

# VISUAL ARTS

## Introduction

In 1995 8332 candidates presented for 2 Unit Visual Arts, with 3762 students presenting for 3 Unit (Additional) in either practical or written studies of the Visual Arts. The majority of the 3 Unit students submitted a second artwork.

The following report includes comments about the submitted artworks in both 2 Unit and 3 Unit and the two written examinations.

Students continue to submit a wide range of works encompassing all categories from painting, which attracts the majority of submissions, to the smaller areas of design and jewellery.

The most successful artworks are sophisticated statements of student understanding of the visual arts. They reflect accomplished interpretations of artistic traditions, processes and conventions along with personally innovative responses to materials, concepts and subjects, and a knowledge of the visual arts. The successful artworks suggest a sustained level of involvement in the process of artmaking, rather than a first attempt or a one-off try-out of an idea. These artworks appear resolved and complete. In the most successful works students demonstrate an understanding of the expressive potential of the selected media and a thorough personal investigation of subject matter and ideas.

All submissions should be produced in accordance with the Subject Rules and **may be itinerantly or corporately marked**. This means that failure to conform to the Subject Rules will prejudice the submission. All students must anticipate the packaging and transportation of their artwork and ensure that it conforms with the prescribed dimensions of form and weight. Particular attention should be given to the strength of the work.

Students are reminded that excessive frames and other presentational devices do not advantage the submission. Drawings and photographs are best presented in cardboard mounts and without frames. Glass is not permitted in any submitted artwork because of potential danger. Mannequins should not be included in wearable submissions.

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### Studying Images and Objects

The more successful responses in the written examination were sophisticated responses to the question. Excellent answers addressed all parts of the question, utilising a complex and individual understanding of the visual arts. The better responses were well written essays supported by appropriately selected examples. In these responses students described, explained, analysed and interpreted examples and issues in the visual arts using a range of art concepts. Here students were able to evaluate visually and to support opinions based on a knowledge of the visual arts.

### Section A : Making Artworks

#### Ceramics

There has been a growing trend away from functional ceramics toward sculptural, hand-built works, ranging from abstract, organic forms to culturally derived subject matter. The skilful exploration of ceramic materials for their qualities of plasticity, colour, texture and wet/dry surface treatments has increased, with candidates displaying an empathy with the materials, which included matt glazes, slips, stains and oxides. Some candidates utilised the results of experiments with glaze recipes. It is pleasing to note the growing use of underglazes in both painterly and decoratively patterned works, rather than the undesirable use of acrylic paint and lacquer.

The Ceramics submissions were dominated by a variety of sculptural and coiled, hand-built forms. These often reflected primitive and ancient cultures or modern art movements in both their form and decoration. Such works were characterised by expressive surface treatments. There were some submissions of wheel-thrown works, with few pieces displaying the high level of technical skill traditionally associated with this technique. Slip-cast works were extremely rare and were generally poorly finished. Similarly, slab-built forms attracted few submissions this year and often displayed technical faults in joining and construction.

The more successful ceramic works demonstrated advanced technical ability, with candidates clearly understanding clay as a medium. Works showed an integration of form and decoration as well as a sensitive and astute handling of subject matter. Candidates showed that they understood the aesthetic qualities and expressive potential of ceramic materials such as plasticity, surface texture, colours and tones. They elected to submit works that were successful individually or as a series of related forms. These works were a culmination of media experimentation and not the experiments themselves. Some explored the boundaries and limitations of materials, taking risks with materials and forms to produce works that were well-resolved in regard to both design and construction. The more successful works integrated construction, surface treatments and firing techniques and had a good weight to size ratio.

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Average submissions were reasonably well constructed but, nevertheless, reflected a lower level of engagement with ceramic processes. Generally decoration did not complement the forms. There was a limited exploration of subject matter, and this was often clichéd. Simple construction techniques were used with an unsympathetic treatment of surfaces; some minor cracking was evident. These works also displayed limited knowledge of ceramic traditions in terms of form and techniques, and were characterised by unresolved areas within the form, or between the series of forms.

Less than average submissions displayed poor construction and finishing, reflecting a limited ability to control the clay. This was shown by uneven contours, sharp edges and raised burrs. Very simple, frequently poor, construction techniques were used, often with badly finished joins and major cracking. Surface treatments were frequently unsympathetic in terms of both the media and the subject matter. Some of these works were unfired.

Some of the larger works were over 34.5 kilograms in weight and, therefore, did not conform to the Subject Rules, reflecting a poor weight to size ratio that was indicative of crude construction techniques. It is important that, when choosing works for submission, the most well resolved, finished pieces should be submitted for marking, while process pieces or experiments should be omitted once they have been surpassed in aesthetic quality and resolution.

### Collection of Works

In this category candidates submitted a wide range of works in a variety of media. This year there was a trend towards the submission of photographic and many mixed media works as collections of works. A number of the submissions contained a sculptural element and more videos were submitted as parts of collections this year.

It is important for teachers and candidates to have a clear understanding of the Subject Rules as they apply to this area, as many submissions clearly did not conform to the specifications as indicated. This is particularly noticeable in regard to scale and number of submissions. There is a growing practice of submitting into this category collections consisting of works carried out in only **one** media. Installation works were also included in this category, but these were generally recategorised as sculpture. Any work submitted as an installation must conform to the Subject Rules in terms of size, weight and duration.

In collections of works subject matter and media strongly represented the students' immediate environment and/or interests. Some submissions appeared to have no relationship to any obvious external sources, material in the local environment, or the visual arts. These consisted simply of disparate elements grouped together in a generally unsuccessful fashion. In this area particularly, candidates are urged to submit only their fully resolved works, as a lack of informed decision-making exposed the weaker elements and this disadvantaged the collection as a whole.

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In this category there was a range of submissions and the better candidates revealed that they understood the clear synthesis between their particular subject matter and all the practical forms that they employed in expressing their ideas.

The excellent and above average submissions were presented as a unified set or series of works. In each individual unit of the collection candidates demonstrated very skilful artmaking. Each artwork could be viewed as a successful piece in its own right and, when joined together, they formed a unified, coherent work in a well resolved, sophisticated piece. The excellent candidates displayed a mastery over all the forms with which they chose to work and an obvious love of artmaking. They pushed their media areas to the limits and, as a result, these works were mature and confident examples of art-making.

In the average submissions, the candidates generally tried to link all the elements of the collection but they did not quite succeed in achieving this. The subject matter was here treated far more superficially, and often one part of the submission was clearly weaker than the other parts. The conceptual basis might have been strong but the practical execution was poor, or the practical work was good but the candidates had not been able to come to grips with what they were trying to express.

The less than average submissions were characterised by at least one very weak unit and were not linked together in regard to concept, or on any other level. The works were represented more literally and here candidates failed to present works of sufficient technical or aesthetic quality to sustain their ideas. Such submissions appeared to be crude and patchy and to have had little thought applied to either their planning or their execution.

### **Design**

Submissions in the category of Design were extremely varied in their approach and outcome, ranging from advertising campaigns for existing or hypothetical products, posters, illustrations, comic books and fashion designs through to unusual products, toys, games and interior design.

The more successful candidates demonstrated through the sophistication of their submissions their depth of knowledge of design history, conventions and contemporary developments. Less successful candidates showed little awareness of the world of design and the visual arts.

Many students still submitted works which could only be described as colour and design exercises. The more successful candidates approached their work as design problem solving, in response to a design brief; in many cases the brief was also submitted with the work. Sophisticated and well presented design solutions clearly showed awareness of the design process.

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Less successful candidates presented work which did not address a design brief of any kind, and showed little evidence of a sustained engagement with the design process. Some works were directly copied from comics or other commercial designs which tended to result in clichéd, poorly drawn and naïve submissions.

### Drawing

Drawing continues to attract a large number of candidates. There was a noticeable decline in abstract or gestural works and an increase in more conservative or representational drawings. An increasing number of large, scroll drawings were submitted, some with greater success than others. Basketball stars and superheroes were again used in a monotonous and unimaginative way. Students showed a general reluctance to stray from very defined and limited use of materials, with some being unable to move beyond the box of coloured pencils, the 2B pencil or the craypas set.

The more successful candidates submitted conceptual, symbolic or abstract drawings. Where works were representational those who had a skilful grasp of the techniques of drawing; rendering, modelling, perspective or the use of unusual and interesting viewpoints produced the stronger drawings. Often the more representational drawings were based on a well-considered theme or concept and in these students attempted atmospheric light effects and the creation of the illusion of volume and space.

Some candidates presented drawings in which text was an integral part of the submission so that there was a successful link between the images and the text or there was evidence of more tenuous connections which, however, imbued the works with evocative or intriguing qualities. In less successful works the text was either clumsily and inappropriately integrated with the image or not integrated at all.

Many candidates presented figurative and portrait drawings. In the more successful works in this category students constructed their images from a variety of viewpoints and angles or used the conventional theme of family or friends but in such a way as to suggest a range of interpretations, moods or ambiguities.

Where photographs or books were used as source material the better submissions were critically mediated images reflected in a fresh and vital manner. The less able candidates provided little more than direct copies that showed limited engagement with or understanding of the subject matter. These works were also restructured in an awkward way and the use of media was both unsophisticated and clumsy. Those who appropriated the work of other artists and did so at a complex and intellectual level produced drawings which presented these images and concepts in such a way that they changed the impact and the meaning. Many of these references were often subtle or humorous.

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Drawings using a large format that were submitted were varied in quality. Students need to note that **extra size does not automatically mean extra marks**. Larger scale should enhance the choice of subject matter, media and purpose. Series of drawings on a large scale should have obvious relationship and meaning.

In presenting a series of drawings it is best to submit only those works which show to advantage the skills and abilities of the candidate. Less accomplished sections of a series diminish the impact of the work.

The more successful drawings were characterised by the combination of various materials and techniques used confidently as well as careful consideration of the surfaces to be worked on. This might have involved the choice of a better quality paper or the application of textures such as gauze, tissue, impasto, gel medium or calcite grounds to the surfaces or the manipulation of the images by layering.

Some drawings extended the parameters of the accepted definitions of drawing. In such artworks there was evidence of more obvious exploration and experimentation prior to the construction of the submitted work. These works also encompassed more challenging concepts and were characterised by an element of risk-taking in both the choice of subject matter and the choice and manipulation of media. The presentation of drawings was increasingly satisfactory with less use of glass and perspex and an increase in the preferred use of simple and appropriate mounts.

### **Film and Video**

The more successful candidates in this section displayed both an extraordinary competence in handling the media and a high degree of understanding of the communicative potential of film and video. These candidates showed awareness of the importance of planning through storyboards; consequently their artworks were characterised by strong directing and carefully considered camera angles and editing. Such candidates were also able to convey subtle statements through careful selection of content for their films which were invariably enhanced by their technical mastery.

A wide range of styles and genres were submitted here. These included the action film, animations, horror films, music videos, soap operas, documentaries, computer animations, dramatic narratives and comedies. Successful candidates showed a superior understanding of the qualities of their chosen category of film and video and were able to convey their messages directly without too great a reliance upon post-production techniques.

