



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2015

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Ordinary Level

100 marks are assigned to this paper, i.e. 25% of the overall marks for Art

Monday, 27 April – Friday, 8 May Morning, 9.30 – 12.00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Monday, 13 April**

Instructions

You may work in colour, monochrome, mixed media, collage or any other suitable medium. However, the use of oil paints or perishable organic material is not allowed. You are not allowed to bring aids such as stencils, templates, traced images, preparatory artwork or photographic images into the examination.

Write your Examination Number clearly in the space provided on your A2 sheet.
Write the title 'Imaginative Composition' or 'Still Life' immediately below your Examination Number.

If you wish to work on a coloured sheet, **the superintendent must sign this sheet before the examination commences** confirming that it is blank. Maximum size of sheet: A2.

Choose one of the following:

- 1.** Make an **Imaginative Composition** inspired by **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D or E. Your starting point and the rationale for your Imaginative Composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.
- 2.** Make a **Still Life** work based on a group of objects suggested by, or described in **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D or E. You are required to bring relevant objects to the examination centre for the purpose of setting up **your own individual** Still Life composition. **This must be done in time for the commencement of the examination.** Your starting point and the rationale for your Still Life should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.
- 3.** Make an **Abstract Composition** inspired by and developed from **one** of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D or E. Your starting point and the rationale for your Abstract Composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet, indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen. State clearly whether your Abstract Composition is following **1** above – Imaginative Composition, or **2** above – Still Life.

Descriptive Passages

Passage A

The Dark Hedges are not easy to find. You must follow a serpentine road along an idyllic stretch, past sheep, and glens and yellow fields of rapeseed until somewhere between the sleepy towns of Ballycastle and Ballymoney — if you keep your eyes peeled and your foot off the gas pedal — you spot a shadowy lane flanked by centuries-old beech trees. These are the Dark Hedges. Their sinewy branches twist toward the sky like the many arms of the Indian goddess Durga. The highest boughs stretch across the lane to the trees on the opposite side, their leaves overlapping, eclipsing the sun. Locals say this place is haunted by a solitary ghost known as the Grey Lady.

“No one ever used to come here,” said David McAnirn, a tour guide, on a rare balmy June morning. “Now hundreds come each day.”

The reason for the deluge? It was written on the T-shirts of a handful of tourists snapping photos amid the Hedges: “Game of Thrones.”

Chronicling a war among dynasties for an Iron Throne in the imaginary land of Westeros, the fantasy series is a cult hit suffused with intrigue and moody landscapes. The latter is making this area a magnet for fans who want to visit places like the Dark Hedges.

As I would learn the next day while driving north on the Coastal Route, the fairy-tale quality of the landscape alone is worth a visit, whether you know the difference between Wildlings and White Walkers or not. A good chunk of the series is filmed on or near this route and the landscape is startling, as if it ought not to exist outside a child’s imagination. The greens are so vibrant you suddenly find yourself questioning whether you ever really saw green before. The white horses in the fields seem like escapees from a Mary Poppins-style carousel.

Among the most idyllic spots shown in the series is Ballintoy Harbour, built in the 1700s and still a working harbour. You won’t see obvious vestiges of the show, but I arrived one Saturday afternoon with some “Game of Thrones” fans, who were spending the day walking in the footsteps of their favourite characters. Off a bus and down a steep hill we trudged, past a graveyard, to Ballintoy Harbour, where fishing boats bobbed, their bells clanging softly. Fog made it impossible to separate ocean and sky. If a boat were to become unmoored, you might believe it could sail to Neverland.

Adapted from *Following ‘Game of Thrones’* by Stephanie Rosenbloom, The New York Times, July, 2013.

Passage B

Out-of-town visitors are excused if they get overwhelmed walking down a busy city street. There’s so much going on that no one can possibly take it all in. Locals long ago learned to filter the sensory onslaught: some people watch, looking for fashion trends or admire architecture, or even nature watch. A rarer tactic, and one well worth trying for a weekend, is to focus exclusively on street art, the un-commissioned, un-commercial forms of expression that pop up on buildings, footpaths and street signs and go way beyond traditional graffiti.

Marc Schiller, co-founder of the Wooster Collective Web site, which exhibits photos of the best street art in the world, knows most people look straight past street art until they start looking for it. Street art can be drawings on paper that have been wheat-pasted onto the side of a building; images stencilled right onto walls; sculptures screwed onto a stop sign pole; even tiles arranged to form 1980s video game aliens.

First, that eye training. Where to look? On and around doors, on abandoned buildings, on shuttered windows, above your head, near the ground, on poles and street signs, traffic signals and phone boxes and scaffolding. A years-old image half torn down or covered with other images is part of the experience.

Doing a little homework will vastly improve your experience. Several Web sites will help you get to know the most prolific artists, and then you'll be able to spot them on the street. No art history background required; it's not like distinguishing Cézanne from Matisse, it's more like Michelangelo vs. Roy Liechtenstein.

Nowadays you can see a lot of street art in galleries. It's a trend that concerns some – but it's good for your weekend if it starts raining.

Adapted from *To the Trained Eye, Museum Pieces Lurk Everywhere* by Seth Kugel, The New York Times, March, 2008.

Passage C

We climb to the top of the staircase and enter his studio. I am shocked by the disorder of it. “I don't allow Zoe to clean my studio,” he shrugs, taking in my expression. “I'm afraid moving around dust will damage the canvases. Now, by the windows, we have work to do.”

