



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
**State Examinations Commission**

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2005**

**ART**

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 The Syllabus**

The syllabus for Leaving Certificate Art has been in place since 1970. A new syllabus, which has been completed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), was presented to the NCCA Council for approval in 2005 and awaits implementation.

The current syllabus is examined at two levels, Ordinary and Higher. Although the syllabus content is common to both levels, (*Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools 2004/05*), differentiation between levels is by means of depth and breadth of knowledge and skills. The syllabus is examined by means of invigilated examinations, where candidates (a) produce artworks under specific conditions within a defined timeframe and (b) sit a written examination paper. Since 1997 the practical components take place in May during a two-week period. The written component takes place in June. This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and the marking schemes which are available at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)

## **1.2 The Examination**

The examination at both Ordinary and Higher Levels comprises four components. A separate examination paper is issued for each component at each level consisting of instructions, stimulus material and specific questions. There is a total overall allocation of 400 marks as follows:

- Imaginative Composition **or** Still Life: 100 marks (25%)
- Design **or** Craftwork: 100 marks (25%)
- Life Sketching: 50 marks (12.5%)
- History and Appreciation of Art: 150 marks (37.5%).

### **Imaginative Composition or Still Life**

This paper, covering both the Imaginative Composition and Still Life options, is distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination and consists of a number of passages of prose and/or poetry to act as stimulus material. The candidate is examined in his/her skills in composing and producing an Imaginative Composition or a Still Life work based on his/her interpretation of one of the texts. A wide choice of media and techniques is allowed. Candidates must work on an A2 size sheet. This is a two and a half hour examination.

### **Design or Craftwork**

A separate examination paper is issued to schools for each of Design and Craftwork. The examination paper is distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination.

In the case of the Design component, candidates answer one question from a choice of eleven options at Ordinary Level, while candidates answer one question from a choice of twelve options at Higher Level. Each question requires candidates to produce a design for a specific craft in response to a specific question which is based on a number of accompanying passages of prose/poetry. The Design examination is of two and a half hours duration.

Candidates who choose the Craftwork option are required to both design and make an item of craftwork from a choice of fourteen different crafts. Stimulus material for craftwork consists of specific topics/themes. The Craftwork examination is of five hours duration.

## **Life Sketching**

As for the other practical components, candidates are issued with the examination paper for Life Sketching one week in advance of the examination. Candidates are required to produce two drawings from direct observation of the model; the first is of a fifteen-minute pose where the model is in a standing position and the second is a more fully worked drawing of a thirty-minute seated pose. Candidates have the option of drawing the full figure or the head and shoulders for the second pose. The examination is completed in a given time frame of one hour which includes breaks for the model.

## **History and Appreciation of Art**

This written examination, at both Ordinary and Higher Levels, comprises three sections as follows:

- Section 1 - Art in Ireland,
- Section 2 - European Art
- Section 3 - Appreciation of Art.

Candidates are required to answer three questions, one from each of the three sections. The examination paper contained twenty questions for Ordinary Level and twenty-one for Higher Level. The written examination is of two and a half hours duration.

### 1.3 The Candidature

Table 1. Numbers of candidates taking Art in the Leaving Certificate 2002-2005

<b>Years</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Number of candidates sitting Art</b>	9199	9 705	10 001	10 228
<b>% of Total Leaving Certificate cohort</b>	16.23%	17.25%	18.11%	18.91%

Table 2. Numbers and percentages of candidates taking Art at Higher and Ordinary Levels.

<b>Years</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Number of Ordinary Level Candidates</b>	2715	2836	2761	2606
<b>%</b>	29.5%	29.2%	27.6%	25.5%
<b>Number of Higher Level candidates</b>	6484	6869	7240	7622
<b>%</b>	70.5%	70.8%	72.4%	74.5%
<b>Total</b>	9199	9705	10001	10228

As can be seen from the above tables the number of candidates taking Art at Leaving Certificate has shown a steady increase over the past four years, rising from 16.2% of the total Leaving Certificate cohort to 18.9%. The percentage male/female take-up in 2005 was 46% males and 54% females at Ordinary Level and 33.2% males and 66.8% females at Higher Level. It is noted that this increase is concentrated exclusively at Higher Level. The numbers sitting Ordinary Level have dropped from 29.5% to 25.5% of the cohort taking Art.

## 2. Ordinary Level

### 2.1 Performance of Candidates

The following table and graph show the overall performance of candidates at Ordinary Level over the past four years when all four components of the examination are included.

Table 3: Percentage of candidates achieving each grade at Ordinary Level 2002 – 2005

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
<b>2002</b>	2715	0.9	17.6	43.4	32.1	4.4	1.3	0.3
<b>2003</b>	2836	1.4	20.6	48.1	25.2	3.0	1.3	0.4
<b>2004</b>	2761	1.8	22.2	46.5	25.1	3.0	1.1	0.3
<b>2005</b>	2606	1.9	24.3	46.5	23.9	2.4	0.7	0.3

## **2.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance**

### **2.2.1 Imaginative Composition or Still Life**

#### **Introduction**

This examination paper, covering both the Imaginative Composition and Still Life options, was issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to schools and distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination. Candidates used this week to research and plan their compositions and use of media, and in the case of the Still Life option to select appropriate objects. The examination, which is of two and a half hour duration, took place in schools in May and was marked in Athlone by examiners appointed by the SEC.

Candidates were required to produce an Imaginative Composition or a Still Life work based on their personal interpretation of a choice of descriptive passages. The passages consisted of an excerpt from *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel; a description of a passage of play in the FA cup final; a description of a devil; a description of stalls in a street market; and an excerpt from *La Belle Dame sans Merci* by John Keats. This broad range of stimulus material offered candidates an array of opportunities to display their creativity and technical competency.

Candidates also have the option to produce an abstract Imaginative Composition or an abstract Still Life work following the criteria outlined above.

#### **Imaginative Composition**

Approximately 20% of candidates opted for Imaginative Composition at Ordinary Level. Their submissions were assessed under the following headings: interpretation, composition, personal creative response, art elements and overall finish.

Candidates' interpretation of the passages fell, in general, into two broad categories. The first consisted of a literal translation of the chosen stimulus material into visual form, for example, animals in a zoo, a market stall, and devil figures. The second approach consisted of a very loose interpretation of the passages. Candidates were instructed to explain their starting point and the rationale for their

composition on the reverse side of their sheets in order to make their interpretation and intentions clear to the examiner. Where candidates availed of this opportunity and produced work that reflected their intentions they gained high marks for interpretation. On the other hand, many candidates presented work that did not reflect in any discernable way any of the descriptive passages. The practice of using previously practiced compositions that did not relate to the descriptive passages is not acceptable.

Most compositions were in landscape format and demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the concept of foreground and background. However, the arrangement of shapes within the picture plane was often haphazard. There was a noted lack of figurative work and most candidates who chose to produce an outdoor scene displayed little understanding of perspective.

The marks awarded for art elements were generally low, demonstrating a lack of awareness of the importance of paying attention to elements such as form, tone and texture. Candidates have the option to work in a variety of media but there were many instances where it was obvious that candidates were attempting to work with media with which they had little familiarity or practice. Most work consisted of a pencilled outline subsequently filled in with colour, such as markers, paint or chalk pastels.

Many candidates attempted to obtain a sense of realism in their work but, in most cases, did not have the skills to realise their intentions. On the other hand, a minority of candidates were imaginative in their interpretation of their chosen passages and responded by selecting an appropriate medium which they used with individuality and confidence. In such instances high marks were gained for personal creative response.

When viewing each candidate's imaginative composition as a whole, and taking into account the overall finished piece, most of the work presented was in the lower attainment range demonstrating little evidence that candidates used the week prior to the examination to prepare. However, in a minority of cases the work submitted was relevant, well composed and executed with competence.

### **Still Life**

Approximately 80% of candidates took the Still Life option. The overall performance of candidates was higher than of those who took the Imaginative Composition option. Candidates' work was

evaluated under the following criteria: composition, use of media, representation of form and volume, personal creative response and evidence of technical skill.