The less successful candidates failed to grasp the general concept of this category. Many of their artworks, however, were characterised by poor editing and lighting, inappropriate sound-tracks and mediated images, vibrating camera work, passive directing and a failure to

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acknowledge sources, or to credit other people or film clips involved. Students are reminded that the audience is an essential element of Film and Video and should be considered in all instances.

All submissions for this category must be able to be viewed, therefore all such artworks, whether Super 8, Super VHS or HI 8 should be transferred to a high quality VHS tape. Slides should be submitted on a standard carousel and all computer animation transferred to high quality VHS tape, **not submitted on disk**.

Candidates are reminded that the Film and Video, in common with other categories for Submitted Works, should be consistent with social expectations. There is no advantage in badly handled, deliberate shock, horror or explicitly sexual material being included in these works. Students are reminded to produce artworks of value and interest to any audience. Further, **students must clear copyright matters when utilising video, film and sound sources**.

### Graphics

Graphics submissions were varied, as in previous years, covering forms as diverse as relief prints, intaglio and drypoint etching, photopolymer, etching, collography, monoprinting, serigraphy and computer graphics, using manipulated scanned or digitised images. There were very few traditional screenprints. Many candidates made adventurous experiments with etching plates, grounds and methods of printing.

In the more successful works candidates demonstrated an innovative approach to their selected form of printmaking, in combination with a definite concept, a sensitivity to images and surfaces, and a sound grasp of technical aspects. Strong works explored personal responses to issues of politics, personal identity, environmental change, and emotional qualities. Here candidates were able to manipulate the processes and materials sensitively to complement the concepts that had inspired their artmaking. Some students demonstrated a confident proficiency in more than one graphic medium, submitting works which combined, for example, etching, lithography and photography.

Experimentation with sensuous surface qualities, such as those which can be achieved with the chine collé technique in either etching or relief printing, or combinations of etching plates and processes including soft and hard grounds, aquatint, sugarlift and photopolymer characterised many of the more sophisticated, complete and successful works.

Candidates using plastic drypoint plates were more successful when they used a variety of techniques such as scratching with sandpaper, applying paint or painting media to the plate, and creating incised marks with a variety of implements. Less successful candidates merely outlined an image, often revealing technical inadequacies in drawing.

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Average works used less adventurous or experimental approaches to the selected graphic medium, and revealed inconsistencies in their technical grasp of the process. Such submissions in etching and relief printing tended to consist of one or two plates printed several times and treated in different ways, for example, hand coloured or collaged. Screenprints tended to rely on paper cut and Riso photo stencils, rather than exploring a range of possible techniques such as hand-drawn direct stencils, gum acacia/wax resists or torn/overlapping paper stencils.

Very few candidates explored the possibilities of colour reduction printing. Less successful works were technically poor, relying on appropriated imagery and a slight and derivated concept. Manipulation of their chosen printmaking medium was minimal. Relief prints from a single block, and plastic dry-point plates predominated. Hand colouring was approached as a form of colouring-in with pencils, drawing skills were rudimentary.

While candidates are not required to submit the printing block or plate, some of the more successful presented a re-worked block as an integral part of their submission. This was particularly successful in collography.

In Computer Graphics, many of the more successful submissions demonstrated a strong and expressive use of digital image-making processes; here students utilised the latest in colour print technologies to achieve very impressive results. These candidates also demonstrated a high degree of competence in the use of software, in many cases exploiting a wide range of techniques to create compelling images which were witty or evocative responses to art and life.

Less successful candidates relied on appropriated images and the capacities of their computer programme, without interpretation and understanding, resulting in extremely superficial works.

It should be noted that a new category of submitted artworks, Computer Generated Imagery, has been introduced from 1996.

### **Integrated Studies**

The Integrated Study continues to attract quite diverse forms of submission, although the interest in and popularity of this 3 Unit Option appears to be declining.

The range of submissions included very sophisticated written studies with supporting artworks, and submissions which were totally integrated word/image concepts such as a presentation simulating a conceptual art piece or glossy journal.

Some submissions were artworks accompanied by a script of 1,000 words. Less successful works were conventional research studies projects with illustrations. A few of these showed

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no apparent art study at all, often dealing with purely personal issues and topics unrelated to a study in the visual arts.

As in previous years, when there was an emphasis on art-making, the study was implicit but supported by a brief text. Where the emphasis was on written text there was some supporting illustration. Poster and book-style presentations were popular. Presentations such as a small item, card or object in an appropriately decorated box is still popular. Favourite themes remain Pop Art, Surrealism and other Modernist styles and artists. Some contributions reflected recent blockbuster exhibitions.

There was a marked decline in the number of poor submissions for this option. This year there were fortunately, very few submissions that took the form of recycled projects from other subjects or revamped visual arts process diaries or artworks with words as an element of the composition, but unrelated to any associated study. This year almost all students seemed to be well aware of the specifications and guidelines for this option.

Successful, excellent and above average submissions were sophisticated combinations of artworks and research and included hand-written text and visual imagery showing a carefully constructed reciprocal relationship between word and image.

The intent of the study was made clear in the supporting 1,000 word paper. The excellent integrated studies consisted of very original responses that contextualised the artwork in contemporary debates, issues and ideas which were ably supported with text. The viewer was encouraged to participate in the study, for example, by unpacking, handling, arranging and touching parts of the works. These artworks were often witty or ironic in applying the content of their study, or took risks by using unconventional topics as the basis of their study.

The average submissions comprised written text and visual imagery which was often clumsy and awkward and not cohesive. The candidates had researched and personally illustrated topics and the written text was punctuated with illustrations. The artmaking in these works tended to be stronger and candidates relied on this area to communicate ideas and concepts. Often the meaning and intent was not clear, convincing or authentic.

The less successful submissions were often unresolved attempts at artmaking and research with ambiguous theoretical underpinnings. Their use of written text and visual images was clumsy and often copied straight from other sources. A presentation which uses collaged images should consist of more than directly cutting from magazines or photocopying art books and pasting the result onto a sculptural or flat surface.

The Integrated Study offers students a unique opportunity to respond to Syllabus requirements with written text and visual imagery. Candidates are reminded that all written aspects of these submissions must observe the academic conventions of citation and reference. Reams of information should not be copied straight from textbooks, catalogues and other sources, and all quotations should be properly cited and references provided.

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### Painting

The submitted artworks in painting included works produced as a single painting or in a series. Candidates continue to use a wide range of painting media including gouache, acrylics, water-colours and oils, along with more innovative combinations of painting media. Again, candidates experimented with widely different forms of applying the materials such as washes, impasto, glazing, staining, scumbling and selected use of gel media. Painting continues to be the preferred medium of a majority of candidates.

Paintings were produced in a wide range of sizes. Candidates are advised to consider the scale of the work carefully. **Big is definitely not always considered better.** The scale of the painting must be appropriate to the expressive intentions of the work and must comply with the Subject Rules.

The persistent themes in Painting were the local environment, issues and images derived from experiences and commentary on the many varied cultural perspectives of contemporary life. An increase in the number of works that utilised multicultural experiences and personal interpretations that challenged the dominant western aesthetic, produced some wonderful images and cross-cultural interpretations.

The use of other artists' works as a source of imagery, inspiration and approach was strong. Historical and contemporary references in the visual arts were common sources in painting. The exploitation of photographic references continued to be popular. Students are advised that direct, unmediated copies of photographs without comment or ironic intervention are not well rewarded. Appropriation and issues of the Post-Modern are increasing, often in clever combination with an historical knowledge of the visual arts. Students are advised to be aware of their obligations under copyright legislation when producing painted works, especially those involving the appropriation of indigenous images and visual codes.

In the submissions for the 1995 examination an increase in more *painterly* works was noted. The painting process is increasingly the subject being explored, with the possibilities in these experiments and investigations presenting diverse results. Candidates appear to be more aware of the use of the surface, as well as the edges and the placement of subject matter as structural elements in the painting. Similarly, the frame as an element in the composition is increasingly being acknowledged, sometimes in the form of a decorated or painted surface itself. A decline has been noted in works produced as abstract, hard-edge paintings although the techniques of this approach are often included in more figurative or expressive works. An enjoyment of and enthusiasm for painting is evident in many of the stronger submissions.

The more successful paintings demonstrated a sophisticated use of painting media. It was clear that these were not the first paintings that candidates had produced. Rather, they were the result of a sustained involvement with painting forms and content. The chosen subject

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matter made personal and individual statements about experiences, feelings and events. Some of these works incorporated the study of images and objects, with a high level of inquiry reflecting a sophisticated understanding of art history, for example, areas of interest such as classicism. The more successful works demonstrated an independent and mature sense of judgment and decision-making about the production of painted works.

The above average submissions were not as conceptually strong as the excellent works. Here candidates utilised experiments, however, as well as exploration of the painting media and a range of ideas. The average works were less *painterly* in quality, often using slight and incomplete washes and thin applications of paint. Relying on cut-outs from magazines and other mixed media additions was of no advantage for weak concepts, poor research or inexperience in working with paint.

The less successful works relied upon crude description, with inconsistent passages of painting and rendering of the images. These often appeared to be first attempts and were frequently unfinished. They lacked the subtlety and sophistication of the excellent and above average works.

### Photography

Photography continues to embrace many new technologies as well as showing challenging, innovative and evocative ways of interpreting ideas and processes in the photographic form. The more successful artworks fully engaged and showed their understanding of how ideas could be interpreted and developed in imagery as well as in selecting appropriate and challenging photographic forms to represent responses and resolve concepts.

Works were extremely varied, and ranged from the pictorial and realistic which showed a high level of competency with the camera, the darkroom and the traditional aesthetics of photography to images in many other varied forms. These included:

computer-generated works;

re-photographed works combining and/or utilising collage, montage, photocopying or computer manipulations, mixed media, image reconstructions and image transfers;

works that incorporated text and narrative, and

works that utilised colour processes such as C41, transparency, Polaroid, colour photocopy, toning and hand-colouring.

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The successful works comprised images of unity, clarity and resolve that showed clear understanding of the relationships and interaction between process, medium and subject. These works presented unique interpretations of subject matter that drew upon an understanding of different photographic styles and genres ranging from fine art photographic sources to slick mass media imagery and the evocative photos of family albums and historical records. Combined with an experienced understanding of their chosen processes, these excellent submissions were synthesised works that expressed ideas in a sophisticated and subtly layered manner.

In average responses candidates often relied on techniques and/or effects to "sell" their work. These works were characterised by an attempt to present an idea photographically, nevertheless many works were not fully resolved or showed that the candidate had difficulty in representing the subject matter to the full. Technically, many of these works were inconsistent, lacking an understanding of what is achievable in the darkroom. Subtleties such as dodging, burning in or understanding paper contrast which were evident in more successful works were often overlooked in works in this category.

In general, these works did not explore and realise the full potential of the photographic process, with parts of many submissions appearing repetitious or weak and lacking unity either conceptually and technically. Often too many works appeared in a series, with some superfluous or poorly completed images often weakening the drama and strength of the whole set.

The less successful works showed little awareness of what can be achieved with the photographic media. These works appeared to have little or no concept of the need for considering the composition of their photographic subjects. They were often repetitive, clichéd, or incomplete, indicating poor technique that seemed to be the result of a limited engagement with the photographic process. It was also obvious that many candidates produced only a few completed images and submitted all of these.