I hurry toward the windows, which are spread over an entire wall and almost completely covered by a linen curtain. The sunlight seems to enter as if through a film, and dust specks flicker in its subdued beam. Edgar rummages through a deep cupboard as I survey the massive studio – glass jars and bottles, paint covered palettes, brushes and chinks are strewn everywhere, easels jumbled together, sculpture stands, tables, armchairs and stools piled with screens, picture frames, rolls of canvas and paper. The click of my heels echoes on the wooden floors. I don't see a place to sit down, so I change into my ballet slippers by leaning over on one foot. In the large studio, I feel very small. He pulls out a large roll of paper and quickly sharpens a few pencils. I stand uncomfortably between him and the windows and nervously scratch my back.

“Hold that pose,” he cries, and I freeze. “You're a natural; I love awkward gestures like scratching your back.”

Immediately my arm begins to cramp, but I ignore it and try to take my mind off it by observing the studio. I am still amazed that it is so unkempt. The high walls are completely bare even though he must have so much artwork to hang. Amidst all of the clutter I strain to hold my pose quietly even though my limbs have been aching for what seems like hours. I focus my eyes on the floor, amusing myself by tallying up how many different colours of paint it is stained with. I count twenty-eight, if shades of the same colour can be categorized as a new colour. As he rummages through his paints, he speaks to me about his friends and the new style of painting they are bringing to Paris.

“We're going in a completely different direction than every artist before us,” he says excitedly while mixing colours. His words are rapid and almost agitated. “We're not painting rigid portraits or religious murals. Observing life is what we are striving to do”

Adapted from *Dancing for Degas* by Kathryn Wagner, Random House Publishing, 2010.

Passage D

It's festival season – but gone are the days when music fans made do with bad burgers and warm beer. There was a time when if you wanted to enjoy a few days of live music and dancing about in a field with your friends, you'd have to sacrifice at least two things: personal hygiene and any quality control over what you ate – burgers, chips, stale sandwiches, fizzy-drinks and maybe ice-cream. But festivals weren't about food.

Not so today. When hunger strikes, from posh nosh to spit roasts, pizzas, ethnic grub and hearty pies, the food trail helps you refuel in style.

The pick of any Festival has to be The Beef Boutique – a VIP area stall, which sells meat from rare breed, pasture reared cattle and also serving up sourdough pizzas, which they flash bake in a wood-fired oven. Posh nosh for the elite – even the chips are freshly carved from locally grown spuds. London fishmongers Seacow are, by now, a festival staple. Their fish and chips with minted peas are always good, but tempura prawns, whitebait and plaice goujons are also worth a go. Other familiar names include Flaming Cactus – for burritos and tacos, and Rocket & Relish who dish out gourmet burgers from an Airstream trailer. Their chargrilled chicken breast, marinated in soy with ginger and lemongrass – served on a bap with sweet chili sauce, onion and tomato – is a knockout.

There's something about the open air that fills me with sausage cravings, and there is no shortage of pork at the Picnic. Nor is there a shortage of stalls declaring their own brilliance, among them The Splendid Meat Company and The Real Food Company. Their kangaroo burgers, I cannot vouch for. Panners, specialise in sweet and savoury crepes. If you're looking for a sugar hit go to Born to Bake, which bakes frosted cupcakes, cookies, tray bakes and muffins. For brownies, check out Sweet Things, where they also serve fresh Belgian waffles.

What else? Oh yes, pies. How could I forget pies? There shall be pies galore, all fighting for your euro. For vegetarians, there are acres of luscious green grass, but if that becomes tedious you could hunt down vegetables, a fruit smoothie or there's a bloke selling nuts and seeds in the Farmer's Market.

Adapted from *Electric Picnic: When Hunger Strikes* by Angela Flannery, The Irish Independent, 2010.

Passage E

My town is nowhere you have been, but you know its ilk. A roundabout off a national road, an industrial estate, a five screen Cineplex, a century of pubs packed inside the square mile of the town's limits. The Atlantic is near; the gnarled jawbone of the coastline with its gull-infested promontories is near. Summer evenings, and in the manure-scented pastures of the satellite parishes the cows lift their heads to contemplate the V8 howls of boy racers tearing through the back lanes.

I am young, and the young do not number many here, but it is fair to say we have the run of the place. It's well after 8pm, though still bright out, the warm light infused with that happy kind of melancholy that attends a July evening. I am sitting with Tug Cuniffe at a table in the alfresco smoking area of Dockery's pub. The smoking area is a narrow concrete courtyard to the building's rear, overlooking the town river. Midges tickle our scalps.

Marlene is the nearest thing I've had to a steady girlfriend. I ran into her in Fandango's on the Friday. There was the usual crowd; micro-minied girls on spike heels, explosively frizzed hair, spray-tan mahogany décolletage. There were boys in button-down tablecloth patterned shirts, their shirtsleeves rolled up to their elbows. We exchanged bashful, familiar smiles.

Marlene lives with her mother, Angie, who even at three in the morning was up and sat at the kitchen table, leafing through a TV listings magazine and supping a cold tea. She filled the kettle and asked if we wanted a cuppa.

Adapted from *Young Skins* by Colin Barrett, Random House Publishing, 2014.

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