The instructions of the State Examinations Commission require each candidate to select his/her own still life objects based on personal interpretation of the descriptive passages and then to set up an individual arrangement. Some centres did not fulfill these requirements and worked instead from communal arrangements. In such instances it should be noted that candidates scored very low marks for composition. Examiners reported that the quality of composition has improved markedly, where the objects appeared to have been arranged with a degree of thought rather than by happy accident. In many instances a draped background was incorporated. As well as the standard compositional approach of having the group of objects arranged centrally in the picture, an increasing number of candidates chose to represent a cropped and/or enlarged view of their groups. This led to a greater focus on shape and form, leading to some very successful work. Fruit, teapots and china cups were the most commonly represented objects. At the lower end of the attainment range a sizeable number of candidates produced work that consisted of objects presented in small scale, centrally on the sheet surrounded by large areas of white.

High performing candidates' use of media, in general, had an affinity with the real textures of the objects. Those who scored well under 'media' also gained high marks for personal creative response, underlining the link between both criteria and also with the representation of form. The work of those who achieved a low grade was frequently executed in marker or pencil on a white sheet, displaying little evidence of study, practice or knowledge of the process of producing a still life work. However, in general, examiners were impressed with the range of media and the confidence in approach and execution, underlining the importance of using the week prior to the examination to prepare.

### **Abstract Composition**

This option of creating an abstract Imaginative Composition or Still Life work is increasing in popularity at Ordinary Level. On the whole, the submissions tended to be mixed in quality, with some well executed pieces. However, the highly sophisticated nature of the submissions in some instances coupled with a formulaic approach in whole centres, led examiners to question whether some candidates' interpretation, personal creative response and individual compositional approach were genuine.

## **2.2.2 Design or Craftwork**

### **Introduction**

A separate examination paper for each of Design and Craftwork, was issued by the SEC to schools and distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination. Candidates used this week to research their chosen question by means of a preparatory sheet which they were allowed to bring into the examination to act as a stimulus. The examination took place in schools in May. Craftwork was marked in schools by examiners appointed by the SEC, while the Design examination was marked in Athlone, also by examiners appointed by the SEC.

Stimulus material for the Design paper consisted of a description of exotic plants and animals from a passage from *The Other Side of Eden* by Richard Newton, and a short story describing an urban scene by Charles Dickens, entitled *Out of Town*. Candidates had the choice of answering one of eleven specific questions in the Design paper. In the case of the Craftwork option candidates designed and made a specific item from a choice of fourteen different crafts inspired by specific topics/titles. At Ordinary Level 32% of the candidature took the Design paper and 68% the Craftwork paper.

### **Design**

In the examination, candidates were required to produce preliminary sheet showing how their ideas were developed from their preparatory sheets, and a final design proposal. Candidates' work was assessed under the following headings: interpretation, development, realisation, finished design and presentation.

### **General Observations**

Interpretation was generally relevant to the questions as set, but research frequently did not reflect the fact that candidates had a week to prepare. Nevertheless, those candidates who were in the higher achieving range, displayed a good understanding of the design process and followed it through sequentially. At the lower end of the attainment scale candidates frequently reproduced a copy of all, or part, of their Preparatory sheets as Preliminary sheets, thereby not addressing the purpose of the Preliminary sheet at all. This approach also indicated a lack of understanding of design as a process and of the concept of a 'design proposal' as opposed to a finished craft piece. Few candidates included any technical annotation or references. It also proved difficult for

examiners to identify which question had been answered as the question number was not indicated in a large number of cases.

Paint and chalk were the most popular media used and often proved to be unsuitable choices. Loose pencil sketches were successfully used for the preliminary work. Answering was concentrated mainly on Questions 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9.

The following is an analysis of candidates' responses to individual questions.

**Question 1. Lettering and Calligraphy**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Question 2. Linocutting and Printing**

A sizeable number of candidates who chose this popular question produced final design proposals for single colour prints. The proposals were usually in the form of pencil sketches. For the most part, they failed to include any of the essential technical information required for lino printing, such as proposed cuts, colours and separations.

**Question 3. Fabric Printing and Batik**

This was quite a popular question. Candidates generally completed an overall repeat pattern using good linkage and appropriate colour choices. However, references to the technical aspects of fabric printing or batik were generally omitted.

**Question 4. Embroidery**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Question 5. Weaving**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Question 6. Pottery**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Question 7. Puppetry**

Most candidates who opted for this question indicated an understanding of the fundamentals of puppetry and concentrated on expressive characterisation. Finished proposals were generally produced using paint or oil pastels. However, most candidates did not include adequate technical information, such as materials to be used, construction techniques and finishes.

**Question 8. Bookcraft**

Designs for book covers, similar in standard to those produced at Junior Certificate level, were the norm. Candidates paid little attention to the choice of materials, proposed assembly of the finished craft item or to choices of binding and ties in their proposals.

**Question 9. Advertising Design**

This was by far the most popular question in this component. The production of fully finished posters rather than design proposals was widespread. In general, layout was well considered with appropriate use of positive and negative elements. Computer generated lettering and lettering produced from homemade stencils were popular, but little attention was given to the suitability of the font to underpin the message of the poster. The use of stock poster designs that had, at best, but a tenuous relationship to the passages or questions was the approach taken by a sizeable number of candidates, often from whole centres.

**Question 10. Modelling and Carving**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Question 11. Stage Sets**

Too few candidates chose this option to make a general comment.

**Craftwork**

During the week prior to the examination the candidate had the option of producing a preparatory sheet where he/she recorded research of his/her chosen question. He/she was allowed to bring this preparatory sheet into the examination to act as a stimulus. In the examination the candidate was required, firstly, produce a preliminary sheet that indicated the development of design ideas from the preparatory sheet and that also acted as a blueprint for the craft item about to be made.

Secondly, the candidate was required to make a craft item as designed in the preliminary sheet. The

work submitted was assessed under the following headings: development of ideas, design, process and craft skills.

### **General Observations**

In general, examiners reported that craft skills were competent but a significant number of candidates did not submit Preparatory and /or Preliminary sheets. The Preparatory sheet represents the first essential stage of the design and making process, i.e. research. Where submitted, such sheets consisted of magazine cutouts, downloaded images from the Internet and photocopied images with little original drawing or other artwork. Characteristically, they displayed a distinct lack of exploration and experimentation, where candidates moved little beyond their initial idea. The Preliminary sheets, the essential step between the Preparatory sheet and the production stage, were in general, a direct copy of an image in the Preparatory sheet. Many Preliminary sheets were annotated in the past tense indicating that these sheets were not conceived as blueprints or working drawings but, rather, were produced after the craft item had been made. Such an approach defeats the purpose of the Preliminary sheet. Few candidates indicated the technique to be employed to make the craft item.

The following is an analysis of candidates responses to individual questions.

#### **Question 1. Bookcraft**

This was the eight most popular craft. In general, candidates scored well for interpretation. However, in design and execution many encountered difficulty by attempting over ambitious approaches. In a minority of cases, concentrated at the higher end of the achievement scale, candidates allowed the topics to dictate the shape of the folder, producing covers that included relief designs, were colourful and eye-catching, and employed a range of handmade textured and marbled papers.

#### **Question 2. Calligraphy**

This was the sixth most popular question. Candidates who chose this craft tended to be well prepared in appropriate craft skills. Marker pen was used to good effect and candidates demonstrated a practiced knowledge of the craft. Harmony between text and image proved to be an area of difficulty where both were treated as separate entities rather than as a single entity.

### **Question 3. Poster**

This was by far the most popular question at Ordinary level. Candidates who had followed the process sequentially through the stages of research and development, and used an appropriate level of craft skills to execute their intentions, scored very high marks. However, in general, examiners reported much repetition between Preparatory and Preliminary sheets which affected the marks for development. Paint and colouring pencils were the preferred media, however, the lower achieving cohort displayed a lack of control, or indeed, understanding of the properties of the media used. Simple straightforward designs worked well, where the message of the poster was clear. Typically, layout consisted of one central image with lettering placed either above or below. Typography had an unpracticed quality, was mostly hand drawn with little evidence of ‘ruling the page for lettering’.

### **Question 4. Weaving**

Too few candidates answered this question to make a general comment.

### **Question 5. Linoprinting**

This was the third most popular question. Candidates in the high scoring cohort clearly demonstrated a very good understanding of the craft, producing simple designs that translated into accurate, clean prints. Candidates in the lower achievement range tended to treat the craft as a drawing exercise and demonstrated little understanding of the role of positive and negative shape and the reversal of images. Many attempted to work from over ambitious designs, and as critical analysis of work in progress was not a factor in the work of most candidates, appropriate alterations that would have allowed for successful completion were absent.

