BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1997 HSC

EXAMINATION REPORT

Visual Arts

1997 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION REPORT
VISUAL ARTS

In 1997, 8989 students presented for the 2/3 Unit (Common) Visual Arts Examination. 3507 students presented for the 3 Unit (Additional) examination. The majority of these students submitted a second artwork (3107); in the other 3 Unit options, 372 students undertook 3 Unit Written and 28 students submitted Integrated Visual/Verbal Studies.

Submitted Artworks

2/3 Unit (Common) and 3 Unit (Additional)

Those submitted works which were the most successful in 1997 demonstrated a sustained engagement with the visual arts in both making and study. These works were characterised by a sophisticated and knowledgeable engagement with the field of Art and skilful and often innovative manipulation of concepts, media and techniques.

Teachers and students are advised that the HSC Examination Subject Rules are strictly adhered to in the marking of students' submitted artworks, whether they are assessed in corporate or itinerant marking. Failure to comply with these rules may prejudice marks awarded to these works.

Students are reminded that excessive framing devices do not advantage submissions. Glass is not to be used in framing. Flat works are best presented in simple cardboard mounts and without frames. Careful attention should be given to the size, weight and duration of works.

In 1997, *A Guide to Ranking Submitted Artworks in the 1997 HSC* was used to assist in establishing the marking scales and, with the syllabus, provided the basis for marking submitted works. These were also the guide for the writing of comments for works selected in each mark range in each of the scales in each media category. This guide is included in this document.

Note

Examination information on HSC Visual Arts is contained in the current *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*.

RANK RANGE	1–10	11–20	21–30	31–40	41–50
COMMENTS/ OBSERVATIONS	NAIVE_____SOPHISTICATED/COMPLEX LITTLE VISUAL INTEREST_____STRONG VISUAL INTEREST & KNOWLEDGE OF THE ARTWORLD DISENGAGED _____HIGHLY ENGAGED				
OVERALL JUDGEMENT	• Works have an appearance of not engaging in any artistic problem–solving • May appear unfinished	• Few artistic problems grappled with • Works may appear repetitive • Little or no synthesis of subject matter and forms	• May attempt some synthesis of subject matter and form. Works may, however, appear unresolved • Works may appear to have little interpretive quality	• Works reflect more knowledgeable choices about what can be done • More accomplished in terms of how subject matter and forms are synthesised in the work • Work is confident demonstration of what is known and can be done practically • Works have a stronger interpretive quality	• Art conventions are personally interpreted in the works produced in an authoritative way • Sophisticated in terms of how ideas are represented, with a strong synthesis of the selection of subject matter and expressive use of forms/media • Informed choices have been made in the work • Works sustain interest at a number of levels • Works appear resolved, complete • Innovative
EVIDENCE OF PROCESS IN ARTWORK(S)	• Artworks reflect a very limited engagement with an understanding of the artmaking process	• Superficial engagement with artmaking process • Works may appear to be a first attempt	• May attempt some synthesis of subject matters and forms, works may appear unresolved, however	• A sustained involvement in the artmaking process is evident	• A sustained and highly accomplished involvement in the artmaking process is evident
ENGAGEMENT WITH SUBJECT MATTER/ CONCEPT	• Subject matter/concepts naïve, obvious, often clichéd	• Subject matter/concepts may be clichéd, awkward • Limited understanding of how ideas may be represented visually	• May deal with quite complex subject matter but has difficulty in representing this **or** • Subject matter may be less complex and ideas may seem overworked • Subject matter may continue to be clichéd	• Subject matter may be complex, subtle, less clichéd and interpreted in a more knowledgeable way • Ideas are represented more confidently and convincingly	• Subject matter may be complex, subtle and may work on a number of levels • Highly interpretive visual statements
ENGAGEMENT WITH FORMS/MEDIA	• Very little attention given to the properties of forms/media • Little knowledge of what forms/media can achieve	• Some attention may be given to exploring the properties of forms/media in the work • Use of forms/media may suggest a first attempt at using them • Technically little knowledge, inexperienced, incomplete • May include overworking or naïve choices	• May attempt to utilise the properties of forms/media • The work may provide the opportunity for finding out about what the forms/media can do • Artworks may appear uneven — better and less well worked areas	• Accomplished use of forms/media • Confident and convincing use of forms/media • Exploits expressive potential • Technically more sophisticated, more experienced	• Highly accomplished use of forms/media • Sophisticated understanding of the expressive potential of forms/media demonstrated in the work