Students should be aware of the Subject Rules regarding the use of glass and plastics for framing as well as the recommended number of works required for submission. Negatives, proofs and test prints should be retained. They should be advised to evaluate carefully the suitability of such things both as an addition of other elements and as the framing of the work. The use of sculptural materials or other media needs to be handled sensitively in a way that enhances the photographic submissions. Inappropriate or elaborate framing devices or clumsy embellishments generally detract from works and are unsympathetic to the ideas and processes evident in the submission. Some candidates would also be better served by making more objective and tighter decisions in the final selection of works for submission.

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### Sculpture

There was a great variety of submissions which explored a sophisticated range of materials, construction techniques and concepts. Many of these incorporated traditional and non-traditional sculptural media. These were readily accepted into this category and appeared as representative works on the sculpture scale.

Submissions were included which could be categorised as *more traditional* in both technique and concept. This did not result in an abundance of clichéd works, but showed a general trend towards more conservative works. The pregnant woman, Popper, the satanic theme, and the damaged environment were not as obvious this year.

Found objects continue to be incorporated into works, with some appropriation, though perhaps less than in past years, and a slight increase in figurative works were evident. There were fewer conceptual pieces, that required their possible meanings to be interpreted. Students are reminded that conceptual works are a valid and contemporary approach to the investigation and production of sculptural works.

Generally, it appears that students submitting works in sculpture are experimenting with the properties of their chosen materials and, consequently, their final work has a sense of polish, quite successfully conveying their knowledge of the properties and potential of the selected materials.

An impressive level of skill was apparent in the excellent works, with submissions including constructions by students who welded, carved, moulded and modelled materials. Wire was a popular medium, creating single works, or being incorporated in works using several media. It was pleasing to note the decline in plaster bandage over chicken wire, a limited sculptural material.

Subject matter was often quite personal, showing strong engagement with ideas, and experimentation with a variety of ways of expressing the chosen theme. Animal themes were popular, ranging from positive to negative views about human interaction with the animal world. There were fewer uninterpreted and clichéd coffins, Barbie Doll images, or unmanipulated found objects, such as shop mannequins, furniture items or *plain old junk*.

Ceramic forms were well represented across the scale. These were usually figurative, and included many portrait pieces.

The most successful submissions showed an understanding of materials and the properties of the selected media, an appropriate choice of material, and the capacity of the chosen material to present the subject matter or concept. These works, while often conservative in their presentation, reflected a high level of exploration and investigation before the student made his/her decision and produced the final work(s)/results.

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The most successful works were either layered, with meanings that thoroughly engaged the viewer, combined with a high level of skill, or were technically superb, reflecting more refined subject matter. Knowing the potential of the materials used contributed to the success of these works.

In the average works candidates tended to demonstrate less sustained investigation of ideas, media and process. Strength in some parts was nullified by weakness in others. Many students had developed skills in manipulating their materials, but left the viewer totally confused about the meaning(s) of their work, which were mostly representational/figurative. Some attempted to break boundaries, but, nevertheless, the final work remained unresolved. Such students should pay attention to the organisation and arrangement of a 3D form, as well as attending to media and subject matter.

The less than average submissions lacked a sense of balance between subject matter and media, with neither indicating a thorough investigation on the part of the student. This lack of resolution was sometimes displayed when students chose inappropriate materials for their form, or when their idea(s) tended towards cliché. Inconsistencies occurred between form and surface, use of found objects that were slightly manipulated and there was an inability to synthesise media, process and subject matter.

It is pleasing to note that the size of works is following the Subject Rules guidelines more closely. A monumental size is not always advantageous. Several exquisite, original, smaller works attracted very high marks.

### **Wearables**

Wearable submissions explored a wide range of media, covering a variety of issues and themes. The submissions showed different levels of technical awareness and a range of responses in terms of an understanding of the function of the wearable.

Forms of wearables ranged from traditional styles of garment through to use of the body as a *site* for art. Submissions ranged from ensembles to several items of the one kind such as hats, or one intricately made item.

Media exploration was varied and a range of innovative and sophisticated techniques was used to embellish surfaces, create areas of interest and communicate issues and themes. Surface decoration included painting, beading, screen printing, riso printing, embroidery, the integration of found and recycled objects, dyeing, gutta batik. Fabrics included paper, leather, feathers, cottons, muslin, silk, satins, plastics and rubber. There was a greater exploration of the possibilities of found and recycled objects such as plastics and metals and a greater number of expressive *painterly* and sewn techniques used.

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There was an increase in the number of submissions which relied on the painted surface for decoration of the wearable. Whilst the successful submissions treated the painted surface with skill as well as exhibiting appropriate and informed choices in regard to the media used, the less successful submissions did not reflect investigation, experimentation or understanding of the possibilities of the painted surface, while choice of paints and techniques were inappropriate for the fabric surface.

Those submitting in this area drew on a wide range of themes and issues as subject matter. Marriage continued to be a popular theme for wearables, as were responses to the works of a particular artist, the sea and the land, politics and royalty, the environment, the third runway, the drought, and issues of gender and sexuality. The influence of the film *Priscilla* was obvious, as well as gay issues, with a number of wearables designed for events such as the Mardi Gras and related drag reviews.

There was a return to nostalgia with a number of beautifully constructed *period* costumes which appeared to be replicas of certain historical dress styles. In many, however, there appeared to be little or no conceptual development or creative exploration of this historical reference. There was little evidence of artmaking, rather more skill development in following a pattern.

The successful, excellent and above average submissions provided unexpected interpretations of themes and use of media, often utilising paradox and original ideas of what a wearable might be. Exploration of the sculptural qualities of the wearable as body adornment was evident, along with the highly skilled and successful integration of a variety of techniques. In many of these submissions, traditional materials were taken and changed into unconventional new meanings and uses. These submissions also approached the works as both a general form and a textural experience. In both complex and subtle subject matters, there was evidence of a strong interpretative quality. Issues, such as local environment and politics, were treated with humour and wit.

The average submissions made sound, yet unoriginal interpretations, of chosen themes. Such submissions often began with an interesting concept but did not fully explore it. There were often inconsistencies in the exploration of media and construction of the wearable, although the concept might have been strong, the choice of media might not have been the most appropriate. Attempts to synthesise the work or elements of the work were not always successful.

The less than average submissions did not take into consideration the wearable as body adornment, often treating it more as a surface for applying paint, collage or clichéd sequined objects. These submissions were often more concerned with fashion than artistic development or statement and the form of the wearable did not always relate to any function or concept/theme. These works lacked resolution and unity and reflected a limited understanding of design, media and techniques.

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Those submitting in this category should consider the following advice as well as being aware of the relevant Subject Rules:

Clear photographs are an advantage and provide visual information for the observer;

Mannequins are not to be submitted. (A number were still in evidence this year.)

Wearables are meant for body adornment, therefore consideration must be given to the safety of the submission and the practicalities of wearing (and marking) the work.

### **Textiles and Fibre**

Submissions here represented a range of media and techniques including appliqué, tapestry and embroidery, batik and gutta, weaving and printed fabric.

### **Appliqué**

Appliqué continues to be a popular form in which a range of fabrics, but no traditional materials, were selected and manipulated to create rich textural surfaces, intricately detailed areas and compositions and bold juxtapositions of colour, shape and pattern. Combinations of hand painting and dyeing, machine- and hand-stitching and silk-screen printing gave form to ideas and issues about the local environment and the wider world.

The successful submissions combined strong compositional devices with a sensitive, confident and innovative treatment of a range of materials and techniques. These submissions reflected the successful integration of concept, selection of appropriate materials and an awareness of the tactile qualities of the medium. The effectiveness of repetition was utilised at a sophisticated level.

Less successful submissions relied on clichéd subject matter such as birds, fish, sea life, butterflies and flowers. Here objects were not integrated into the surface of the work and appeared to be merely stuck on. Elements were often ill considered and unresolved. There was little evidence, if any, knowledge of appliqué techniques nor of the possibilities of how surfaces can be transformed.

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### **Tapestry and Embroidery**

Successful submissions reflected a sensitivity to the medium and an informed selection of materials. Strong design, innovative presentation, confident decisions about subject matter, pattern and colour contributed to the powerful statements made about such issues as the drought and multicultural Australia.

The subject matter in average submissions, while technically sound, was clichéd.

### **Batik and Gutta**

There was a noticeable decline in the number of submissions in these media. Traditional batik works were characterised by expressive brush and line work, over-dyeing and crackling to create areas of interest and patten.

### **Weaving**

There were few responses this year. It is important to ensure that woven submissions are well constructed and finished, while presentation should be considered. The subject matter focused on the drought and life on the land. There was some integration of found objects with the woven surface, but such practices need to be refined and further developed to be successful.

### **Printed Fabric**

There was a decline in this area. Silk screen-printing and lino-printing were the preferred techniques. Most works were less than successful. Little evidence of an understanding of fabric design, or of registration of stencils, or handpainting and printing techniques was apparent.

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## 2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

### STUDYING IMAGES AND OBJECTS

#### Part A

##### Art in Australia

##### Question 1

*Analyse the work of TWO OR MORE Australian artists who have contributed to your understanding of the local environment.  
Refer to specific examples you have studied.*

This question attracted a large number of responses and was generally well answered by candidates who drew upon a body of knowledge based on their study of the Focus Area, using it to construct an informed analysis of their understanding rather than just a subjective and descriptive response to selected artworks.

This question provided opportunities for candidates to explore the full range of possible interpretations of the concept of the local environment as indicated in the Syllabus. Students were also required to discuss matters of aesthetic and/or conceptual concern that had arisen from their study of the local environment through their analysis of the work of selected artists. The scope of this question, therefore, allowed candidates to examine content ranging from different representations of the physical environment through to the ideas and attitudes artists have presented or questioned in their work about the cultural values and mores that shape the identity of the local Australian environment.

The majority, however, focused on the more concrete interpretation of the local environment as the physical, and most commonly, rural or outback landscape. In their responses they repeated standard information about the Heidelberg school and other prominent landscape painters such as Drysdale, Williams and Olsen. Some candidates extended their analysis beyond the artists' representative modes and choice of subject to include an examination of the relationship of the rural painting tradition with the construction of a sense of an Australian identity or spirit. Others defined the local environment as being socially, historically and/or culturally constructed and examined issues and ideas such as domesticity, feminism, social and psychological isolation, the influence of the mass media and also the influence of colonial contact on indigenous culture. Surprisingly, though, given the prominence of indigenous art forms and contemporary art in the outline of the focus area, very few candidates referred to either of these in their responses. Many referred to artists and works that appeared to have been drawn from their study of one or more of this year's Recommended Areas of Study for this focus area.

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Excellent responses were characterised by clear expression of the student's definition and interpretation of the local environment and the ways in which their study of particular works had contributed to their understanding. These candidates usually showed that their understanding of the local environment was on a more complex level than a simple discussion of its physical appearance in artworks. They revealed a breadth of understanding of historical and contemporary works and their contexts, as well as the significant issues that surround them. In these responses candidates analysed their selected artists' works using richly evocative art language, and discussing details of the work to illustrate their accounts. This analysis was strengthened by informed judgements, supported by an understanding of the visual arts in Australia and often expressed with a passionate and personal insight.

