Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2016

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Ordinary Level

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

Tuesday, 3 May – Friday, 13 May Morning, 9.30 – 12.00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Tuesday, 19 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

Together we pushed on the big wooden doors, and they swung open on squealing hinges. The large room beyond was a kind of atrium, the high ceiling supported with buttresses like the ribs of a huge animal. Light glowed from globes of yellow glass that hung down out of the dark on thick cables. The stone floor was so dark it seemed to absorb the light. Corridors ran off in three directions. There were no sounds except for the slap of our feet against the stone. It was the quietest school I'd ever been in and the coldest. The air seemed wetter and more frigid inside than out.

Mom stopped at a door and waved for me to catch up. Stenciled on the frosted glass was *Office of the Principal*. From inside came a slapping noise, a whap! whap!, that sounded at irregular intervals. The office was dimly lit, with yellow paint that tried and failed to cheer up the stone walls. Two large bulletin boards were crammed with tattered notices and bits of paper that looked like they hadn't been changed in years. At one end of the room was a large desk, and behind that sat a woman wearing a pile of platinum hair. No, not sitting–standing. She was not only short, but nearly spherical. Her arms, almost as thick as they were long, thrashed in the air. She held a fly swatter in each hand and seemed to be doing battle with a swarm of invisible insects. Her gold hoop earrings swung in counterpoint. "Shut the door!" she yelled without looking at us. "You're letting them in!" Then thwack! She brought a swatter down on the desk. Her nameplate said Miss Pearl, School Secretary.

The doors nearest the office were all in the 100s. The doors were all closed, though from some of them I heard voices. Then I found the stairs and went up. I reached the second floor to find another row of closed doors. I put my hand on the doorknob–and then it swung open, pushed from the inside. A very tall white woman in a very long black dress looked down at me. She seemed to be constructed of nothing but straight edges and hard angles, like the prow of an icebreaker ship. Her black hair, shot with gray, was pulled back tight against her head. Her nose was sharp as a hatchet, her fingers like a clutch of knives. "Mr. Harrison," she said. "I am Mrs. Velloc." Her lips barely moved.

She led me downstairs and along a corridor to a cavernous room, the cafeteria. The serving line was on one side, and wooden tables filled the rest of the space. I picked up a large wooden bowl and tin cup. One by one the students passed the counter, where a pair of lunch ladies filled the bowls with a steaming, chunky stew. The air smelled of vinegar. I held out my bowl. The lunch lady, a thick–necked woman with horsey teeth, held out her ladle. When she moved I caught a glimpse of the kitchen behind her. A woman who could have been her older sister stood at a metal table holding a huge silver fish, perhaps three feet long, by its tail. The creature twitched weakly in her grasp.

Adapted from *Harrison Squared* by Daryl Gregory, Titan Books, 2015.

Passage B

Frankie Dettori's phenomenal success as a jockey is rivalled only by his love of food and his family. He is a master in the kitchen and cooks for his family at every opportunity. Frankie, his wife Catherine and their five young children divide their time between Newmarket and their extended family in Sardinia.

"My earliest memories of food and cooking are by most standards fairly sophisticated. My mother's cooking, whilst simple in technique and not given to fussy sauces, was to say the least eclectic. This is because what she cooked on any given day depended on what fresh produce she found at her local market in Milan. This diversity was compounded by the three blissful months we spent in Sardinia with my grandparents every summer. Every day my Nona would prepare a wonderful array of fresh local produce. This could be anything from line–caught eels and suckling pigs to home-made cheeses and wild boar. All the vegetables she served were fresh out of the ground from her *orto* (vegetable patch). There were tomatoes the size of a fist that tasted of tomato in a way that I've never tasted since, figs so ripe they dripped with syrup, huge succulent peaches and the sweetest grapes I've ever tasted. Best of all, my grandparents produced thirty litres of olive oil from their own trees.

I'm happy to say that my kids love their food and are not fussy, finicky eaters. I'm sure this is because they eat proper food, not so called children's food. Sure, Catherine tries to sneak in extra vegetables here and there but overall they do ok. My son Leo will try anything once. We gave him prawns the other day and he loved them. It's also important for me that my kids recognise their Italian roots, so we eat a lot of Italian in my house, balancing it out with the odd shepherd's pie and bangers and mash, which I also love.

When I cook at home there are always half a dozen people milling around me (as well as assorted cats and dogs) playing, talking, tasting, laughing, bickering and, of course, opening the odd bottle of wine. As they say in Italy 'the most important thing in life is to eat together as family'.

There is nothing in the world that tastes as good as Italian ice cream 'fatt'in casa', that is to say 'homemade'. *Gelaterie* in Italy are on every street corner and 'andare a prendere un gelato' (going for an ice cream) is the equivalent of going for a pint. I make my own and these recipes are simple, especially if you have an ice cream maker."

Adapted from *Frankie Dettori's Italian Family Cookbook,* Harper Collins, 2007.

Passage C

He got off the bus downtown and he set out walking toward his own district; he had always liked to walk. In this rather dowdy and noncommittal bit of the city there were still small shops; independent markets, unappetizing little restaurants, and so on, struggling along with the overwhelming competition of the great High Street Outlets.