Ceramics

A decline in the candidature in Ceramics was evident in 1997. This was attributed partly to the fact that many ceramic works submitted belonged to the category of Sculpture. The reasons for this were varied, including minor technical faults, a higher than usual ideal weight–to–size ratio, the use of other materials, eg iron, steel mesh, found objects, and bold sculptural treatments. It should be noted that ceramic submissions are marked as examples of the visual arts, rather than as functional objects and, as such, minor technical faults are subordinate to the visual impact of a work and its use of materials. Students should realise that Contemporary Ceramics is not a purely traditional and functional form–making medium, but, rather, a discipline which explores the expressive and tactile qualities of clay and surface treatments, pushing the medium and incorporating informed and selective use of other materials.

Ceramics submissions included personal interpretations of traditional handbuilt forms as well as inventive sculptural works. A small number of wheel–thrown, slip–cast and pit–fired works were also presented.

Sculptural works ranged from figurative pieces which used the medium to suggest the human form to less literal and more conceptual works in which forms evoked different emotions or issues related to the particular student's environment.

Wheel–thrown and slip–cast works tended to be conservative and focused on technique, with little exploration of the potential of these processes. Pit–fired works broke away from a vessel–making emphasis, exploring the possibility of forms and their use as installations.

Students displayed a growing awareness of different combinations of surface treatments. The use of incising and the exploration of textural surfaces was evident. Application of coloured slips, the use of sgraffito, oxide highlights and the selective use of glazing to create wet/dry contrasts was evident, showing an understanding of the range of possibilities presented by the ceramic medium, from raw clay to finished, fired and decorated form.

Above-average works used clay as a vehicle for expressing conceptual themes, with students drawing from issues in their environment (both local and global) and the history of ceramics and the visual arts in general. They were obviously based on sound research and experimentation in the development of forms, surfaces and decoration.

Submissions at this level were well resolved in terms of design, construction and decoration. Candidates took informed risks with techniques of construction, at times effectively integrating other materials to give the works a contemporary post–modern, industrial look. These invited interpretation on a number of levels — as forms, concepts and decorative surfaces.

Works were built confidently, manipulating clay in ways that were innovative and using multiple firings for surface decoration. Evidence of experimentation by manipulating commercial glazes, combined with subtle colour combinations which enhanced the forms, was pleasing to see. A sophisticated integration of form and surface decoration was present, with a strong sense of design linking individual pieces within the series submitted.

Average works were built competently, but lacked refinement in either form or finish. Concepts presented were often clichéd or lacked subtlety. Although works were generally personal interpretations of traditional ceramic forms, they were often formulaic, using the same shape or decoration on a number of pieces, with little development or variation upon a theme. At times works were conservative and unchallenging, reflecting a reluctance to explore the expressive potential of ceramic form and allied decoration techniques. Such works showed an understanding of the capabilities of the ceramic medium, but failed to exploit them fully. Often form and decoration were mismatched and did not complement each other, with decoration appearing as an afterthought. At times decoration was limited to the surface of only one area, with the three-dimensional form being treated frontally.

Below-average works were characterised by poor construction, with obvious technical faults, such as open cracks in the walls of component pieces and cracking at joins. A poor control of external contour and careless treatment of rims, openings and bases was also evident. Exploration of surface was minimal, with students failing to exploit the potential of clay as a tactile medium. Works often appeared to be a first attempt, with poorly resolved and naïve handling of clay and decorative materials. Often there was minimal relationship between forms and/or decoration where the submission consisted of multiple pieces.

A conceptual approach was also lacking, with students simply (and poorly) replicating a form. Often there was little relationship between form and concept, with the interpretation of concepts being unresolved. Works in this range were visually and physically heavy, revealing a lack of understanding of form, proportion and construction technique. Non–ceramic decoration such as acrylic paint and boot polish was used in an uncontrolled and unsympathetic way in an attempt to replicate ceramic processes, eg underglazing, burnishing, coloured slips, pit–firing.