### **Question 6. Puppetry**

This was the fifth most popular question. A majority of candidates who selected this craft presented marionette and rod puppets. A wide variety of approaches was employed, including the making of heads from foam, balsa wood, quick drying clay and plaster bandages. The most accomplished work reflected good practice, beginning at the design stage, following systematic and well-rehearsed procedures to produce puppets that followed the examination paper specification and thereby met the criteria of the marking scheme. Less accomplished work was exemplified, in particular, by poor function where marionettes were not correctly strung and arms and legs were rigid.

**Question 7. Screen Printing**

Too few candidates answered this question to make a general comment.

**Question 8. Hand Printed Textiles**

This was the eighth most popular question. Where candidates adopted a systematic approach to both design and execution, their submissions were in the higher achieving range. Such candidates displayed a consideration for elements such as linkage and flow in their designs and employed overprinting to obtain extra colours. In the lower attainment range the work was characterised by inappropriate design decisions coupled with an obvious lack of practice in the craft. These two aspects combined to produce designs that were 'over busy', and thereby technically difficult to execute.

**Question 9. Batik**

This was the seventh most popular question. Apart from the work of a minority of high achieving candidates, Batik at Ordinary Level was characterized by levels of craft skill that did not enable candidates to realize their intentions as indicated in their Preliminary sheets. Generally, the work showed an appropriate choice of colours but, in execution, much of the imagery was unclear and candidates resorted to giving definition through hand painting. The use of tjanings was seldom encountered.

**Question 10. Pottery**

This was the fourth most popular question. A sculptural approach was popular but frequently the techniques employed did not allow the candidate to construct a feasible piece of pottery. In general, the standard of finish was inadequate as many items were cracked and/or had sharp edges. Most of the work was fired but not all was glazed.

**Question 11. Embroidery**

This was the tenth most popular question. Most candidates favoured a contemporary approach to the craft of embroidery. Some very high quality work was produced which included a full array of techniques such as machine embroidery, hand embroidery, appliqué and beading. In some instances the use of colour appeared to be dictated by the availability of threads and fabrics rather than by the dictates of the candidate's design proposal. In such instances the work often lacked clarity and cohesion.

**Question 12. Woodcarving**

Too few candidates answered this question to make a general comment.

**Question 13. Metalwork**

Too few candidates answered this question to make a general comment.

**Question 14. Modelling**

This was the second most popular question. Quick drying clay was the medium of choice of many candidates. However, a significant amount of the work submitted in this medium was cracked, indicating that the candidates in question lacked the basic skills needed to successfully produce sculptured pieces using this material. Commonly, candidates painted the finished work rather than using light falling on surfaces and planes to emphasize form.

### **2.2.3 Life Sketching**

Candidates were required to produce two drawings of the model; the first was of a fifteen-minute pose where the model is in a standing position and the second was a more fully worked drawing of a thirty-minute seated pose. Candidates had the option of drawing the full figure or the head and shoulders for the second pose. The examination, which was of one hour duration, took place in schools in May and was marked in Athlone by examiners appointed by the SEC.

In the Life Sketching examination candidates were required to draw the human figure from direct observation, representing the model in two-dimensional format on an A2 sheet. Life Sketching is a skill that is gained, largely, through practice both in drawing and in the selection of appropriate media to carry out such drawing. The following criteria were used to assess the work presented: composition, form, proportion, the use of light and shade, and in the case of the second pose, marks were also allocated for the treatment of detail.

Examiners were of the opinion that the standard of Life Sketching at Ordinary Level has improved. Overall, the first pose was more accomplished than the second and candidates achieved a relatively higher mark. The majority of candidates took the head and shoulder/half figure option for the second pose. Where candidates chose this option composition was well understood. However, dealing with proportion and foreshortening proved to be a difficult area for many Ordinary Level candidates.

Pencil, on a white ground, was the favoured approach. However, the wider use of oil and chalk pastels and charcoal was noted as a positive development towards a more personal expressive response. Few candidates availed of the possibility to use sugar paper or colored ground. Higher achieving candidates selected a medium that reflected their strengths and presented their drawings as full rounded figures. At the lower end of the attainment range work was characterised by an obvious lack of practice in both representation and in the use of media. Lack of knowledge was evident from approaches, used by candidates, such as drawing both poses on the same sheet, the use of landscape format for the standing pose or very small figures afloat in a sea of white. The practice of viewing the model from behind or from a position where the model's hair covered his/her face was noted in a number of centres. In such instances candidates precluded themselves from displaying their ability to depict detail such as the face and thereby achieved low marks under this heading. Schematic drawing of the body and of detail such

as earrings, eyelashes and personal details rather than observed recording of what was viewed by the candidates was a common feature of Life Sketching at Ordinary Level.

## **2.2.4 History and Appreciation of Art**

### **Introduction**

This written examination comprises three sections as follows:

- Section 1 - Art in Ireland,
- Section 2 - European Art
- Section 3 - Appreciation of Art.

Candidates were required to answer three questions, one from each of the three sections. The examination paper contained twenty questions. The written examination, which was held in June, was of two and a half hours duration.

The following is an analysis of candidates responses to individual questions.

### **Section 1: Art in Ireland**

#### **Question 1. (Sun disc /torc)**

This was the most popular question in Section 1. Candidates were well versed with the sun disc and torc, giving detailed descriptions of the production process and of the style of decoration, whilst using the accompanying illustrations to maximum benefit. However, only candidates achieving the higher scores used technical terms such as ‘repousse’ and ‘inscribing’. A large number of candidates either did not attempt part (c) or discussed an object from a different period, such as the Iron Age or the High Christian Period. Sketches were generally of a good standard but rarely deviated from the given illustrations. However, a minority of sketches included details of the metalwork techniques, thus providing information that supplemented written responses.

#### **Question 2. (Cross of Moone)**

This was the second most popular question in the Irish section. Typically, candidates presented descriptions of the provided illustration but lacked adequate knowledge to describe the cross as a whole. However, a minority of high achieving candidates comprehensively described the cross’s environment, the relief carvings and the meaning of the carvings. A large majority of candidates successfully outlined the function of the cross and named another, most popularly the High Cross at Ahenny. However, many candidates did not describe the cross they had named. Almost all candidates included sketches and used the given illustration to maximum effect.

**Question 3. (Book of Kells)**

In general, answering was typified by inadequate knowledge of this topic. A minority of candidates mentioned symmetrical and geometrical types of decoration and included terminology, such as ‘intertwining’ and ‘knotwork’, but the majority did not use any art specific vocabulary. However, some candidates mentioned animal skin and calfskin as the material but few used the word ‘vellum’. The Book of Durrow was the most popular second manuscript chosen by the small minority of candidates who addressed this aspect of the question with varied quality of answering.

**Question 4. (Georgian building)**

This was a popular question and was, in general, attempted by high achieving candidates. Those who had obviously visited a Georgian building had a solid basis of information and knowledge from which to draw. Some candidates gave a detailed explanation of the location of their chosen building. In answering the second part of the question, fanlights and black and white tiled floors were discussed enthusiastically. Relevant supporting sketches aided the written answer for part (c) of the question.

**Question 5. (Walter Osborne)**

The accompanying illustration offered a rich source of imagery for discussion. Candidates who scored well, genuinely engaged with the illustration and had a good knowledge of other Irish artists. Examiners were of the opinion that many candidates did not understand the term ‘composition’ but, discussed it indirectly. A wide variety of interesting interpretations of the figures and subject matter was proffered. Jack B. Yeats and Paul Henry proved to be the popular choices for the final aspect of the question.

**Question 6. (Figurative sculpture)**

This question was answered by a small number of candidates who possessed descriptive and analytical skills regardless of their knowledge of Irish public sculpture. All proffered an opinion on their favourite piece and gave reasons that were reflective and mature. Those candidates who named another piece of public sculpture often selected works that they had encountered in their local churches or in galleries.

**Question 7. (Choice of artist)**

The very small number of candidates who answered this question were well-prepared and had obviously been to an exhibition of their chosen artist's work. All parts of the question were well answered, and detailed descriptions of subject matter indicated a genuine engagement with the work described. Materials and techniques were well understood. Almost all candidates named and described another piece of work by their chosen artist. Sketches were relevant and effective.