Above average responses answered the question in a manner that revealed a good understanding and knowledge of their chosen examples and this was expressed clearly and directly. Here students generally interpreted the question on a more subjective, yet superficial, level and many did not explicitly indicate their understanding of the environment. Many responses, whilst discussing artists' works, were more descriptive and literal in their interpretation of the works, relying primarily on internal evidence such as subject matter and style. Works were identified as belonging to a particular style or period but little other external information was introduced.

Below average candidates revealed little understanding of the question or of Art in Australia and their knowledge was superficial, making little reference to the question. Responses were generally poorly expressed, included very few relevant points, and slight reference to examples.

### Question 2

#### EITHER

- (a) *Australians from Aboriginal, colonial, and post-colonial origins have gained identity and strength from the land and artists' representations of landscape.*

*Discuss this statement with reference to TWO OR MORE historical and/or contemporary artists and their works.*

This question required students to interpret the body of knowledge built up from their studies of the Recommended Areas of Study of Art in Australia, specifically, *the representation of the landscape and its relationship to ideas of national identity for historical and contemporary Australian artists.*

The more successful candidates extended their discussion beyond an analysis of the landscape paintings of two or more artists to include analysis and interpretation of

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subject matter and its organisation and of the way in which identity has been created and represented through artistic decisions.

Prepared answers were of little benefit to the student if he/she could not apply the information to answer the examination question. A number of students overlooked concepts of *strength* and focused mainly on national identity in their responses. Many also gave only a chronological account of artists who recorded the Australian landscape. Answers to this question included very little use of illustration and/or diagrams, and most examples given were not successful. Moreover, a large number of responses glossed over specific examples, some mentioning them only in passing.

The most successful responses attempted to answer the question by defining identity in terms of the physical, national, cultural or social, while their selected artists and examples of their work reinforced the understanding of identity which was discussed in both historical and contemporary contexts. Language and the discussion of concepts was both sophisticated and confident in these answers.

The average responses referred to artworks and linked them to the question in a superficial way, without providing supportive evidence through analysis or further discussion. These responses also described the diversity of unique Australian characteristics, supporting this by referring to artworks in which the artist was obviously inspired by these particular characteristics. In doing this, only superficial references were made to strength and identity.

The less successful responses tended to be merely narrative and relied upon description, narrow interpretation with little or no supporting evidence. No links or indirect links were made to the question, or to the Focus Area, Art in Australia.

OR

- (b) *Evaluate the significance and achievement of Australian women artists. In your answer, refer to works made prior to and since 1945.*

This was a popular question focussing on individual women artists, their interests and their significance in the visual arts. A wide range of artists was selected for discussion. The excellent responses included sophisticated accounts of the practice of women artists in the period prior to 1945, along with recent and contemporary examples.

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### Question 3

*What have you learnt from the work of Australian artists and used in your artmaking?*

This question was very open, providing students with the opportunity to discuss a wide range of artists and artworks, issues, styles and themes. The focus on learning meant that students needed to reflect on their understanding of particular artists and selected artworks rather than just showing how subject matter, style and imagery had/has been borrowed or copied.

Knowledge in this question was focused on knowing what it is to make art by examining and understanding the work of another artist, then interpreting and applying this to one's own artmaking experiences.

The selection of specific examples by the artists examined provided students with ways of revealing their own analysis of an artist's work, as the examples chosen stood as evidence of such work, revealed by the way in which the viewer interprets the work, whereby the viewer then becomes an artist.

The more successful answers comprised a discussion of several artists and specific examples from the perspective of the contribution made to the cultural and social context in which they worked. Artists and artworks were considered in terms of the major themes expressed in their work, the materials used, the methods and techniques particular to that artist as well as the ideas and concepts that persisted throughout the body of work produced. The influence of other artists on those selected for discussion was also considered. Quotations from the artist were utilised to indicate further the intentions, preoccupations and interests of the specific artist.

The more successful responses included discussions of specific examples, related to the candidate's own artmaking. Issues of composition, technique, methods and materials, subject matter and ideas were explored. These discussions were reflective, students indicating how they had learned from their study and used such knowledge in their own artmaking.

Appropriate use of sketches was made illustrated, explained and demonstrated a particular understanding of issues such as composition, techniques, methods, media and the character of the artwork as it related to the student's own ideas and work. Annotations and diagrams were helpful, especially when they were used in an informative or explanatory way rather than by merely labelling parts.

The better candidates also made judgments supported by evidence about other artists' works and used this to support their own ideas on what they have learnt from the work of Australian artists. Reference to the influence of three or more artists, with an in-depth discussion of their work in relation to what was learnt from each one, gave a clearer indication of the concepts that individual students wished to express.

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Less successful responses tended to ignore part of the question and made only fleeting reference to the way(s) in which they developed their own work by looking at images or objects produced by artists of whom they had little background knowledge.

The less able responses tended to share the following characteristics. The name of individual artists, or images and objects were not included, indicating that the candidate did not know any specific details of the visual arts. These students did not state what it was they had learnt or observed in other artists' works and how they had used some of these ideas or concepts in their own artworks. Many of the poorer students discussed only artworks and gave very little, if any, balanced discussion about the artists studied.

In their comments they referred only to one or two artists, with little reference to works, context, or composition and use of media. Some interpreted *used* literally, and wrote how they cut and pasted *bits* from various artworks and combined them to make their artworks. Many of these responses were too brief, naïve and used inappropriate examples, i.e. discussed painters but named sculptors. Other less successful responses showed very little understanding of the artworks and artists named, or of the meaning, purpose and motivation of such artists. Students often could not develop an answer that satisfied the question asked.

### Art and Culture

#### Question 4

*Discuss how particular artworks or buildings in your local environment reflect influences from outside Australia.*

*Refer to TWO OR MORE examples you have studied.*

The question allowed students to discuss in great detail any aspects of ways in which artworks or buildings have been influenced from sources outside Australia. The open nature of the question allowed students to name two or more examples studied, such as at least one artist or architect or one site. For example, they discussed buildings by Harry Seidler and the influence of the Bauhaus, or an analysis of the Japanese Gardens at Cowra, and the sculptures within that garden and the relationship to traditional Japanese culture.

This was a question which required *students to discuss matters of aesthetic and/or conceptual concern within their own local environment in relation to images, objects and artworks associated with the Focus Area(s) studied.* A number of responses indicated that candidates had not undertaken a study of artworks and/or buildings in their local environment and were unable to identify influences from outside Australia. A number of candidates addressed their responses to one major example whereas the question stipulated *two or more* examples.

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The excellent responses utilised knowledge of some very specific examples and reflected a preparedness and depth of analysis of concepts and symbolism, that was markedly more factual and interpretative than other responses. Detailed discussions were based on the candidates' familiarity with a building or artwork within their own local environment. They combined a broad overview with support and cross-referencing of influences from outside Australia, and successfully placed the selected works in cultural contexts.

The average responses centred around the listing of influences in a response that often contained reasonable argument backed by generalisation but with limited knowledge of the visual arts.

Below average responses seemed derived from impromptu decisions by candidates to answer this question. It was obvious that such candidates had not studied any examples from their local environment. These candidates gave only a superficial discussion of artworks and/or buildings, and rarely mentioned specific examples. There was no evidence of analysis and little awareness of the work in its historical or cultural context or reference to overseas cultures.

Contemporary commercial franchises such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut were cited as examples of an American influence, but there was little consolidation of ideas or analysis of these sites to support the arguments.

### Question 5

#### EITHER

- (a) *Give an account of the ways in which art, artefacts, and sites celebrate religious beliefs. In your answer, refer to works from different historical periods and regional contexts.*

This question dealt with a recommended area of study from the Art and Culture focus area. The question structure held no surprises for students and was straightforward, allowing them to set out what they had studied in this area. The majority of responses demonstrated an adequate knowledge of relevant material and reflected sound and well organised preparation.

Art and Culture is the second of four focus areas. In its content is drawn from cultures in the regional settings of: Africa, Oceania, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The common theme of the question required knowledge of the ways in which people in a variety of cultures, periods and regions have celebrated religion through their artmaking practices over time. In structure, spirit and content, Question 5(a) is typical of the cultural focus area in asking students to study and relate a range of art forms from a number of cultures connected by the common theme, in this instance, religious celebration (See: Syllabus Years 11-12 Visual Arts, 1987: 21).

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It should be noted that Australia is not included in this cultural grouping as Australian art and culture has, for many years, been an independent focus area. Those who choose Australian artists or examples despite their lack of appropriateness or relevance to the question, simply on the grounds that they have prepared them are at risk of a less successful result. Australian artists, however, who come from, or have links with, the regions indicative of the focus area, are both relevant and appropriate. It will be advantageous to read the relevant section of the Syllabus (1987: 21) together with the recommended areas when undertaking the task of planning, programming and studying this material.

When Recommended Area topics are published the words included are intended to prompt students' awareness of the range of possibilities for investigation, thus, art, artefacts, and sites were interpreted to include buildings and complexes such as:

- prehistoric Stonehenge,
- the Giza-Karnak sites in Egypt,
- the Buddhist Yün-Kang Caves of Shansi Province in China,
- the Sanchi and Ajanta complexes in India,
- medieval European cathedrals such as Chartres or Rheims, or
- modern examples such as Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel or Matisse's interior of the Chapel of the Rosary in Venice.

The idea of the artworks was well understood and included individual objects, and works such as sculptures, stained glass, or altar-pieces symbolising religious ideas, beliefs or values.

The concept of an artefact was less well understood. Its inclusion is relevant to the celebratory aspect of the question and invited candidates to include those objects which might not have been made intentionally with an artistic purpose but were integral to religious rituals or practices, thus ecclesiastical robes embroidered with biblical symbols and emblems, crucifixes, Islamic tiles emblazoned with calligraphic script of Koranic verses, Egyptian mortuary vessels and coffins were all discussed as artefacts. In this question students were also required to consider a range of periods/cultures and regions. Those who wrote exclusively about, for example, Gothic cathedrals, demonstrated insufficient engagement with the question. The words of the recommended area provide criteria for discrimination amongst responses and thus should be closely attended to when planning and studying this material.

Candidates were asked, in the question, to *give an account of*. This invites a speculative, story-telling approach, which combines description with other narrative strategies to evoke or represent the material studied. The essence of the question is, thus, descriptive rather than evaluative or comparative.

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In excellent responses candidates showed their understanding of the significance of giving an account of religious celebration as illustrated by artworks. In such responses candidates discussed Gothic cathedrals, and related the construction, form and function of the cathedral as part of the life and beliefs of the community of the town or countryside in which it is situated; a few connected the elements of the medieval cathedral to the rise of the practice of pilgrimage.

Generally, there were two ways of tackling the question. Students surveyed a wide range of cultures, periods and regions, thus producing a brief but connected review of many examples. The alternative and equally popular interpretation was to select two or three cultures/periods representative of two or three regions and examine in greater depth the development of religious art and expression within those regions. A large number of candidates successfully mastered the demands of both methods of approach.