One of those shops under the ramp was a secondhand store; the sign above the windows said ANTIQUES and a poorly lettered, peeling sign painted on the glass said JUNK. There was some squat handmade pottery in one window, an old rocking chair with a moth–eaten shawl draped over it in the other, and, scattered around these main displays, all kinds of cultural litter: a horseshoe, a hand-wound clock, something enigmatic from a dairy, framed photographs, slightly chipped vases, figurines, used reading glasses in their cases, old costume jewellery, old telephones, obsolete game consoles, a well-thumbed rosary, and a stack of old hi-fi records, marked "Gd Cond", but obviously scratched. Moved by the impulse, he went in.

It was cool and rather dark inside. A leg of the ramp formed one wall, a high blank dark expanse of concrete, like the wall of an undersea cave. From the receding prospect of shadows, bulky furniture, old toys, boxes of cutlery, candelabras, precarious stacked teacups of all shapes and colours, decrepit acres of paintings and fake–antique spinning wheels now becoming genuinely antique though still useless.

From these tenebrous reaches of no–man's–things, a huge form emerged, seeming to float forward slowly, silent and reptilian. The proprietor raised a crooked left elbow and said, "Good day. Do you wish an object?"
"Thanks. I was just looking."
"Please continue this activity," the proprietor said.
It withdrew a little way into the shadows and stood quite motionless. He looked at the light play on some ratty old peacock feathers, observed a 1950 home-movie projector, a blue and white tea set, a heap of magazines, priced quite high. He hefted a solid steel hammer and admired its balance; it was a well-made tool, a good thing. "Is this your own choice?" he asked the proprietor, wondering what the proprietor might prize from all this flotsam of the affluent years.

Adapted from *The Lathe of Heaven* by Ursula K. Le Guin, Scribner, 2008.

Passage D

The place I spent my childhood summers holds the most glorious, golden memories that cannot be improved by time, or by rose coloured spectacles. I can picture scenes of happy children playing in a world of colour as clearly as if it was yesterday. The experience is like stepping into a painting, a very special painting.

Childhood then was a time unencumbered by the constant call of technology; it was an era full of invention, imagination and games. The days seemed full of excitement. Best of all, at least in our family, it was a time when the issues of the adult world had absolutely nothing to do with us.

Our grandparents had a big, rambling, charming house that lent itself to children's holiday visits. It could not be described as a grand country manor; it was a spread out, higgledy-piggledy affair, full of nooks and crannies. There were dark staircases up to small landings, with doors leading into lots of rooms, some big, some tiny. The place seemed simply enormous to us children. In a downstairs room a yellow bird sang in a pretty, cream coloured cage and like many homes at that time, on huge sideboards were various stuffed birds, resting on their perches under glass domes. The real magic bit was at the back, where my grandmother had created an enchanted garden. This absolutely vast place – or so it was to us – was an adventure in itself; a child could almost get lost among the growth.

Left to ourselves, we lived in a magical world full of escapades. We slid down haystacks or fished with a jar and a little net on a bamboo handle. Progressing to wild and sometimes dangerous games; we tested our vigour, faced our fears and discovered our strengths and weaknesses. The absolutely forbidden practice of leaping from a wall onto the back of the old, patient horse, sliding off, crashing to the ground, then climbing up and doing it again, was one of our chief delights. Later, we proudly compared our bruises. It seems to me now that we laughed from morning to night.

There were long, idyllic days when we weren't running wild in the surrounding countryside, when we spent time in our grandmother's garden. Heavenly, drowsy days spent reading our books or talking to her, the only sound the drone of the bees, the chirping of song birds and all around, the scent of many marvellously coloured flowers. Her garden was the stuff of – indeed may have been inspired by – a Mildred Anne Butler painting.

I keep a postcard of 'The Lilac Phlox, Kilmurry', painted almost one hundred years ago by that wonderful artist. Something about this quiet, peaceful colourful work brings me back to those childhood summers. The painting is not of a formal garden; it is of a wide, overgrown drive, with a brilliant splash of Lilac among the many shades of green and yellows. There is an open gate at the end, inviting us in to the painting. I like to think that perhaps behind the gate there is an old summer house, like the green and white one we used to play in...

Adapted from *Childhood Summers* by Jane Shortall, Mining Memories, www.writing.ie, June 2011.

Passage E

Tar was soft underfoot in Keogh's yard. One dog slept between the bars of an upturned cattle feeder. Another sat alert on a stack of fertiliser bags. Keogh, his everyday white shirt untucked as a concession to the weather, was standing in the shade of the supplies shed, a huge barn-like structure full of things he sold to the farmers of the area: the feedstuffs for cattle and sheep, the seeds and grain, the bales of twine and drums of oil. Fencing posts of different lengths and shades stood against the back wall. Tyres and hubcaps and old engine parts, culled from worn-out tractors and jeeps, were piled and hung and pegged in corners.

He watched as Tom approached, not moving or speaking until a few feet separated them. Keogh was a rich man. The half–rusted carburetors and planks of timber had made him more money, over the years, than had the bags of grain and the gallons of petrol and the shop and the bar all put together, but of this he showed no sign. The white shirt was the same shirt the whole week long: grubby by Tuesday, filthy by Thursday. The van he drove was years old, deeply dented along one side.
"Have you twine left?" Tom asked.
Keogh laughed at the question. "Have I twine, Tom? Plenty of twine, too much of the stuff. That's what I have."

Adapted from *Solace*, by Belinda McKeown, Picador, 2011.

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