Submissions should comprise the best pieces from a body of work, since all pieces submitted are considered when marking takes place. Weaker pieces are not disregarded and do influence the final mark. Selection of well-resolved forms, showing an awareness of form and proportion, is essential when choosing works for submission. Attention to the finishing of openings, rims and feet as well as an exploration of the surface quality of clay, and surface treatments, will be of advantage to the student.

Sculptured works can be submitted in Ceramics, even if they incorporate non–ceramic materials in a way that is sympathetic to their concept. A relationship between forms in terms of shape, surface and concept is desirable. Exploration of the surface potential of clay and the allied use of slips, oxides and glaze in multiple decorative firings is encouraged to add complexity to forms.

Collection of Works

Collection of Works continues to be a popular category for those who wish to complete works in a variety of media and styles, revealing a sustained involvement in and understanding of the artmaking process. This year a number of submissions consisted of many pieces. It should be noted that individual components must be in keeping with the limitations on size, weight and duration of submitted works; this applies particularly to video/film components.

In this year's submissions, emerging themes and subject matter were memories, family, identity and cultural dislocation as well as explorations of the surface qualities of everyday objects. Some submissions were based on the candidates' investigation of the Recommended Areas of Study, particularly *the exchange of signs, symbols, images and materials between the world of art and popular culture*. The better candidates coupled this framework with a conceptual awareness of the expressive potential of their chosen media and thus demonstrated the depth and breadth of their artmaking abilities. Although not a prerequisite, most collections were linked either thematically, conceptually and/or by media and this strengthened the collection as a whole.

Photography and Graphics continue to grow in popularity, as do Computer–generated Works, as individual components in this category. Many submissions included three–dimensional elements, whilst very few Film/Video components were presented. Electrical works were not generally submitted in this category.

The excellent and above-average submissions were characterised by a strong and concise relationship between the concept and the expressive form. Candidates showed that they were able to explore beyond the boundaries, making the ordinary appear extraordinary and often involving the viewer on more than one level. A consistently high degree of competence in the range of media used was evidence of their sustained involvement in the artmaking process. Humour was used as a key element in the more sophisticated works and presentation served to unify the parts of the collection, making a more coherent submission.

The average submissions were characterised by competence rather than confidence. Candidates showed empathy with their subject matter but often failed to show any deeper exploration of the expressive qualities and potential of the media used. Concepts were sometimes weak but counterbalanced by competent technical skills or, conversely, technical mastery was poor and did little to enhance a strong concept.

The below-average works were characterised by insensitive and inconsistent use of media. Use of the found object, photocopies and magazine image collages was common and often gave the impression of the candidate's limited experience with sophisticated artmaking. The concepts seemed to be naïve and sometimes immature, with little development beyond the obvious. Images selected did not relate well, even though a theme was evident.

Students are encouraged to be selective in their choice of pieces for submission. Presentation and display of the collection should be carefully and realistically considered, with clear instructions included, where appropriate. Titles may further communicate a concept and should be chosen, if they are to be used, with that fact in mind. Size, weight and duration limitations should be strictly adhered to, both in the whole submission and in the individual pieces of the submission. Where there are a number of components, instructions for display are appreciated and recommended. Photographs of layouts may be submitted to facilitate set–up instructions.

Computer–generated Works

Computer–generated Works is a category that is continuing to attract a small candidature who investigate and extend the artmaking possibilities of digital imagery. 129 computer–generated works in 2/3 Unit were submitted in 1997. In the most successful works, software and special effects were exploited and applied to make visually powerful artworks.

A strong interest in the human figure as subject matter was evident. The figure as an aesthetic investigation into beauty, or, on the other hand, into grotesque, particularly through scientific or mutated human forms, was common. Portraits reflected issues related to identity and self–expression. Text was also utilised, often to build connections, play against visual references, to explain or anchor images, as a supporting statement, as a key to unravel meaning or as a label for each image. Text also appeared as the narrative in comic books.

Submissions were commonly presented as a series, with most of the digital submissions being still rather than film or video–based work. A small number of slide and sound presentations were made. Discrete selection and editing of series submissions revealed student knowledge of the power of each image as a sequential key in telling a visual episodic story.

Flat manipulations of still images relied on Photoshop and Corel, rather than investigating 3D software tools. Many submissions still depended heavily on cut and paste, generic manipulation of stock filters, masks and fx tools. The repetition of a single image manipulated through such a variety of tools, filters and colour settings, and often presented in grid composition or format, was typical.