Responses emphasising sites and architecture were perceptive, generally including thorough and appropriate discussion of the properties, construction and meanings of the examples chosen. The most successful responses used sophisticated language to enhance the descriptive requirements of the question and demonstrated a sound knowledge of artistic concepts. Most of these responses correctly placed selected examples in historical contexts. Popular examples from Prehistory such as:

Stonehenge,  
the Venus of Willendorf,  
Greece, with reference to the Parthenon,  
Egypt, which was a popular and well understood culture,  
medieval Europe, with an emphasis on the Gothic period, and the Renaissance.

The religions and cultures of India were also discussed, with many references to Sanchi and Ajanta, and Shiva as Lord of the Dance. Other widely used examples included:

the Cretan or Minoan cultures and religious rituals,  
Aztec, Maya and Inca,  
Australian Aboriginal practices, and  
Salvador Dali's later paintings which explored themes from writings of St John of the Cross.

Excellent results were achieved by candidates whose responses demonstrated wide reading and included less stereotypical examples for discussion. As indicated, these candidates were also careful to address all the aspects of the question and to confine their discussion to material which exemplified *celebration*. A small number contrasted aggressive and pacifist cultural styles, thus the Pre-Columbian cultures of the Americas contrasted with Buddhism, or Islamic cultures as compared to Christian styles. This was a novel and largely successful strategy.

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Average responses dealt with some of the demands of the question but generally failed to connect the art with ideas of cultural belief. The less successful and poor responses read as being prepared answers with inventoried examples in detail which, whilst accurate, were largely irrelevant to the question. Some answers seemed to have benefited more from Studies of Religion or Ancient History and had little content derived from the Visual Arts. The error commonly shared by poorer responses was incomplete discussion of only one region or period.

It was noted that, in the examination, there was a diminution of the use of diagrams or sketches by candidates in answering the question. Those who focused on architectural and environmental examples were more likely to annotate their argument with a sketch or plan, e.g. the elements of the Stupa as symbols of the cosmos, a plan of a cathedral with notations indicating parts and functions. Some diagrams and sketches were so elementary as to be counterproductive, e.g. a vestigial stick figure on a cross to illustrate a Gothic crucifix or Dali's painting of Christ. Students who choose to utilise this strategy should study the examples carefully before the commencement of the examinations to ensure that they can use visual material appropriately. Students should consider how a sketch enhances the clarity of their argument and decide that, if such devices do not do so, they are best avoided.

OR

- (b) *Discuss how classicism has endured and evolved as a tradition in the visual arts. Refer to examples from both historical and contemporary contexts.*

This question, with classicism as its theme, was popular with candidates and, as it was one of the recommended areas of study, many of the responses were well-researched. The more successful candidates defined classicism in terms of its antique genesis with reference to the religions, philosophical and cultural context, supporting their rationale for classicism with critical analyses of appropriate artworks from Greece and Rome. These students often explored the evaluation of classicism by reference to its antithesis in the baroque, mannerist or expressionist and alluded to the revival of classical tendencies as a response to the need to restore calm after cultural turmoil.

In the more successful responses classicism was often closely linked to such concepts as power with classical manifestations, for example, in the reigns of Louis XIV, Napoleon and during the Nazi era. Some candidates referred to cultures, or times when intellectual, rational and logical thinking have been culturally valued as in the Renaissance, or by neo-classical artists such as Cézanne, Mondrian, Picasso and Frank Stella.

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The more successful candidates traced the evolution of classicism into the post-modern world and discussed the appropriate restructure of concepts, ideas and images from ancient classical archetypes in the artworks of contemporary artists. These students showed knowledge and understanding of the conceptual bases of classicism as it evolved in different cultures and communicated these by using appropriate examples of artwork, and language which were expressive, reflective and analytical. A number of these students were able to support their analyses by referring to various critical writings.

The less successful candidates found the breadth of knowledge required by this question difficult and failed to account for the evolution of classicism. Their responses were characterised by limited definitions of ancient classicism and made only passing reference to the links between later manifestations of classicism and the cultures that embraced it. Such responses incorporated a superficial knowledge of classicism in a contemporary context, and many candidates could only bring their discussion into the early 20th century. Here students often used a slight chronological overview of classicism which consisted of a description of artworks from selected times and cultures beginning with Ancient Greece, the Renaissance, 19th Century Classicism and ending with an artist of the early Modern period.

### Question 6

*Explain how the study of artists and artworks from ONE of the following regions has influenced your artmaking.*

*Europe  
Asia  
the Americas  
Africa  
Oceania.*

This question required candidates to show an understanding of the work of specific artists from one region within the Art and Culture Focus Area and integrate this with an understanding of the processes investigated to create the candidates' own artwork. The broad nature of this question allowed candidates to write knowledgeably and confidently about their own creative processes and to explain not only the cultural context in which specific artists worked, but also their concepts and practices and how this influenced selected examples of their work.

Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and Oceania are identified as the five regions that comprise the Art and Culture focus area. Australia is listed neither as a region in this focus area nor as a part of Oceania and, therefore, candidates electing to refer to examples of Australian artists and artworks were in error and disadvantaged.

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Many candidates successfully related the study of images and objects to their own artmaking. The depth of analytical and conceptual discussion varied but was impressive in the above average and excellent ranges. Europe was a very popular region for discussion. Pop artists featured as being the next most popular.

The frequency with which Munch, Dali and Van Gogh occurred in discussion as influencing artists occurred in uncertain essays that were couched in generalised terms that indicated that the student had not come to terms with the intensely personal nature of the artmaking process.

The best responses reflected a deep knowledge and a critical awareness of the work of a range of artists, their processes and influences, relating their understanding to the cultural and historical contexts in which the artist worked. Well balanced accounts of artists and artworks were integrated with an analysis of the candidate's own artmaking processes. Obvious, as well as more subtle, philosophies that inspired artists as well as the candidates were discussed with understanding and sophistication. These more sophisticated answers often analysed a number of examples by an artist in order to give a more detailed view of the aims of such an artist and his stylistic influences on others.

In the above average responses candidates placed artists and artworks in an historical context. They discussed a variety of artists and artworks and analysed each. There were a number of well researched and understanding responses that dealt with artists, their historical context and the candidates own artmaking. Sketches were often included and were effective in illustrating the candidate's own work, and in analysing specific examples of the works of the artists being discussed. Art concepts were used, incorporating a good analysis and understanding of the candidates' own artmaking processes, as well as their use of materials and influences.

In the average responses the description of artists' works was adequate, whilst the critical evaluation of how such artists had influenced their own artmaking was only superficial. The linking to their own artmaking tended to be tenuous, for example, discussing colour rather than structural or conceptual links. Here candidates tended to list qualities and artworks in a categorical yet unco-ordinated way. There was limited discussion of artists and artworks in an historical context and their relationship to the candidate's own artmaking.

The below average responses made no reference to an historical context or any analysis of problems and issues but discussed the candidate's own work, making occasional reference to specific artists and their work but without showing any understanding of the elements that influenced their artmaking. There was little use of analysis or reference to the relationship of artists and their artworks to the candidate's own work. Discussion was not supported by formal or conceptual criticism, while the use of sketches showed no relationship to descriptions of artists and the candidate's own artmaking.

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### ART AND MEDIA

#### Question 7

*Explain how TWO OR MORE artists have made artworks that use signs, symbols, images, and materials to communicate individual and/or social meanings.*

*Refer to specific examples from your environment.*

The responses to this question, which provided students with the opportunity to refer to artworks from their own world, were usually brief. Important buildings like churches, theatres and public places could be expected to provide a variety of examples from which to select. Public sculptures, murals and the complex multiple worlds of the mass media could also be considered as examples of art in the student's own environment. Photography, video clips and fashion icons like Mambo and Hot Tuna are very much a part of many students' world and could be included in the Art and Media Focus Area.

Question 7 was a question which required students to communicate their understanding of artists and artworks in their own environment. Most were able to discuss the materials and images used; signs and symbols, however, needed to be identified and discussed rather than simply stated.

The better responses tackled all aspects of the question, referring to the manner in which artists communicate personal and social meaning by using artworks relevant to their environment. Students described the works of two artists and their use of signs, symbols, images and materials. Some supported otherwise poorly expressed ideas with very good annotated sketches. A few candidates presented their answers in a comic strip format, most of these were of a high standard.

In poorer responses candidates often avoided the question and described artworks in general terms and with little analysis. It was surprising to note that artists' use of materials was often neglected in many of these responses.

The majority of artists referred to were painters; few, if any, graphic artists, photographers, sculptors or architects were discussed. It was noticeable that most responses were from single candidates from a centre rather than several from the one centre.

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### Question 8

EITHER

- (a) *Give an account of the influence of the found object and the ready-made in historical and contemporary visual arts practice.*

*Refer to specific examples you have studied.*

*You may use sketches in your answer.*

This question offered candidates a structure to assist them in formulating their responses. The better candidates recognised this and answered all parts of the question. They defined key words, based their arguments on these definitions and thus were able to investigate the question on a number of levels.

Most candidates responded to this question with a chronological account from Dada to Post-Modernism and used their examples as a vehicle for the larger question of *What is art?*. Some candidates suggested that found objects have always existed, using primitive examples as a basis for this discussion.

The excellent responses showed that the students had assimilated facts and concepts and were able to combine these into an original argument. They also showed a sound understanding of the background material related to the development of ready-mades and found objects. This information was used to argue a point rather than simply to illustrate and explain their historical knowledge of the visual arts.

The better responses discussed the philosophy behind ready-mades and found objects and used a wide variety of examples which clearly supported their perception of the influence of such objects in changing the direction of modern art against the background of changing boundaries of what art could be. In most essays students mentioned Marcel Duchamp and Dada, with the better ones referring to a variety of Dada artists, as well as differentiating and evaluating the differences between their works, practices and ideologies.

A very high level of art-based language was used and candidates showed their analytical and critical skills in validating a point rather than in merely describing artworks. Some of the more perceptive candidates argued for Post-Modernist appropriation and reconstruction as being derived from ready-mades and found objects of the early 20th Century. Careful candidates also included Australian artists in furthering their argument in a contemporary context.

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The average responses showed a sound knowledge of influential art movements in an historical context and their use of the ready-made and the found object, but it was more obvious that this information had not been well assimilated into their broad knowledge of art and its nature. There was little attempt at critical analysis and here candidates concentrated on descriptions of individual artworks. They were still able to show that they understood the influence that the ready-made and the found object had in conveying meaning, but in a much simpler way. The most commonly discussed artists were Duchamp, Schwitters, Picasso and various Pop artists, but these candidates failed to explain fully their influence on, or implications for, later contemporary art.

In poor responses students found it difficult to link the question to their prepared information. They were unable to place works into an historical context and there were factual inaccuracies. Examples were discussed superficially in terms of their visual appearance only. Personal and irrelevant opinion dominated these essays, in which no mention at all was made of any contemporary examples; the writing style was not good and essays were devoid of any real analysis.

OR

- (b) *Changing technologies, including mechanical and electronic advances, have forced artists to reassess their processes and products.*

*Evaluate this statement by referring to specific artists, processes, and artworks.*

Students are always urged to read the question fully; in this question some candidates did not address all sections equally, in spite of the wording of the question.