**Section 2: European Art**

**Question 8. (Romanesque and Gothic)**

This was the second most popular question in the European section. Candidates tended to list the architectural features of both styles rather than discuss them. Those who were well prepared used appropriate terminology to describe the various features, but many confused the two styles. Naming a church or a cathedral did not cause a problem for the majority; however, very few gave an adequate description of the decoration of their chosen church or cathedral. Notre Dame, Paris, and Autun Cathedrals were the two most popular choices. Sketches tended to provide additional information on architectural features, rather than on decoration.

**Question 9. (Donatello)**

This was the least popular question in this section. In general, candidates had a good knowledge of Donatello, *Mary Magdalene* and *David* being the two most favoured works to be discussed. Well prepared candidates discussed the various works to a high standard and usually gave two informed reasons why they found them interesting. However, candidates in the lower achieving range presented inaccurate information and frequently confused Donatello with Michelangelo.

**Question 10. (Choice of artist)**

This was the most popular question in this section. Michelangelo and Leonardo were the most frequently chosen artists. Uccello and Masaccio also featured but to a much lesser degree. The most popular works discussed were *The Last Supper* and the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo and *David* and the Sistine Chapel ceiling by Michelangelo. Candidates generally presented knowledgeable descriptions of their chosen work and achieved high marks by outlining two well presented reasons why they found them interesting. Most sketches were labelled and informative.

**Question 11. (Van Gogh)**

This was the third most popular question in this section. The quality of answering ranged across the attainment spectrum. The illustration provided candidates with an opportunity to engage with a richly textured and foreboding work; most candidates responded enthusiastically, describing the atmosphere in the painting whilst referring to brushwork, colour contrasts and the colour scheme. The choice of a relatively unfamiliar work as an illustration gave the candidates the opportunity to list a more commonly known work as the second painting and almost all succeeded in this regard. Selections included *Sunflowers*, *Self Portrait*, *Bedroom at Arles* and *Starry Night*. Candidates wrote at length about Van Gogh's background (c), often recounting salacious details. Sketches were generally effective, some included colour to show Van Gogh's brushstrokes.

**Question 12. (Choice of works)**

The majority of candidates who attempted this, the fourth most popular question in this section, chose Van Eyck's, *The Arnolfini Wedding*. In general they displayed a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and of the symbolism within, recalling various well-known anecdotes relating to this painting. However, the concept of composition was not well understood or well handled. Other popular choices were *The Deposition of Christ*, *Sunrise*, and *L'Absinthe*. There were a few excellent answers on Degas, Monet and Turner. Answers on Giotto were generally not well informed and revealed a high degree of confusion.

**Question 13. (Guernica)**

This was the fifth most popular question in this section. A large number of candidates did not understand the concepts of composition and technique. Many guessed the basic meaning of the painting and that the subject matter was about war or violence by analysing the illustration. Very few named a second work by Picasso; however those who did were knowledgeable. As with other questions which were accompanied by an illustration, this question also attracted a high proportion of candidates who were solely reliant on the illustration for their answer.

**Question 14. (Dali)**

The many candidates who attempted this question had, in general, little knowledge of the painting in question or of Dali and relied on the accompanying illustration. Most struggled with the terminology in part (b) and neither discussed any of the symbols or imagery present in the work nor

named the term 'Surrealism'. Naming and describing the second piece separated the candidature into appropriate grades as those who relied solely on the illustration were unable to respond successfully. Many did not attempt part (c) or a sketch.

### **Section 3: Appreciation**

#### **Question 15. (Playground site)**

The large-scale appeal of this, the most popular question in Section 3, was probably due to the fact that it could be answered, in the main, by visual means. Sketched responses with little written discussion predominated, some of which were of such a high quality that they obviated the need for lengthy textual responses. Part (b) was answered very well by most candidates, many giving more than two safety steps. Many candidates gained full marks for site safety as most recognised the traffic and water hazards adjacent to site. The vast majority of candidates gained very high marks for this compared with their other answers.

#### **Question 16. (Team badges)**

This was the least popular question in this section and was generally well answered by those candidates who saw the opportunity to draw on personal experience. Some of the most successful answers were obviously based on real sporting clubs of which the candidates were members. Discussion of the chosen badges was well considered in general, with candidates referring to the historical, social or political symbolism in the badges, use of colour, imagery and shape. Sketches were generally relevant, providing additional visual information.

#### **Question 17. (Design of school reception area)**

This was one of the least popular questions in this section. Candidates generally followed the format of the question and answered in a methodical fashion. The vast majority of candidates gave their school reception area a detailed make over as required, drawing reference from popular television programmes. Suggestions, in general, were confined to potted plants, notice boards, fish tanks or elaborate art works, whilst a minority argued the case for the inclusion of jukeboxes. Sketches were generally informative with some candidates using colouring pencils very effectively.

**Question 18. (Gallery / museum)**

This was the second most popular question in this section and was attempted, in general, by candidates who had clearly been to an exhibition and were well prepared. Only a small minority failed to name the gallery / museum they visited. Visits to the National Museum and National Art Gallery were popular choices but many also cited local galleries and specific exhibitions.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned positive approach of many candidates, a sizeable number proffered stock answers that did not meet the specific requirements of the question. However, higher performing candidates included discussion on lighting, labelling, methods of displaying work and the provision of information through various methods such as guides, catalogues, information technology and bookshops. Many sketches were effectively labelled.

**Question 19. (Garden furniture)**

The two accompanying illustrations provided an effective starting point for description and discussion. Most candidates excelled in part (a) of the question. However, part (b) proved more challenging but when addressed, the limitations and benefits of various material were well considered.

**Question 20. (DVD cover)**

This was the third most popular question in this section. Candidates generally identified and described a particular DVD cover of choice and briefly explained why they thought it was well designed. In answering part (b) of the question, candidates rarely used the prompts provided and referred only to imagery, colour and lettering. The majority of candidates failed to mention that covers are used to protect the DVD.

## 2.3 Conclusions

- Examiners reported that the examination papers were fair and appropriate to Ordinary Level.
- The majority of work submitted for the Imaginative Composition component was in the lower attainment range, where many candidates continued the practice of using previously rehearsed compositions with little reference to the specific stimulus material provided.
- The standard of composition in the Still Life component was generally high.
- Many candidates in the lower attainment range displayed distinct lack of practice in their chosen media.
- Many candidates did not use the week prior to the examination to prepare adequately for Imaginative Composition, Still Life and Life Sketching.
- The purpose of the Preparatory and Preliminary sheets is not well understood at Ordinary Level. A significant number of candidates did not submit any such sheets for either Design or Craftwork.
- In the Design component many candidates did not include technical information regarding the production of their design.
- Candidates were reasonably well prepared for the Craftwork examination but many lost marks for the Preliminary sheet and for finish.
- Life Sketching was of a higher standard than in the past.
- In the Art History and Appreciation examination many candidates appeared to rely solely on the accompanying illustrations, and did not seem to have any knowledge of the work in question.

- Candidates' lack of art specific vocabulary was noted. Examiners commented on the lack of understanding of terms such as 'composition', 'layout' and 'features'.
- In the Appreciation section candidates responded well to questions that related to their personal experience.

## **2.4 Recommendations**

- The improving standard of Life Sketching should be encouraged. Candidates should avail of the opportunity to apply this skill to the Imaginative Composition component by including figure based imagery.
- The role of the Preparatory and Preliminary sheets should be included as an essential step in the learning process for Design and Craftwork.
- The use of stock answers should be discouraged in all components.
- Candidates should not rely on the accompanying illustrations as the sole means of answering a particular question/s in the Art History and Appreciation components.
- An appropriate level of knowledge of relevant art specific vocabulary should be encouraged in order to allow candidates to fully understand the questions as posed in the Art History and Appreciation component.

### 3. Higher Level

#### 3.1 Performance of Candidates at Higher Level

The following table and graph show the overall performance of candidates at Higher Level over the past four years when all four components of the examination are included.