The newer, emergent interests were in the combining of other media such as fabric, paint, and sculptural relief within some 2D works, usually as a framing device, or to create packaging. Colour is becoming more important, with intense colour application in both the manipulation of the image on computer and in the print settings. Glossy prints are preferred by candidates and increasingly, works show the potential of the software to morph. Bryce KPT and Poser KPT packages were used; students often gave the responsibility of constructing their artworks to the tools, however. It is encouraging to note that fewer submissions rely solely on the capacities of the software to create the image through one-step manipulation. Changes in the technical capacities of programs and software with greater choice and availability to students, along with more competitive pricing, will inspire greater numbers of students to work in digital forms.

Works printed in large-scale format using low DPI lose the image's integrity for scale. At present, low DPI resolution of the digital camera combined with low DPI used in scanning images can result in extremely low-grade resolutions in final images presented, especially in large-scale images.

The stronger submissions reflected a sustained level of engagement with the artmaking process, as well as sophisticated manipulation and selection of software appropriate to the concept and ideas communicated. These works showed that the student was in charge, not the technology. The range of subject matter in the better works included the self–portrait, the introspective journey, explorations of gender and identity, the confusion and contradictions of adolescence, emotional or psychological concerns, the body in action as Poser program, and appropriated images from sport and fashion.

The mass media acts as a significant influence in this form: television characters, shows and genres continue to be a resource for students, both conceptually and as a source of appropriated, scanned or *kidnapped* images. Other current events used as subject matter included political and social issues, with references to Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party and racism. Aboriginal identity, multiculturalism and immigration, ecology and the environment, as well as vegetarianism, multinationals such as IBM, Foxtel and Macintosh, the military and technology, the physical properties of technology, gadgets such as the handset, the computer, cable television and motherboards. Subcultural/popular culture themes in music and sport, eg the lifestyles of the raver, the rapper, the Gothic and the punk, the surfer and skateboarder, were also explored. There was, perhaps, an undue reliance on appropriation and mediated images in this form.

Some references were made to the visual arts; these tended, however, to take the form of appropriating artworks to create the composition. Students are encouraged to complement the mass media attractions of computer imagery with the recent history and tradition of these forms in the visual arts and cinema, and to inform their works with knowledge and skills acquired in other forms of making and studying the visual arts. Historical, scientific and cultural references to Fritz Lang's significant and iconic masterpiece *Metropolis*, as well as George Orwell's novel and the later film, *1984,* were sometimes revealed.

The more successful works reflected a knowledge and appropriate application of digital processes including scanning of original photographs, selective use of image banks, as well as use of original photographs, ranging from point and shoot processes to staged, posed shots. Attention should be given to lighting, point of view, setting, arrangement of set and models, use of make-up and cropping.

In the more successful works, students used more than one package with sensitivity. These images had a *wow* factor. Appropriation was used as a strategy to comment on the student's world, or in juxtaposing images from disparate cultures or historical frames to create images which produced a social comment. These were synthesised with a sophisticated and skilful use of software, attracting the viewer with a density of symbolism and possible readings.

Average works also attempted to deal with personal and topical issues of the student's world. The inconsistencies in treatment of the concept, composition and software applications, however, made them less successful. There was evidence of experimentation, as well as attempts at a more personal interpretation of images, but the synthesis of subject matter and what the form can do or offer appeared to be unresolved. When in series, submissions reflected less discrimination in selection and editing of the visual narrative.

Presentation of these works relied on conventional, clichéd formats such as grid compositions. They showed a generic manipulation of stock filters/image processing techniques, as well as a greater reliance on appropriating images from other artworks, the mass media, or image banks, for design qualities rather than as a strategy for exploiting their concept or subject matter. Text was used as supporting statement or as a design element rather than being integrated into the imagery.

The less successful artworks showed little evidence of development other than as a naïve or clichéd concept. Investigations of the expressive or technical possibilities of the form were slight. They appeared as a first attempt and, whilst experimentation might be evident, the image was left to resolve itself, through chance encounters with software tools.