The better candidates' responses revealed a sound understanding of the concepts presented in the question. They offered their own concise definitions of technology, presented arguments and gave practical examples to support their position. These candidates appeared to have a strong technological background and were able to draw, not only on their knowledge of contemporary artists working in this field, but also on their personal experience in terms of computers, the Internet, film and video. It was this interrelationship of direct and indirect experiences that characterised these responses. Such candidates also addressed all sections of the question and evaluated the ways in which technology has influenced current art practice. Specific artists and their works were discussed fully (although there was little visual representation of the works), in strong art-based language that clearly showed a complex understanding of the concepts presented.

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Average responses were characterised by a rather superficial knowledge of what constitutes *changing technology*. Candidates discussed technology simply as a change in the more historical sense and therefore did not mention the works of any contemporary artists. Historical examples, such as the invention of the camera and its impact on image-making and the effect of television on subject matter, were popular examples and this information was not presented in a way that amplified the candidate's evaluation as required by the question. In these responses, not all parts of the question were considered, with candidates relying on description rather than any interpretation of the works. The language used was simple and did little to help reveal the depth of the candidate's understanding and knowledge of this area.

The less successful scripts presented a limited understanding of what was required in answering this question. The technology that candidates chose to discuss here was inappropriate. Such responses were shallow, relied heavily on description and very often used examples with little or no relationship to technology or any related artistic processes, and provided only a naïve interpretation of this question. Some candidates actually misinterpreted the key words in the question, nor did they refer to any contemporary examples. The language used was very simple and these students were unable to give any evaluation of the artists they had chosen on any level.

### Question 9

*How has the study of artists' responses to the problems of artmaking influenced your use of symbols, images, and materials?*

*Refer to THREE artists and examples of their work.*

*You may use sketches in your answer.*

This was a question which required students to relate how their study of artists and their artworks had influenced their own use of symbols, images and materials.

In general terms the question was well answered, with many candidates revealing in their answers a personal choice of artists and a deeper understanding of the world of the visual arts through their own experiences in artmaking. A number of artists were discussed suggesting, in many cases, the genuineness of the relationship between the candidate's choice of examples and her/his own artmaking. Those working in newer technologies such as animation and air brush illustration, or with science-fiction-derived imagery, were often able to speak in suitable terms of these less well known examples.

The best responses sought to answer the question fully, recognising that there are problems to be solved in artmaking and linking their own confrontation with such problems with those of artists they had studied.

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In these responses the examples chosen were appropriate, revealing a good understanding of the visual arts and a good command of art concepts and language. The best responses were by no means prepared responses and often gave very personal insights not only into their own artmaking but also their reaction to the wider world of art. Problems associated with artmaking materials and (techniques) were adequately discussed here.

In average responses candidates revealed a thorough knowledge of the works of three artists. They discussed these in terms of their influence upon their own works, rather than analysing the full implications of the question. While many such candidates discussed symbols and images very fully, materials were sometimes overlooked.

The less successful responses were those concentrating on their own artmaking in a very descriptive manner, outlining the process only. These revealed a less than thorough knowledge of the works candidates chose as examples, with a slight attraction to the visual images, while their relation to their subject matter seeming to be the full extent of their knowledge. A few candidates did not include three artists.

### ART AND DESIGN

Answers in this focus area were disappointing, written, in many cases, obviously by candidates who had not studied within it. Students are advised to answer questions from within a focus area in which they have specifically studied the work of historical and contemporary artists and designers. In order to show an understanding of the design process the discussion of specific examples is essential.

The stronger responses obviously came from candidates who had developed a deep understanding of design through exploring a link between *art-studying* and *art-making*. In many cases the discussion was based on a level of understanding arising from their submitted Artwork Major in design. The better candidates successfully showed their understanding of the historical, social and political contexts of the designed works they elected to discuss in their essays.

#### Question 10

*Contemporary Australian design is influenced by processes and subject-matter from Asia, Europe, and America.*

*Explore this statement by referring to TWO OR MORE designed images and objects in your local environment.*

This question was answered better than the other three in this Focus Area. It appeared to provide a good framework for the stronger candidates, in which they could both organise their ideas, and demonstrate their knowledge.

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The better responses showed a high level of awareness of the influences on Australian design of overseas processes and subject-matter, particularly from America and Europe. Harry Seidler's work, in particular the Rose Seidler house, were popular examples. In the better responses connections between specified examples of design experienced by the candidate, and his/her knowledge of design concepts were made. In these responses students discussed contemporary Australian design, although some did discuss design theory and history emanating from Asia or Europe or America.

Many responses in the good and average range dealt with the Bauhaus and its impact on modernist and contemporary design, showing a thorough understanding and knowledge of specific examples of the graphics, architecture and the furniture designs of Le Corbusier and Marcel Breuer.

The poorer responses were merely descriptive, providing little analysis or interpretation. These answers tended to be very general and avoided answering the question fully.

Common problems arose because candidates often misunderstood the term *contemporary*; many obviously thought this term was interchangeable with *20th century*. Discussions of design were limited to Asia, Europe and America, except in the most general sense. The local environment was discussed in its narrowest sense, making vague references to local shops, cinemas and offices, and demonstrating only a limited understanding of design processes and conventions.

### Question 11

EITHER

- (a) *Compare and contrast the characteristics and significance of TWO design movements. In your answer, refer to ONE movement from the nineteenth century and ONE from the twentieth century.*

This question was, on the whole, quite well answered. The better responses were based on thorough research and an understanding of various design movements, as well as the ability to make comparisons and connections between movements. They also showed a sophisticated awareness of the significance of these movements to twentieth century art and design. Specific and relevant examples were selected to illustrate a general comparison of the two movements. These better responses clearly addressed all aspects of the question. Popular topics for discussion were the Arts and Crafts movement and the Bauhaus.

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In the average responses candidates selected an appropriate nineteenth century and twentieth century design movement and showed adequate knowledge of both. Some difficulty, however, occurred in locating these movements in a cultural and historical context.

The poorer candidates dealt only very superficially with the characteristics of the nominated design movement. The concept of significance was not well understood in many cases, nor was the format of the question which specified *compare and contrast*. Some very poor responses were mere recollections of fragments of design knowledge, making little or no reference to the question asked.

Unfortunately some students were disadvantaged by only half-answering the question and referring only to two twentieth century movements. Many appeared to be unfamiliar with the term *movement*, or relied on the powers of their own invention as with the *Post-Moderates* and the *Anything Goes Movements*. Some combined aspects of Questions 10 and 11, this did not advantage their response.

OR

(b) *Look at Plates 1, 2, and 3.*

*Evaluate the contribution made by artists and designers working in the areas of printmaking, graphics, and poster design to the visual arts in Australia.*

*You may consider these plates and/or any other examples you have studied.*

The question was, in general, not well answered. Candidates approached it as a question making little or no reference to the plates, providing in their responses superficial descriptions, but demonstrating little or no knowledge of the recommended area of study, which required candidates to evaluate the contribution made by artists and designers working in the areas of printmaking, graphics and poster design to the visual arts in Australia.

The weaker responses could neither place the three plates in their historical context, nor locate them within a design convention or genre. Many candidates experienced great difficulty in interpreting Plate 1 *Micky Allan Untitled* and, more particularly, Plate 3, *Redback Graphix - What Now, Mr Mao*, believing it to be an advertisement for Coca Cola. Other examples could have been discussed.

In the average responses students demonstrated some knowledge of the recommended area of study, discussing examples of works by specific designers or printmakers; their knowledge of the historical, technological and aesthetic developments of this form was, however, extremely limited. They relied on descriptions of the selected examples

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rather than interpretation or analysis. Where analysis was attempted, it tended to be descriptive and unsophisticated discussion of colour, shapes, symbols and typography.

The better responses revealed a depth of knowledge and understanding of the recommended area of study. Here candidates were far more selective in their discussion of the plates provided and, in many cases, they chose to concentrate on their own appropriate and well selected design examples - a strategy which helped them to answer the question effectively.

Students should be aware that, where the question does not direct them specifically to discuss the plates, they should be referred to only in support of answers or to extend and illustrate their interpretation of the question.

### Question 12

*In what ways have particular designed images and objects produced within any culture influenced your own artmaking?*

*Refer to specific examples you have studied.*

This question was generally not well answered. Many candidates showed only a minimal understanding of design and its relationship to the study of visual arts. Many interpreted this to be a generic type question, discussing the influence on their artwork of artists such as Tom Roberts, Peter-Paul Rubens, Salvador Dali or Brett Whiteley. Many such responses were extremely vague and general, and were based on only limited knowledge of the selected artists. In the average responses candidates discussed two or three specific artworks, or showed some knowledge of art concepts, placing the selected works into a context, and indicating some link to their own artmaking. Where candidates attempted some discussion of design issues it was often very superficial. Popular examples of designers/artists referred to were Reg Mombassa (Mambo), Ken Done, Brett Whiteley and traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artists - albeit discussed in a general and descriptive manner.

In the better responses appropriate, well chosen examples were fully described and discussed, and placed in their historical or contemporary contexts. These responses revealed a sophisticated understanding of the visual arts and the design process and included interesting and knowledgeable discussions of designers as diverse as Vivienne Westwood, Mambo Graphics, Hilippe Starck and, historically, the Bauhaus.

On the whole, however, the responses to this question revealed that the focus area of Art and Design is not well understood.

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### Part B

#### Question 13

*Look at Plates 4 - 11.*

*Critically analyse how TWO OR MORE of these plates reflect the cultural context in which they were produced.*

*You could consider:*

- *belief*
- *identity*
- *power.*

This question required candidates to analyse critically aspects of the cultural context of two or more of the unseen works. The discussion could be further supported by consideration of belief, identity and power.

The excellent responses included a critical discussion of cultural contexts in the visual arts, often connecting works with others that were similar in style, subject matter, and approach to materials. Other responses discussed the cultural context, frequently using the citation included with the work. Few candidates referred to other artists or examples that they had studied - they did not have the time. From most of these essays it was obvious that the visual impact of the plate, the cultural context and the suggested issues provided ample material to discuss at length.

Excellent responses were confidently written, placing selected examples in their cultural and historical contexts. Here candidates commented on stylistic characteristics and generally discussed external criteria. The most popular plates were *The Lamentation* and *the Birth of Buddha*. These were discussed in reference to belief. The best responses referred to belief, identity and power and clearly addressed the focus of the question. They displayed a researched knowledge of the visual arts, expressed in sophisticated language. These responses gave a complete and coherent account of the work.

In critically discussing the works, candidates described them in clear and evocative terms, analysed each one as an aesthetic object or artefact, and interpreted this discussion in terms of cultural contexts. A wide knowledge of the visual arts was clearly evident. Multiple meanings, layers of meaning and speculation about meanings were included.

Excellent responses also used other examples from the same or similar cultures to demonstrate their knowledge of the visual arts. Questions were also asked about how the artwork might represent the culture, what it was that the culture was demonstrating and to what extent the artwork fulfilled this desire. Where a direct interpretation of the artwork was not known, in

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excellent responses candidates would give opinion supported by evidence inherent to the work or culture.