Table 4: Percentage of candidates achieving each grade at Higher Level 2002 – 2005

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
<b>2002</b>	6509	7.0	36.1	41.8	14.4	0.6	0.1	0.0
<b>2003</b>	7012	7.7	38.5	40.6	12.5	0.7	0.0	0.0
<b>2004</b>	7239	4.4	32.6	42.4	19.1	1.3	0.1	0.1
<b>2005</b>	7633	4.0	32.1	43.9	18.9	1.0	0.1	0.0

## **3.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance**

### **3.2.1 Imaginative Composition or Still Life**

#### **Introduction**

This examination paper, covering both the Imaginative Composition and Still Life options, was issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to schools and distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination. Candidates were afforded the opportunity to research and select personal approaches, to develop ideas for their compositions and to select media and objects for their still life arrangements during this week. The examination, which is of two and a half hour duration, took place in schools in May and was marked in Athlone by examiners appointed by the SEC.

In 2005, the descriptive passages consisted of excerpts from *That They May Face the Rising Sun* by John Mc Gahern which described a rural setting; *The Fortunes of Solitude* by Jonathan Lethem provided urban images; *The Star of the Sea* by Joseph O'Connor described a storm at sea; *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig offered candidates an array of motorcycle images; a passage by JRR Tolkien described the flight of a dragon, and a passage from the *Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope provided an opportunity for multifaceted interpretation. By providing such image orientated stimuli, candidates were afforded a wide range of opportunity for artistic stimulation and expression. Stylistically, a realistic approach predominated for both Imaginative Composition and Still Life.

#### **Imaginative Composition**

Approximately 15% of candidates opted for Imaginative Composition. Candidates' work was assessed under the following headings: interpretation, composition, personal creative response, art elements and overall finished work.

It was clear that most candidates had made a genuine effort to interpret their chosen passage as stipulated in the instructions, to visualise the possibilities inherent in it, and to devise a personalised pictorial solution. Most followed the instruction to state the rationale for their composition on the reverse side of the sheet thus providing examiners with additional information regarding interpretation. In general, the work was relevant to the passages, and candidates thereby achieved high scores for interpretation. The most popular was Passage A, where candidates produced mainly

landscape scenes, and in many cases also included depictions of various animal and the characters 'Jamesie' and 'Mary'. In interpreting Passage D, many candidates produced figurative work incorporated in innovative compositions such as reflections from the mirror of a Harley Davidson. Passage F inspired stylised depictions of girls looking into mirrors, applying make up or dressing their hair. Passage C prompted strong and expressive depictions of storms at sea. Passage B was chosen by a minority of candidates who presented simple graffiti and hip-hop imagery. Those candidates who used their life drawing skills in this component gained optimally as they availed of the opportunity to transfer their knowledge from one component to another. Happily, this practice of applying knowledge across components, particularly in the case of figure-based imagery, was noted to be on the increase. Candidates who were, in general, in the lower attainment range opted for passage F producing imagery that included flowers, butterflies, rockets, fireworks and fountains.

The quality of composition varied. At the higher end of the attainment scale candidates combined a focused application with natural aptitude to produce high quality pictorial imagery in line with examination specification. In such cases candidates achieved full marks under all headings. However, in many instances beautifully developed and rendered imagery was not effectively composed, for example, where the sheet was not seen in its entirety as a composition of both positive and negative space.

The personal creative response of candidates was somewhat formulaic, but competent, in the mid range of attainment.. At the lower attainment range the work frequently had a haphazard appearance with little evidence of practice, or indeed, engagement with the process. However, most genuine Higher Level candidates have grasped an understanding of the importance of the various art elements when composing and executing an artwork.

When viewing each candidate's imaginative composition as a whole, and how the various aspects come together in the completed work, candidates who were in the high achieving range presented relevant, well-composed, well-executed and expressive Imaginative Compositions. In the mid range much work was competent and candidates scored well through diligent application of the skills and competencies gained through practice. At the lower end of the attainment scale much work lacked the basic representational and technical skills needed to sit the paper successfully at Higher Level.

## **Still Life**

Approximately 85% of candidates took the Still Life option at Higher Level. Candidates were required to make an individual selection and arrangement of objects based on their interpretation of a choice of the descriptive passages outlined earlier. The work was evaluated under the following headings: interpretation, composition, personal creative response, art elements and evidence of skill.

Candidates were required to indicate their interpretation on the reverse side of their work, thus providing additional information to examiners in relation to interpretation and intention. In many instances candidates produced predictable, though valid interpretations. In other instances candidates engaged creatively with the stimulus material and included objects, which although not specifically mentioned in the passages, reflected the sense and meaning of the text in question. Passages A, C, D and F were the most popular sources for candidates' arrangements. Arrangements depicting Passage A frequently included fruit and vegetables, jams and preserves, whiskey bottles, tea sets and sandwiches. Passage C inspired compositions depicting boating objects, lifejackets, nets and shells. Candidates who chose Passage D presented compositions with motorcycle gear, helmets, parts of engines, chains, tools, goggles and items from a garage. Depictions of Passage F included cosmetics, hairsprays, jewellery boxes and mirrors.

The selection and arrangement of appropriate objects has a fundamental formative influence on the final outcome in terms of composition and appropriateness to the candidate's level of ability to depict the chosen objects in two-dimensional format. The fact that candidates are afforded one week to plan their composition should ensure that well planned compositions are the norm. Unfortunately, this was not always the case. Particularly at the lower end of the attainment scale many candidates paid little attention to this essential aspect. On the other hand, there were many excellently composed and relevant submissions, which demonstrated strength and vitality in the work, and were the obvious result of having researched and found aesthetically interesting and challenging interpretations of the passages.

Candidates worked from close up, traditional pyramid layout and enlarged sections. Crayon, pastels and paint were the most favoured media. Those whose skills were of a high order, displayed a confidence and assurance that allowed them to gain high marks through their recognition of the importance of art elements such as line, shape, colour and texture.

Overall, composition was of a higher standard in 2005 than in previous years. Many fine wash renderings, controlled and appropriate line work, and innovative use of paint coupled with the effective harnessing of a light source, contributed to the success of the work. In general, the most vibrant and successful work tended to be in a medium other than pencil.

Mid range candidates tended to struggle with the process of depicting three dimensions in two-dimensional format, presenting work that, although competent in many respects, lacked spontaneity and was somewhat formulaic. These candidates, though diligent in their application of the process, did not possess the knowledge or skills to execute the work to a high standard. However, such work reflected a genuine effort commensurate with the candidates' level of ability and was rewarded accordingly. A common weakness lay in the treatment of the background where, if included, it did not visually complement the depicted objects and often had the appearance of having been added later without awareness of the integrated nature of all aspects of a composition.

At the lower attainment level much of the work presented was tentative, unpractised and lacking in any kind of assurance. Such work, typically, displayed poor technical skills and did not clearly relate to any of the descriptive passages. One would have to question the decision of some such candidates in taking Art at Higher Level.

### **Abstract Composition**

A tiny minority of candidates took the Abstract Composition option. In general, the work presented was at the lower end of the achievement scale and lacked both conceptual and technical qualities.

### **3.2.2 Design or Craftwork**

#### **Introduction**

A separate examination paper for each of Design and Craftwork, was issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to schools and distributed to candidates one week prior to their sitting the examination. Candidates had the option of producing a preparatory sheet during the week prior to sitting the examination and bringing this sheet into the Design or Craftwork examination to act as a visual prompt.

The examination took place in schools in May. Craftwork was marked in schools by examiners appointed by the SEC, while the Design examination was marked in Athlone, also by examiners appointed by the SEC.

In the case of the Design paper candidates were required to answer a specific question from a choice of eleven relating to the included descriptive passages. The descriptive passages for Design consisted of excerpts from *Taltos* by Anne Rice, describing a cityscape; *The Skull Beneath my Skin* by PD James describing a seaside town; and from *The Electric Michelangelo* recounting the days of seafront music halls. In general, the passages motivated the candidates well, resulting in valid and imaginative interpretations for their design solutions.

In the case of the Craftwork option candidates were required to select one question from a choice of fourteen. Stimuli consisted of named topics/themes.

At Higher Level 24% of the candidature took the Design paper and 68% the Craftwork paper in 2005.

#### **Design**

Each candidate submits a preparatory sheet, which is produced during the week prior to the examination, together with a preliminary sheet and final design proposal which are produced in the examination.