These works relied on clumsy cut and paste collages, simple scans which might present a single aesthetic decision such as repetition to create vacuous visual headlines, eg *this is a face*. Book–style submissions often ignored the practical realities of this mode of presentation; text were used as a label and was often unrelated to the visual concept presented. Mixed media were poorly integrated.

Students are advised to avoid sacrificing resolution and complexity of images in concept and manipulation for scale alone. The scale should be appropriate to both the conceptual intent and the available technology. Submissions should not be presentations of images as a vehicle for displaying an inventory of software tools. This approach tends to produce images which indicate a superficial or artificial engagement with the concept and subject matter and the artmaking process itself.

Clichéd representations and symbols should not be used; for example, bald and crude confrontations with guns, blood and bodily functions, crosses, and cyberspace clichés do not enhance the work. Examiners are not shocked by the veracity of this graphic form. Students are advised to be selective and to choose the most successful and powerful images. **Dangerous materials must not be used in submitted artworks**. Disks must not be submitted.

Design

There was a decline in the number of submissions in this category. Most were average or below-average, with very few being in the excellent category. Few 3D works were presented, and those that were tended to be architectural models in the style of Design and Technology submissions. There was also a decline in fashion design, illustrations and colour and design exercises. There was, however, an increase in the use of computer graphics, which were often used as layouts for a range of design forms. Colour–scanned or colour–photocopied images were popular and often appeared to be glossy photographs.

There seemed to be a lack of understanding of what would constitute a suitable submission in this category. Few submissions included a design brief outlining the problem to be solved. Some briefs were a discussion of the work, or an explanation of the processes undertaken, rather than a brief clearly defining the design task. Few submissions showed a sound understanding of contemporary design practices or showed that students had broadened their understanding of product design by studying the work of current design practitioners through journals, publications or direct experience.

Above-average works often included a number of design solutions, with the best being developed into a selected product. These works also set themselves complex and sophisticated design problems to solve and then showed an accomplished involvement with artmaking processes in order to do so. Many of the more successful works included a well-presented design brief, which helped the examiners to judge how successfully the candidate had solved the design problem attempted. Many of the above-average submissions were in the form of book illustrations or comic books, in which the candidate showed a shrewd and sophisticated understanding of the conventions of this form and successfully sustained an accomplished involvement over a number of pages. It was pleasing to note that many candidates had availed themselves of commercial production processes as in printed T–shirts or computer–scanned images. These submissions were further enhanced by the inclusion of the original artwork, so that examiners could note how the design had been developed through a number of stages from the initial artwork and layout, through to a finished product.

Works that were average often presented clichéd themes such as designs for CD covers, which showed limited engagement with the imagery used. Other works such as posters were often not fully resolved or showed a lack of control in their paint application. Architectural models were often submitted with floor plans but were lacking in artistic application or showed a limited understanding of practices in contemporary architecture.

Works of below-average quality were poorly constructed or relied heavily on copied imagery, eg drawings of comic book heroes. Many of the poorer architectural models appeared to be badly constructed dolls' houses furnished with Lego blocks and showed little understanding of artmaking processes or architectural design practices.

Students are advised to approach this media area as being design within the visual arts and to show how a submission in Visual Arts would differ from a project in Design and Technology. Students could be directed to study ways in which visual arts practices can be applied to design outcomes, eg painting, drawing, graphics, photography or computer–generated images. These could then form part of the imagery for a layout for an advertisement, magazine cover, book illustrations or promotional material. In submissions in which text is to be included, students should investigate lettering conventions, including choice of font, typeface, size and interrelationship with imagery. They are encouraged to include a design brief as part of their submissions. This should be a statement identifying the problem to be solved, such as a designer would present to a client. The brief should not be an abridged version of students' Visual Arts Diary; rather, it should provide a context for interpretation of the work.

Knowledge of this area could be further enhanced by students' use of resources such as *Design in the Visual Arts*, which was designed as a support document for Visual Arts and the Visual Arts Content Endorsed Course; it provides design briefs which incorporate historical and critical studies, marketing and functional design.

Drawing

The works submitted by students in the Drawing category this year showed a definite interest in traditional conventions and techniques of drawing. The trend towards figurative subject matter intensified, with the majority of students exploring traditional drawing subjects such as figure compositions and, to a lesser extent, still life, landscape and the environment.