The better responses worked well on several levels of visual interpretation. Candidates described each plate, making direct observations, noting the mood, the balance, the relationship between the internal parts. These candidates successfully extracted the purpose of the art objects they were viewing and made the necessary links between the culture of the artist and the importance of the image or design. The significance of the artwork was clearly shown to relate to the viewers of such artwork in the context of the specified culture.

The average responses simply offered a narrative interpretation. The story of the people seen in the plates became the focus of most essays. Some students were equipped with the necessary background to express the activities of the characters in some of the plates. If the responses included a basic appreciation of pictures (compositional structure, perspective, symbolism of colour) then the essay fulfilled the requirements of the question. Often the idea of comparisons and contrasts between the images was raised, such as birth and death, joy and sadness, real and abstract.

Average candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the question; their responses, however, tended only to describe and analyse the chosen works, omitting interpretation of them. A confident level of visual language (often in formal terms) was used to achieve this.

The average candidate should have interpreted the works and related them to their associated cultural context. These candidates either analysed the artwork or the culture but did not really unify these parts of the question. Many interpretations of the question concerned belief and focused on this single issue in relation to the two religious examples. These candidates attempted interpretation but made minimal reference to cultural context. They concentrated more on the analysis of the subject matter which they discussed as a narrative and concentrated on either pictorial or cultural analysis rather than addressing all components of the question. These candidates drew upon some knowledge of the visual arts which they expressed with a degree of competence.

Less successful responses were merely descriptive, making little analysis of possible meanings. Here some candidates discussed religious belief but made little reference to plates. Some of these essays, which were generally very short, presented unsubstantiated opinion, and made little use of art vocabulary.

These responses included superficial, visual descriptions of what the students wanted to say. Most were brief and relied on clichéd thoughts about religion, technology, etc.

Many candidates devoted most of the space to lesser details in the plates which assumed profound importance - like sad or happy expressions on faces. Unable to move away from the story in the work, they lacked the power to describe the image, the beliefs of people in various cultures and the importance of identifying with hero and leader in historic times.

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### Question 14

*Look at Plates 4-11*

*Compare the different attitudes to the visual arts represented in THREE of these works. In your answer, include reference to subject-matter, meaning, and purpose.*

This was a popular question and the standard was generally good. Most candidates chose a broad range of artworks in order to highlight the different attitudes to the visual arts. Candidates appeared to respond well to the structured nature of the question as it offered a potential plan or approach for the essay. The scope of the question was broad enough to cater for a wide range of student abilities, for here students were required to refer to three plates, comparing attitudes to the visual arts represented therein, and to consider subject matter, meaning and purpose for each.

Students were able to address the focus of the question from a number of interpretations given to *attitudes* - an artist's point of view, a viewer's attitude or opinion, the cultural context of time and place. The elements of the question were generally handled well and were supported with evidence from the selected artworks in varying degrees.

Excellent/above average responses were characterised by the use of a wide reference to external sources in which students demonstrated the ability to relate art styles to their historical and cultural contexts. They were able to define and support their opinions where necessary, and frequently included relevant quotations. These responses analysed the concept of attitudes, selected artworks that best fitted each concept in terms of subject matter, meaning and purpose and successfully compared these approaches. In innovative responses the student showed his/her awareness of his/her position as viewer or spectator, reading the artwork as a text illustrating the beliefs and values of another culture.

The average responses concentrated on a structural analysis of the artworks, a description of the subject matter and gave unsupported but possible interpretations, with students struggling to answer all parts of the question. They tended to interpret perceived symbols in a rather fanciful manner and gave broad generalisations. Below average responses did not address the question and relied heavily on descriptions of what was visible in the artworks but giving little or no analysis. They showed a limited understanding of art concepts, possessed no art vocabulary and references to other artworks or artists were rare.

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### Question 15

*Look at Plates 4-11.*

*Select TWO OR MORE of these plates and analyse the possible meanings for contemporary audiences.*

*You could consider:*

*different interpretations*

*effects of time*

*cultural influences.*

This question asked students to explain the meaning of a number of artworks. A broad range of responses were given. Some candidates treated the question in a generalised manner, made minimal reference to the visual arts, and concentrated only on the subject matter of the images as a basis for meaning. The notion of how a contemporary audience might see the meaning of an historical artwork and how meaning is changed by time or cultural context was discussed by only a small group of candidates in what was otherwise a very popular question.

This question reflected the Syllabus requirements in that it required students to *explain the nature of images and objects both critically and with empathy, to react to them with imagination and interpret their possible meanings*. The question addressed this directly, as it did the Syllabus statement, viz "there are many valid ways of examining the relationship between art forms, artists and cultures past and present".

It was pleasing to see students referring to a wide range of plates and taking advantage of the citations with the use of dates and the artist's country of origin or the cultural context and meaning of the plate adding to the discussion. The length and range of responses appeared unchanged, despite the reduced time of the examination, although there were notably less visual/verbal responses to the question. Students drew on a wide range of personal experience, with some innovative and original interpretations being presented with varying degrees of success.

Only in excellent responses did candidates answer all parts of the question, analysing the artworks critically in a sophisticated way, using clear statements and opinions supported by evidence in the artwork or drawn from a knowledge of the visual arts. They also referred to examples of other art movements or relevant theories to help convey their meaning and used a sophisticated art vocabulary to describe how art media as well as the work's content create meaning. Frequently these candidates also possessed a broad general knowledge about religious, cultural or social movements which helped them to attribute *meaning* to the question.

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The average responses tended to include only part of the above, but frequently gave original or innovative meanings which were well supported. They tended to answer only some sections of the question in a more subjective, but frequently generalised type of answer. The average candidate tended to give interpretations of the image that were relevant and interesting, but were unsupported by references to other contexts and often used rather basic formal description of the images, ignoring their other visual art qualities.

Poorer responses tended to be very brief and relied on description only, with much of the information coming from the captions to the plates. Candidates did not support their opinion by referring to the plates or to any wider area of visual arts knowledge.

### 3 UNIT (ADDITIONAL)

#### Part A : Art in Australia

##### Question 1

*Australian painting and sculpture have been dominated by continuity of traditions rather than revolutions of change.*

*Evaluate this statement and give reasons for your view. Refer to particular painters and sculptors and examples of their work.*

This question provided opportunities for students to show different depths of knowledge about Australian painting and Australian sculpture, using particular aspects of each in order to respond to the question. The quotation enabled candidates to develop a framework for their response, and this was then expanded with reference to their knowledge about Australian painting and Australian sculpture. Some candidates chose to agree, others to disagree with the statement. Concepts of continuity, tradition, revolution and change supported the discussion.

The question reflects the nature of the content of the 3 Unit course and the type of engagement that is advantageous for a 3 Unit candidate studying images and objects. It asks the candidate to demonstrate knowledge that has been acquired through sophisticated and informed choices, innovative methods of enquiry and personal and authoritative interpretations.

The excellent responses revealed that the candidates had formed and were able to substantiate an argument based on the study of particular painters and sculptors and examples of their work. Artists and examples of their work, the nature and history of their practice, the processes of producing their works, were discussed. These responses dealt with the whole

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question; they were packed with judgment, critical evaluations and analyses of issues.

In the above average responses candidates used relevant information and appropriately selected examples. Candidates in this grouping used knowledge about particular painters and examples of their work to build most of their response, placing less emphasis on examples taken from the field of sculpture.

In average responses candidates answered some aspects of the question but made only slight reference to particular sculptors and their work. Judgment, critical evaluation and analyses included in these responses were neither deep nor well informed. Appropriately selected examples of artists and their work were included in the responses and, although used neither as verification nor as a basis for judgment, critical evaluation or analysis, such examples were described neither as a reference to the question nor as a basis on which to build the candidate's views.

There were few below average responses. Most of these were brief, containing general comments and, although relevant examples were included in these responses, they were merely described without any interpretation or judgment.

### Question 2

*Look at Plates 1, 2, and 3.*

*Examine how ONE OR MORE of these, and works by other Australian artists, are a response to the urban environment.*

This was a popular 3 Unit question and the standard of response was above average. It provided candidates with a number of starting points from which to examine a variety of responses to the urban environment. Using complex and expressive language, they discussed multiculturalism, alienation and cultural displacement, third runway issues, ugly suburbia and environmental concerns. Students related this photographic image to the works of David Moore, Max Dupain, Anna Zahalka, Albert Tucker and Arthur Boyd. *Rushing* was discussed in terms of the speed of city life, alienation of the individual, claustrophobia and anonymity, with reference to some satirical aspects of the city rush. Students related this work to other paintings by Grace Cossington-Smith, John Brack, Jeffrey Smart, and included some reference to Futurism and the Modernist agenda. Plate 3 was discussed in terms of cultural displacement, loss of identity, cultural heritage, Aboriginality, cultural duality, spiritual isolation. Works alluded to were by Trevor Nickolls, Fiona Foley, Tracey Moffatt and Gordon Bennett.

In these responses candidates chose one artwork for thorough discussion and referred to similar works by the same artist or the works of other artists who have also explored aspects of the same theme.

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The less successful responses consisted of rambling descriptions of all three images with little or no interpretation of these or other works. Here some candidates used what might have been prepared essays for Question 2(a) of the 2 Unit paper. The rural images used were inappropriate and did not relate to the question despite efforts to make them fit; these responses were, therefore, rendered irrelevant and incoherent. Such candidates treated the three plates as unseen artworks and, ignoring the terms of the question, offered unsupported opinions about their possible meanings in terms of superficial description.

### Question 3

*Within a decade, 1947-57, American art had lifted itself from a provincial version of modernity into an art of global status and significance.*

*With reference to this statement, discuss the impact of American ideas in Australian art after World War II.*

The better responses understood the historical significance of the change from American associated provincial to international modernity and identified pivotal artists and monuments. Here students cited relevant Australian artists to illustrate the influences of American ideas on Australian art post World War II.

### Question 4

*Australian architecture is the offspring of an old, remote continent and a newly arrived European culture.*

*Evaluate this statement, referring to a range of examples.*

Four candidates attempted this question, which allowed students to discuss a range of examples which they had either personally experienced or had studied from secondary sources. It allowed them to discuss particular significant achievements in architecture relating their knowledge of European culture in an Australian context. The better responses debated the statement and used relevant Australian examples.

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### Part B : Art and Culture

#### Question 5

*Women artists have represented themselves through their artwork in reflective, interesting, and subtle ways.*

*Discuss this statement with reference to the work of TWO OR MORE European or American women artists you have studied.*

In this question candidates were required to respond to the quotation which deals with a traditional perception of the attitudes of women towards art, depicting their art as being reflective, interesting and subtle.

The better candidates responded by challenging this viewpoint, referring to artists who have been able to uncover the patriarchal and traditional attitudes to women's artmaking and gender stereotyping. These responses clearly supported the challenge in the introductory passages and identified artists whose work also challenged the perception of women in society. Most examples referred to were North American, post-Modernist, feminist artists who have represented themselves through sustained use of contemporary art practice. The most popular examples were Jenny Holzer, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Miriam Shapiro and Judy Chicago, with reference to historical examples of artistic practice by Georgia O'Keefe, Kath Koltwitz and Artemesia Genteleschi .