The contents of the preparatory sheet consist of a selection of personal interpretations and researched ideas relating to the question the candidate has chosen. This work is done during

the week prior to the examination and may be executed in a wide variety of media and may be annotated. However, all work is presented flat on to an A2 sheet.

The A2 sheet of preliminary work is done during the examination. This is a development sheet where the candidate explores ideas that are in the preparatory sheet. All aspects of 2D or 3D design, as appropriate to the chosen question, are explored and evidence is included of significant further development of the ideas that are in the preparatory sheet.

The final design proposal, which is the final step in the process, includes such information that the candidate considers necessary to communicate his/her final design proposal, with particular reference to relevant visual, functional and material characteristics rather than concentrating solely on the production of a piece of highly finished artwork.

The following headings were used to assess the Design component: interpretation, development, realisation/suitability, finish/evidence of skill and finished design.

### **General Observations**

Answering was concentrated in the main on Questions 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9. Although no marks are allocated to the Preparatory sheet, this sheet represents the essential first step in the process of designing and/or designing and making a craft item. Higher performing candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the function of the Preparatory sheet by producing research ideas and visual information that provided the foundation for their subsequent work. In general, Preparatory sheets consisted of cut-out images worked in collage, textured materials, embossed paper with a limited amount of mixed media and few sketches. A minority of candidates did not submit Preparatory sheets at all, thus diminishing the basis on which to develop successful designs.

The Preliminary sheet continues to be a problem area for some candidates. It frequently consists of a direct copy from the Preparatory sheet or a version of their finished work with no evidence of considering different ideas, of synthesis, analysis or of making adjustments to the work in progress.

Candidates scored high marks where they were obviously experienced in the craft they had chosen and produced design that took into account the salient aspects of that craft, and its possibilities and limitations for the designer.

The following is an analysis of candidates responses to individual questions.

### **Question 1. Lettering & Calligraphy**

Poster design was the most popular option within this question. The standard of answering was low, where an obvious lack of knowledge of the craft of calligraphy and/or of lettering resulted in many candidates losing marks in section (c) (realisation/suitability) of the marking scheme. These candidates provided little information on their Preliminary sheet or indeed finished sheet, explaining how their design was to be carried out.

### **Question 2 Linocutting and Printing**

This question did not have a high uptake but, where taken, the standard was high. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the craft, submitting designs in black and white and in two and three colours. A successful balance of colour, texture, shape, and positive and negative spaces was the norm. However, the minority of lower performing candidates displayed an obvious lack of knowledge of the properties of linoblock printing and presented line drawings without reference to the technical aspects of the craft.

### **Question 3 Fabric Printing:**

This was quite a popular question and well executed by many candidates. The most popular option was (a), a repeat pattern for a nursery. Candidates took their starting point from a range of topics for example, ballet dancers, racing horses, carousels and ice cream. Fish and birds motifs were popular for the beach option where candidates demonstrated good knowledge of half-drop repeat pattern making. Some excellent use of colour was noted. However, a sizeable number of candidates lost marks in the area of development as their designs were a direct copy of work in their Preparatory sheets.

### **Question 4 Embroidery**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment. It is thought the candidates who specialised in this craft opted for the craftwork examination.

**Question 5      Weaving**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment. It is thought the candidates who specialised in this craft opted for the craftwork examination.

**Question 6      Pottery**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment. It is thought the candidates who specialised in this craft opted for the craftwork examination.

**Question 7      Puppetry**

This question was a popular choice but not well answered in general. A high number of candidates did not explain, or show, how their puppets would be made or function. Instead they presented paintings of puppets as still life figures with no indication of measurements, materials, construction techniques or function (part (c) of the marking scheme). The more popular interpretations included clowns, acrobats, jesters, and characters from the funfair.

**Question 8.      Bookcraft**

A small number of candidates chose this question. Some confused a folder with a book cover in section (a). Frequently candidates indicated measurements and general layout but demonstrated confusion in the layout of the cover and in the placing of lettering. Lettering on the spine was often up side down or back to front.

**Question 9      Advertising Design**

This was by far the most popular question. Option (c), the billboard design, produced some imaginative work where candidates used collage and where the lettering complemented the work optimally. Proficient and imaginative responses to the design for a bus indicated that candidates respond creatively and skillfully to the challenge of an unusual question.

**Question 10      Modelling**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment. It is thought the candidates who specialised in this craft opted for the craftwork examination.

**Question 11      Carving**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment.

## **Question 12      Stage Sets**

Too few candidates took this option to make a general comment.

## **Craftwork**

Each candidate submits a preparatory sheet, which is produced during the week prior to the examination, together with a preliminary sheet and a finished piece of craftwork which are produced in the examination.

Work was assessed under the following headings: development of ideas, design, process and craft skills.

## **General Observations**

When candidates produced preparatory sheets with substantial research, sketches, annotation and experimentation, such work generally led to successful designs at the preliminary sketch stage. Some centres opted for a number of thumbnail sketches with descriptions. This method enabled candidates to work out a number of related ideas and allowed Examiners to see exactly the origin of their ideas. Candidates thereby secured high marks for development. Despite the good practice outlined above there was significant repetition of images from the Preparatory sheet where ideas did not undergo any development but were copied directly to the Preliminary sheet. The development of a blueprint, which is the function of this sheet, was not well executed in a number of candidates work. Also, annotations frequently indicated that the sheet was produced at the end of the entire process rather than being used as an ongoing reference point throughout. The stipulation that candidates should work directly onto their Preliminary sheets was not adhered to in some centres.

The following is an analysis of candidates responses to individual questions.

## **Question 1      Bookcraft**

This was one of the least popular questions. Higher achieving candidates demonstrated an in-depth understanding of bookcraft, exemplified by relevant design decisions and appropriate choices, such as weight of card, papers, and adhesives to ensure sound construction. In most cases the traditional rectangle/box shape was used but there were some imaginative exceptions to this approach where the folder itself, and the top/lid, were cut into a shape in keeping with the theme of the question. At

the lower end of the attainment range the work was exemplified by poor design decisions, inadequate attention to binding, ties, assembly, and an untidy finish.

### **Question 2      Calligraphy**

This was the third most popular question. Candidates used both traditional and contemporary styles and, in general, displayed a good understanding of the properties of this craft including an awareness of spacing and graphic layout, penmanship, and the fusion of imaginative illustration with text. Calligraphy executed in accordance with the examination specification worked optimally as candidates managed to consider the whole page as a single entity. Notwithstanding the above positive points, there was a tendency in some centres toward pictorial effect rather than balancing text with lettering, where many illustrations were well-executed ‘paintings’ in their own right. Media used included paint, inks and coloured markers. Textures derived from layers of tissue paper, collage and mixed media, when used judiciously, enhanced the work. Sometimes little consideration was given to the size of the nibs in relation to the A2 sheet. The use of A1 sheets of paper, which candidates were unable to complete during the examination time frame, was noted in a minority of centres. Such sheets are outside the examination specification.

### **Question 3      Poster**

This was by far the most popular craft. Much of the work presented was of a high quality and was well researched as evidenced in the Preparatory sheets. Candidates displayed an understanding of the relationship between typography and imagery, underlining the function of a poster, and of the importance of graphic elements such as typography, shape and colour in visual communication. In the area of craft skills much of the work was strong and confident, employing a variety of materials from paint to coloured pencils and collage, cut out stencils, and spray-painted backgrounds. Typography, although the weakest aspect, tended to be more appropriate than in the past and included a sizeable amount of hand constructed lettering, a welcome trend. Where candidates work was in the lower attainment range, examiners noted an inordinate amount of repetition through the Preparatory sheet, the Preliminary sheet to the finished piece of craftwork.

### **Question 4      Weaving**

The minority of candidates who chose this craft were well prepared and were in the higher achieving cohort. The most successful submissions contained an appropriate warp with even

tension emphasising a clear knowledge of the process. In addition, an imaginative choice of textures and colours ensured a tactile quality that richly enhanced the finished work.

#### **Question 5      Linoprinting/ Blockprinting**

Examiners reported a mixed standard in this, the fourth most popular craft. The choice of approach varied from printing one to three colours. The option of using a monotone print allowed for a greater emphasis to be placed on textural qualities and on the direction of cuts which resulted in many fine submissions. The stipulation of submitting the lino block itself with the prints for assessment was beneficial to Examiners in assessing craft skills. Candidates in the lower achieving cohort tended not to reverse their images on to the block, an omission that indicated an underlying lack of understanding of the craft process for linoprinting/blockprinting.

