why' and 'how' of a work of art. This would enrich their understanding of meaning and contextual aspects.

This transferable knowledge would be of greater use in the photograph questions, where candidates might be tempted to rely on previously learnt information, rather than undertake a comparative analysis.

HISTORY OF ART

Paper 8285/02

Modern Art

Moderator's Comments

There seemed to be no apparent difficulty with the questions set this year, but it was again disappointing to see how few candidates chose Option 4, **Aspects of Modern New Zealand Art**, given that examples of work could be studied at first hand. Only 3 candidates chose **Question 11**, although 7 did choose to answer **Question 16**, the photographic comparison. Answers were presented in an articulate and confident manner. As the Marker noted "It is important for candidates studying History of Art to gain an understanding and appreciation of the art works of our own country."

The vast majority of candidates (49) chose Option 1: **Towards Abstraction**, which would seem to indicate that this period is given considerable importance within the School curriculum. However, the majority of candidates seem to concentrate on Cubism, and **Question 1** attracted far more responses (43) than either of the other two questions within this Option (**Question 2**: 6; **Question 3**: 0).

Unfortunately, many candidates limited their answers to a discussion of the three works they had selected, without fully demonstrating the links between the different phases of Cubism, and how this developed between 1906 and the early 1920s.

There were no responses to Option 2: **Fauvism and Expressionism**.

Option 3: **American Art since 1945** was slightly more popular, and 5 candidates chose to answer the essay question, whilst 19 chose to compare the de Kooning and Warhol images.