The more sophisticated discussions of the quotation tended to tackle it from a post-modern perspective and, in these, candidates identified theories which they used as a way of explaining the specific choice of imagery, text and media of these women artists. Some candidates quoted the artists to justify their stance and they carefully integrated these into their responses, using appropriate language and showing a clear understanding of art concepts.

The average candidates agreed with most parts of the quotation and were also able to recognise the fact that most women artists were not subtle in challenging society's perception of gender issues. The notion of *subtle* has been used creatively in interpreting this in relation to aspects of specific artists' works.

In the poorer responses candidates chose Australian artists, although the question clearly indicated that an American and European focus was necessary. They also concentrated on biography, while description of works took precedence over critical analysis of the issues addressed by such works. A few candidates appeared to ignore the question completely and presented a prepared essay which did not relate to the issues raised in the question.

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### Question 6

*Explain some of the significant beliefs and ideas that are explored in the visual arts of a culture you have studied.*

*Refer to a range of examples in your answer.*

This question attracted a large number of responses which varied considerably in quality.

In the better responses candidates defined key terms like *culture*, *beliefs* and *ideas* and were selective in explaining those which are regarded as significant within the specific culture. In these responses, consistent links were maintained between ideas, beliefs and selected examples which were *interpreted* and not merely described in order to portray the culture being discussed.

Average responses showed that information had been learned but candidates had difficulty in applying such knowledge to the question. In some instances information was obviously prepared, in others terms were not interpreted but assigned common and general understandings. Essays tended to describe particular artworks, showing little awareness of the larger issues of Art and Culture within the question.

Less than average responses made little reference to the question but presented brief summaries of artists either as biographies or through descriptions of examples. Little or no reference was made to the significant beliefs and ideas that are explored in the visual arts of a specific culture.

Many students were too narrowly focused on their knowledge of the Recommended Areas of Study from 2 Unit and were not able to apply or extend their understandings to the question they had selected.

A number of students had difficulty in explaining their understanding of the term *culture*. The Visual Arts Syllabus clearly indicates that, in studying a culture, *a comprehensive range of images and art forms* should be examined with consideration being given to the 'cultural context in which the art forms and images were created'. Students with such a background were able to demonstrate their understanding of the beliefs and ideas of a specific culture and referred to a range of examples.

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### Question 7

*Look at Plates 4, 5, 6, and 7.*

*How do TWO OR MORE of these contemporary artists examine issues of post-modernism and appropriation?*

Few candidates answered this question.

The better responses dealt with the question fully, showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of post-modernism. Here candidates also made good use of appropriate art language and concepts and placed Post-Modernism in an historical art context, sometimes in relation to Pop Art and Dada and often in a post-colonial social context, as in Juan Davila's work. They often drew upon their knowledge of other Post-Modern works in support of their discussion and also saw the selected artworks, by Cindy Sherman, Hans Haacke and Jeff Koons, as cues to expose and reveal the issues and practices of Post-Modern artists which provided the basis for wider discussion.

In the average and less successful responses candidates interpreted the plates as being the framing factor of the question and, consequently, such responses were descriptive rather than interpretive. They often failed to substantiate opinions or consider the wider issues of post-modernism in a social context.

### Question 8

*Images of alienation and fear have permeated modern art.*

*Explore this statement with reference to particular artists and their works.*

The majority of candidates who answered the question showed a strong understanding of the visual arts. The question was very open-ended and allowed a wide range of interpretations of artworks and artists to be included in the discussion. Some candidates chose very contemporary examples such as the 1995 *Perspecta*, while others surveyed the century of modernism. Some answers relied upon a more historical understanding as a basis for discussion.

In general this question was well answered. The best responses included discussions of selected appropriate examples taken from a diverse range of artwork and artists. Even though some were more restricted in content, they were successful because they showed an excellent understanding and analysis of a few works by a couple of artists and related this to the question asked. The better responses were also able to analyse the different concepts of alienation and fear through a wider knowledge of the problems and issues felt by modern artists.

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Some candidates used only Australian examples which limited their responses. (Prepared answers for the 2 Unit Recommended Areas of Study were also insufficient and limited in their relevance to this question and the issues in the Art and Culture Focus Area.) The less successful responses dealt with art and artists biographically, showing little understanding of the concepts of fear and alienation in the context of the modern world. A more literal understanding of these concepts often led to the use of fewer examples and a narrower field of reference.

The few poor responses resulted from students' trying to fit their limited or shallow knowledge of the visual arts to the question but failing to make that link.

The concepts of the modern world, including industrialisation, war, cultural dislocation, materialism and phobias were all referred to and treated as being reflected in works of alienation and fear. The use of Pop art, as an example, was inspiring, while the scope of the question allowed for both personal and wider issues to be explored.

### **Part C : Art and Media**

#### Question 9

*Look at Plates 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.*

*Examine how materials and symbols have been used in artworks made for civic or public use in TWO OR MORE of these plates.*

*You may refer to other examples in your answer.*

Few candidates attempted this question.

The most successful responses drew upon a background knowledge of the visual arts, especially in relation to Australian indigenous culture, and the significance of bringing diverse elements together (particularly in Plates 8 and 9). In these responses materials were also seen to be symbolic and candidates referred to a wider range of works, relying not solely relying on the plates represented to reinforce this idea. This was done in a manner that supported the opinions raised in the investigation of the intent of the question.

The better candidates' use of language to reveal an understanding of the nature of symbols and materials and their potential meanings was strong. The use of appropriate quotations was also a feature of these responses which, in addition, showed a wider knowledge of architects', artists' and designers' intentions and the actual purpose of the buildings discussed.

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Average responses, although based on some knowledge of materials and symbols, were very descriptive but gave little consideration to the notions of *civic* or *public* use which was the focus of the question.

### Question 10

*Photography, film, and video have engaged the attention and energy of artists in the twentieth century.*

*Discuss this statement by referring to the work of TWO OR MORE artists.*

The better responses focused on the statement for discussion and, in support, gave a detailed and sophisticated account of a range of examples from each of the nominated media. Artmaking practices in these media were discussed in a historical context as a reflection of technological change. The ways in which individual artists utilised technology such as film, video and photography in their artmaking were discussed. Here candidates examined not only the ways in which such media affected the outcome of the works, but also the ways in which they were communicated to their audiences. Thoughtful connections were made between the electronic and print media and the visual arts, and the role of photography, film and video as means of making performance art permanent, and as part of the more hybrid artforms of many contemporary artists.

Average responses were descriptive references to photographers and film-makers and their works. They did not, however, explore *why* and *how* these contemporary media areas might engage the attention and energy of artists.

In the less successful responses there was little evidence to suggest that the candidates had accurately interpreted the question. A prepared answer was used, with little regard being paid to critical issues raised by the question.

### Question 11

*What is the social function of art in an age of mass media?*

*Give reasons for your views.*

*Refer to specific examples in your answer.*

The most successful responses defined art and its social functions by referring to various artists and 20th century Art Movements. Some candidates began by looking at Pop Art, the influence of Dada and the elitism of High Art. Others presented arguments based on post-modernism and took a more philosophical stance, looking at parody, appropriation and

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changing art forms that are the result of new technologies. Candidates successfully explained how these social functions have changed and have been affected by the development of mass media. They also supported their views with logically presented arguments that were well selected and discussed examples of artists' works with appropriate quotations from artists and art critics.

In the average responses candidates gave superficial definitions of the visual arts, making some attempts to support their opinions. Some focused on the various social functions of art in the 20th century, such as feminism and concerns for the environment. They described works of art, attempting to interpret them and relate them to mass media. Mostly, however, these responses concentrated on the artists who actually used mass media as their art form and made very little reference to the social functions of art.

The less successful responses relied on discussing a few artists with descriptions of their work and the media used. Reasoned discussion was not a feature of these responses.

### Question 12

*Give an account of how artists or designers have combined traditional and new materials, sign, symbols, and visual codes in their work.*

The question, on the whole was well answered, with responses being focused on artists' use of traditional and new media as well as signs, symbols and visual codes.

The most successful candidates defined the elements of the question and, in relation to these, discussed relevant artists and their work. Their responses were well expressed and, in them, students showed a confident understanding of art concepts. A number of artists, approaches, styles and contexts were used, ranging from prehistoric to post-modern. The main artists discussed were from the 20th Century, e.g. Joseph Beuys, Robyn Stacey, Julie Rrap, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Trevor Nickolls, and Gordon Bennett. Some responses included quotations to help illustrate a point and demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of art concepts.

The above average responses tended to be descriptive and avoided engaging in explanations of how artists or designers have combined traditional and new materials, signs, symbols and visual codes in their work. These candidates listed, and supported with an example, artists who had employed traditional and new materials, but did not develop opinions or discussion of the signs, symbols and visual codes used by them.

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### Part D : Art and Design

#### Question 13

*Design is largely a modernist construct and begins to be influential in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.*

*Evaluate this statement with reference to a range of examples in your answer.*

A small number of responses were received, none of which were poor or below average.

The question required an historical response to the criteria of the Focus Area of Art and Design. It allowed the student to investigate historically and critically some or all of the design areas within the Focus Area of Art and Design. Candidates incorporated historical and contemporary studies of design concepts and images ranging from early 19th century design movements and designers through to Australian contemporary design. Design theories were analysed, with appropriate examples of design practice such as the Red House and William Morris designed interiors. The majority of candidates critically evaluated the statement in the question, whilst acknowledging its validity.

In the above average and average responses candidates connected historical design movements and the statement in the question. Architectural examples predominated. Some candidates attempted to explore differences between modernist and post-modernist design.

In the average responses candidates used a limited number of examples and appeared to possess little knowledge of design and design movements. These students often misinterpreted the statement, in particular interpreting the term *construct* as meaning *construction*.

#### Question 14

*Analyse the impact of computer-generated imagery on the development of visual communication in the last decade.*

*Refer to specific examples in your answer.*

There was only one response to this question.

## 1995 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

### Question 15

*Give an account of the roles of innovation and tradition in contemporary design in ONE OR MORE of the following areas:*

- *graphic design*
- *product design*
- *wearable design*
- *interior/exterior design.*

*Refer to a range of examples in your answer.*

The question required analysis of aspects of innovation and tradition in historical and contemporary design movements and consequent relationship of those influences to current designers.

Due to the range of design areas covered by the question, students were able to refer to a variety of movements, personalities and product examples that were both innovative and traditional.

### Question 16

*Look at Plates 14, 15, and 16.*

*These buildings were selected for design awards over the last five years.*

*Discuss the architectural qualities that may have contributed to the selection and success of ANY of these buildings.*

The scope of the question allowed students to draw on all their architectural knowledge, both historical and contemporary, in referring to the question. The examples given provided a starting point which enabled them to discuss methods of construction, visual appearance and aesthetics, materials and function, as well as the way in which human needs and environmental factors were considered by the designers/architects.

The best responses cited relevant examples which encompassed a broad range of historical, modernist and contemporary areas and styles. These responses were concise and coherent, and noteworthy for a logical sequencing of information and ideas, and for their analysis of the architectural qualities which contributed to the success of the buildings as outstanding examples of architectural design.