#### **Question 6      Puppetry**

This was the fifth most popular craft. The topics gave candidates the opportunity to create strong characters with dramatic presence. A great variety of materials was used, from stuffed tights and scrap material to carved foam and proprietary brands of quick drying modelling material. The most common reasons for low marks were (a) the use of inappropriate materials for the head and limbs, where they were often too heavy to function optimally and (b) poor assembly which had an adverse effect on function and durability. In a small number of centres candidates submitted life size puppets. Whilst they were visually striking, these puppets were unfinished and lacked mobility, being heavy and difficult to manipulate.

#### **Question 7      Screen Printing**

A small minority of candidates opted for screen-printing. Candidates encountered difficulty in designing for flow, movement and linkage and in registration for overprinting.

#### **Question 8      Hand Printed Textiles**

Candidates who opted for this minority craft were well rehearsed and experienced. The standard was high. The concept of a half-drop pattern was understood and designs were appropriate in most instances. However, at the lower attainment level very few candidates made use of overprinting as a means of colour mixing and inaccurate registration and 'bleeding' were common faults.

**Question 9      Batik**

The topics were well interpreted and, in general, Preliminary sketches were appropriate and self-explanatory. Candidates in the higher achieving range displayed a good understanding of the relevant craft skills which included competent brushwork and use of tjanting tools. In line with the specification, hand painting was kept to a minimum by stronger candidates who did not rely on it for clarity of imagery. Candidates are not required to mount their finished work, a practice which has been adopted by a minority of centres. Colours, textures and the qualities of a finished piece are easier to assess when an examiner can hold the work up to a light source.

**Question 10      Pottery**

A sculptural approach proved popular with those candidates who chose this craft. The designs proposed on Preliminary sheets were often not well realised. Most candidates glazed their work although frequently the glazes chosen contributed little to the aesthetic qualities of the finished piece. A number of candidates applied paint to their finished work rather than glaze, a practice which is outside the specification for this craft.

**Question 11      Embroidery**

Most candidates favoured a contemporary style incorporating machine stitching, patchwork, appliqué, hand stitching and beadwork. Preparatory and Preliminary sheets were relevant and led to well considered designs. Appliqué and layering were used imaginatively to create relief and textural effects.

**Question 12      Woodcarving / Carving**

There was a very low uptake for this craft. The standard was very low with unpractised carving skills that resulted in poorly finished pieces.

**Question 13      Metalwork /Construction**

A minority of candidates answered this question. In general, the work presented, almost all enamelling, was of a high standard which demonstrated that the candidates in question had a specialised knowledge of the craft.

**Question 14    Modelling**

This was the second most popular craft. Modelling was generally strong in quality. Examiners noted an imaginative approach to this craft generally. A number of candidates successfully executed technically difficult pieces. Many proposed a site for their finished sculpture in their Preliminary sheets although very few indicated its scale in relation to the site. In general, the structure of the finished pieces was sound and the absence of colour on the finished work has led to an increased focus on textural qualities and on employing the fall of light to define planes and form. Candidates in the lower performing cohort tended to use a paint finish. Quick drying clay was the most popular choice of material although the use of pottery clay has shown a rise in popularity.

### 3.2.3 Life Sketching

As for Ordinary Level, candidates were required to produce two drawings of the model; the first was of a fifteen-minute pose where the model was in a standing position and the second was a more fully worked drawing of a thirty-minute seated pose. Candidates had the option of drawing the full figure or the head and shoulders for the second pose. The examination, which was of one hour duration, took place in schools in May and was marked in Athlone by examiners appointed by the SEC.

Candidates were tested on their ability to draw the human figure in specific poses from direct observation, representing the model in two-dimensional format on an A2 sheet. The work presented was assessed under the following headings: composition, form, proportion, the use of light and shade, and in the case of the second pose, marks were also allocated for treatment of detail.

The fact that the examination paper is issued to candidates one week prior to the examination appears to have contributed to an increasing standard in Life Sketching from year to year. However, it was noted that this high standard was not always matched by an equally high standard in candidates' other practical components. Much of the work presented in 2005 was strong and mature with effective employment of art elements such as line, tone, shape, form and texture.

Compositionally sketches were well laid out and the majority depicted the poses with accuracy. In addition, high achieving candidates displayed their drafting superiority in effective and elegant depiction of detail. The most common approach was pencil on white paper although a small number of candidates used other media such as chalk and oil pastel, colouring pencil, charcoal and various wet media such as water colour, paint and inks. White paper provided the preferred ground but a minority opted for coloured or textured paper – sometimes black or grey with white *conté* or white colouring pencils for tonal accent. At the lower attainment level, often concentrated in whole centres, small crudely drawn, ill proportioned drawings revealed a lack of preparation in the skills required to pass at Higher Level and also reflected lack of prudence in the choice of level.

In general, the first pose was sketched to a higher standard than the second, with most candidates scoring high marks for composition and their ability to depict form and volume. However, candidates frequently lost marks for proportion. While the first pose was sketched with anatomical

correctness by most candidates, some displayed difficulty in depicting hands and arms, and foreshortening.

The second pose presented a greater challenge to candidates. Most opted for the full figure and those who chose the head and shoulder / half figure option depicted the correct pose with accuracy. At the higher end of the attainment scale sketches were vibrant and individual with spontaneous use of expressive line using a variety of media. Less accomplished candidates displayed difficulty with the depiction of detail and also with the proportion of hands and feet and the relationship of each to the other.

### 3.2.4 History and Appreciation of Art

This written examination, comprises three sections as follows:

- Section 1 - Art in Ireland,
- Section 2 - European Art
- Section 3 - Appreciation of Art.

Candidates were required to answer three questions, one from each of the three sections. The examination paper contained twenty-one questions. The written examination, which was held in June, was of two and a half hour's duration.

The following is an analysis of candidates' responses to individual questions.

#### Section1: Irish Art

##### Question 1. (Bronze Age)

This was the most popular and also one of the better-answered questions in Section 1. Most candidates named three Bronze Age objects as required and discussed two in detail but provided much less information for the third example. Most were familiar with the techniques of incision and *repoussé* but few mentioned twisting. Less successful candidates confused the Bronze Age with the Iron Age or wrote at length on the historical background, or presented learned-off general information instead of discussing specific examples as required by the question. Sketches were generally good but only sometimes well annotated.

##### Question 2. (Crosses)

This was the second most popular question in Section 1 with a range of answers across the attainment spectrum. In general, candidates were knowledgeable on the stages of development of the High Crosses. Some concentrated on the early slabs and crosses whilst others chose the 'sermons in stone'. Marks tended to be lost in the area of comparison where candidates demonstrated a marked reluctance to make comparisons or give a personal view. The sketches tended to be quite strong and at times well annotated.

**Question 3. (Ardagh Chalice, Derrynaflan Paten)**

Despite the fact that the paper contained illustrations of the artefacts in question, much of the answering was in the lower range of attainment. Most candidates recognised the Ardagh Chalice but many failed to identify the Derrynaflan paten. Candidates tended to give a basic description of the Ardagh Chalice but failed to describe its decoration or any of the techniques used in its production. Few candidates displayed knowledge of the influences of the development of metalwork. However, a minority did refer to other periods but did not always make appropriate connections.

**Question 4. (Irish Romanesque)**

There was a low uptake of this question. Higher performing candidates had an in-depth knowledge of Cormac's Chapel and also drew upon their general understanding of Romanesque architecture to make relevant connections.

**Question 5. (The Custom House, James Gandon)**

This question was quite popular and was answered, on one hand, by candidates who obviously studied this area in great depth and consequently achieved high marks and, on the other hand, by those who had little knowledge and relied largely on the given illustration. A variety of Georgian buildings was chosen but few candidates cited a second example by James Gandon. Sketches tended to be weak but did, however, give information through annotation.

**Question 6. (Frederic Burton)**

Many candidates who chose this question did not possess a lot of factual knowledge about Burton but, rather, demonstrated considerable visual awareness and skills in evaluating *The Meeting on the Turret Stairs*. Some excellent discursive answers correctly identified the theme of forbidden love and loss, and presented effective answers through discussion of the texture, colour, mood and composition. The most popular second examples were by Walter Osborne, Jack Yeats, Roderick O'Connor and William Leech. In general, candidates demonstrated more factual knowledge of their second artist and some made good comparisons in terms of style, technique and subject matter. Sketches were strong for the second choice and sometimes coloured.

**Question 7. (Contemporary Irish Artists)**

The most accomplished responses addressed the question as posed and provided salient argument. However, more commonly, responses tended to consist of stock answers that did not address the

question. The most popular chosen artists were Louis Le Brocquy and Robert Ballagh. Candidates tended to have less knowledge of the second chosen artist and in some cases wrote on an artist that did not appear on the list at all. Higher scoring candidates produced strong sketches.

## **Section 2 European Art**

### **Question 8. (Gothic Sculpture)**

This was the second most popular question in Section 2. In their answers, high scoring candidates displayed a comprehensive familiarity with Gothic sculpture and its relationship with architecture. Specific examples cited included the cathedrals of Chartres and Notre Dame, Paris, and sculptors Claus Sluter and the Pisanos. Such candidates also displayed a clear understanding of the differences between the two periods and used Autun to underpin the points they made. In the lower attainment range candidates tended to use stock answers that did not address the specific aspects of the question and/or concentrated solely on Romanesque period.

### **Question 9. (Choice of Works)**

This question was answered by few candidates. The most popular choices were The Wilton Diptych and The Virgin and Child window from the Chartres Cathedral. Answers were typified by short discussion of the work and by little mention of style and techniques.

### **Question 10. (Renaissance Architecture)**

This question did not have a very high uptake. Typically answers were either relevant, knowledgeable and discursive or, on the other hand, lacked the basic information required. Brunelleschi's Dome was the popular example used. In some instances, candidates presented stock answers on Romanesque architecture.

### **Question 11. (Choice of named works)**

*The Last Judgement* was by far the most popular option taken within this question. Discussion tended to be general with little specific reference to style, specific characteristics, composition and technique. There was little take up of *St. Jerome in his Study*, but it was answered by well prepared, high achieving candidates. *The Night Watch* was quite popular and well answered as candidates

were also familiar with a second work by the artist. *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa* was answered by a small number of knowledgeable candidates.

**Question 12. (The Ambassadors)**

There was little evidence that the candidates who chose this question were either familiar with *The Ambassadors* or had any knowledge of Holbein. They relied on their observation of the illustration but had little knowledge of the messages conveyed through the figures and objects, and lost marks in this section. Few candidates made any reference to Holbein's royal patronage.

**Question 13. (Burial of Count Orgaz)**

There was a low uptake of this question. Most candidates relied solely on the illustration. However, the small minority who were well prepared used the illustration more constructively.

**Question 14. (19<sup>th</sup> Century)**

This was the most popular question in Section 2. Most candidates correctly understood that the question did not confine their answering to Impressionism. A comprehensive range of artists was chosen with lengthy accounts of their work. However, examiners commented that some candidates wrote at length on historical facts and details of artists' lives which were not required by the question. Most candidates presented a good account of a second artist. Sketches were excellent with quite a few in colour.

**Question 15. (Choice by Category)**

This is a perennially popular type of question.

**Nativity scene:** In general, answering was in the lower range of marks. Some candidates did not understand the term Nativity Scene and cited amongst others *The Deposition* by Giotto and *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli.

**An Altarpiece :** Some high achieving candidates discussed examples such as the Ghent Altarpiece. However, a lack of ability to identify an altarpiece was widespread, with candidates discussing any religious painting located in a Church, for example, Leonardo's *The Last Supper*, Giotto's *Deposition*, and the works of Michelangelo.

**A Still Life painting:** Candidates confused portrait painting with still life. Several chose Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. Others proffered in-depth discussions of still life component of other works for example, Manet's *Le Dejeuner sur L'herbe* or Van Eyck's, *The Arnolfini Wedding*. The higher

achieving cohort chose works by Van Gogh and Cezanne and gave well considered knowledgeable answers.

**An Equestrian sculpture:** This was quite well answered by the few candidates who chose it. *Gattamelata* was the popular choice.

**Painting /Sculpture working on the land:** A small number of candidates attempted this question, citing inappropriate choices of artworks. Advisers noted that examples such as Constable's *Haywain* were not used.

**Question 16. (Matisse)**

Most candidates who answered this question had good knowledge of the artist. However, a sizeable minority relied totally on the illustration to provide information for their answer.

### **Section 3. Appreciation**

**Question 17. (Film)**

Candidates who choose *Lord of the Rings* had a far greater in-depth knowledge of how it was produced than those who chose *Shrek*. In general, the stronger candidates discussed sound, camera work, special effects as well as colour, lighting, sets and costumes. Computer effects were familiar to most candidates and especially the fluid animation used for fabrics in *Shrek*. Candidates in the lower attainment range tended to discuss the plot whereas higher scoring candidates addressed the question as set. Sketches were relevant and in some cases included diagrams showing camera angles and zoom shots.

**Question18. (Garden design)**

The standard of answering was high in this popular question. Candidates suggested imaginative and practical solutions to the design problem presented. Proposals were obviously influenced by modern trends in garden design and suggested such features as decking, lights, water features, split levels, paving, barbeque areas, patio heaters, pots and flower tubs. Sketches and diagrams were excellent, and often annotated.

**Question 19. (Gallery visit)**

This was one of the more popular questions in this section. It was obvious from a sizeable proportion of the answers that candidates did not read the question accurately or that they had used stock answers. However, high scoring candidates presented relevant and well considered discussion pertinent to the question as posed. The more popular galleries/exhibitions were, The National Gallery / Museum, The Hunt Museum, The Crawford Museum, IMMA, and many local museums and galleries. Sketches were strong but some unnecessary and /or irrelevant diagrams of plan and layouts were also included.

**Question 20. (Poster)**

Examiners noted that, considering the high uptake for the poster question in both Design and Craftwork, few candidates applied their obvious experience and knowledge of the craft of postermaking to answering this question. They further noted a lack of art specific vocabulary in relation to analysis of the poster. Most of the candidates described the imagery with little reference to typography, colour or balance, or indeed to any symbolic meaning or specific style. Answering of the last part of the question varied from little or no knowledge to detailed discussions on the use of scanners, digital cameras, photocopiers and computers in general. Sketches varied from replicas of the illustrations to detailed analysis of parts of the poster.

**Question 21. (Costume as art)**

This question was well answered by the minority of candidates who chose it. It offered candidates an opportunity to draw upon their experiences in school activities, such as *Form and Fusion*, school plays and musicals. Higher scoring candidates included excellent annotated sketches and diagrams.

### 3.3 Conclusions

- Examiners reported that the examination papers were fair and afforded candidates every opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- In 2005 there was greater adherence to the instructions. Candidates engaged with the texts as required and presented fewer stock answers.
- In many instances individual candidates did not display consistency in standard across all their components.
- It was noted that candidates did not, in general, transfer their excellent Life Sketching skills and knowledge to Imaginative Composition.
- The approach to composition was noted to be of a high standard in the Still Life component.
- The importance of the Preparatory and Preliminary sheets is not understood by all candidates at Higher Level. Frequently the Preliminary sheet consists of a direct copy from the Preparatory sheet or part thereof.
- Teaching and learning in the Design and Craftwork components are increasingly concentrated on a small number of crafts.
- Many candidates at the lower end of the achievement range did not have the skills or knowledge appropriate to Higher Level.
- In line with previous years, answering tended to be concentrated on a small number of questions, indicating that candidates are being exposed to less of the Art History and Appreciation course each year.
- Categories and genres were often confused by candidates in the Art History and Appreciation component.
- Candidates do not apply their knowledge of art practice to their answering in the Art History and Appreciation component, particularly when discussing a particular work.

### **3.4 Recommendations**

- Candidates should practice the integration of their life drawing skills into Imaginative Composition and thereby transfer their skills from one component to another.
- The Preliminary sheet should be use to analyse stimulus material contained in the Preparatory sheet and to tease out ideas for the design or craft item to be produced. Development of ideas should be apparent in the Preliminary sheet.
- Candidates should ensure that they understand relevant art terms.
- Candidates should ensure that they can identify the various art movements and genres relevant to the syllbus.
- Candidates should be made aware that the over concentration on individual components is ill advised.