This renewal of interest in drawing was apparent throughout the range of work submitted, with students emphasising the mastery of techniques of conveying varying degrees of complexity and sophistication. The control and possibilities of technique became a significant element in the meaning and intention of many works.

Related to this traditional emphasis on technique was an interest in the use of well-established conventions of representation and subject matter. A number of students chose to work with subjects such as the human figure, portraits, their immediate environment, family and friends. The predominant mood of this work was subjective, domestic and controlled. Many subjects could be described as sombre, quiet and reflective and possibly reflected the *alienation and isolation* Recommended Area of Study.

The retreat from tackling large social, environmental or political issues in student drawings was replaced this year by concentration on the conventions of capturing appearance, analysing structure or expressing mood and atmosphere inherent in familiar and domestic subjects. There was a very noticeable decline of interest in fantasy, satire or social comment. These qualities, along with social, political and environmental concerns, seemed to have been transferred to the comic and cartoon genre. This seemed to have become a significant area in drawing, with submissions of all kinds from very good to very bad.

A decline was noted in such areas of subject matter and uses of drawings as:

•   bold, expressive and adventurous work;
•   conceptually challenging work which questioned the nature and activity of drawing through mechanical, digital or textual inclusions;
•   abstract drawing;
•   fantasy, surrealism and the grotesque;
•   overt art referencing through appropriation;
•   popular culture such as dead musicians, basketball heroes or tattoos;
•   widely known sporting heroes (these tended to be local, topical or the student's friends).

An area of subject matter which is growing significantly is the exploration of cultural placement and ethnic identity. At its best, this work is rich and multi–layered in its symbolism, technique and materials. At its simplest, it relies upon the juxtaposition of stereotyped cultural images.

The drawing area showed a distinct tendency towards large and complex series. These were often related to subtle and intense explorations of a single subject such as the human figure. There was a pleasing lack of single–work submissions, even at the bottom of the scale.

Popular drawing materials included oil pastel and oil stick, dry pastel, charcoal and graphite. There was an increase in the use of ink pen in all its guises – drafting pen, biro, pen and nib and felt pen. The combination of a variety of materials or the obviously expressive use of materials was significantly small, as was the use of applied materials as part of the drawing surface. Where collage was used, it was generally restrained and appropriate.

Work in the above-average category was characterised by outstanding handling of pure drawing media such as charcoal and white pastel, coloured dry pastel and various materials used with resist and washes. Many works showed outstanding use of the chosen media. The ability of students to retain the freshness and clarity of pastels or to layer charcoal while retaining clean areas spoke of extraordinary knowledge and experience of the materials.

These students showed an understanding of drawing conventions in all aspects of their work. They possessed skills such as the integration of figure, ground and format, composition and placement, confident balances of line, tone and space, an understanding of alternating richly layered and lost surfaces.

An interesting characteristic of much of the best work was the students' approach to their subject matter. Most of these works limited or controlled the range of references in the chosen subject and there was very little synthesis of a wide variety of images to create narratives or support themes within single works or even series. This control was used to explore meanings, symbolic qualities, atmosphere or emotional effects inherent in the subject or the student's response to the subject. Thus, the atmosphere of particular places, the personality or emotions of the subject of a portrait or the strengths and vulnerabilities of the naked figure were investigated through a closely related series of images and with very little recourse to symbolic attributes or wider narratives. This was allied to a sense of specificity — naked figures were about particular bodies rather than issues of body image such as anorexia; architectural studies were about the structure or atmosphere of defined places rather than about issues such as urban development.

The very best works showed a complexity of meaning and allowed multiple readings within the controlled response to subject. The handling of materials and the resolution of drawing conventions were highly personal and reflected the students' responses to their subject. Instances of this were seen in the alternation of clarity and precision of sketching with scumbled and rubbed–back areas of tone to evoke the relationship of a figure with its environment, or assertive hatching to express the strength and dominance of an architectural edifice. There were, however, concerns that a regrettable blandness accompanied some technically good work. Technical virtuosity cannot, in isolation, be equated with excellence. It should be allied with sophisticated and confident content and concept if it is to exemplify above-average qualities.

In average work, students produced some evidence of research into selected themes and issues but had varying degrees of success in communicating ideas. Their use of drawing materials and techniques showed their concern with achieving control of the media, as well as varying degrees of accomplishment in the use of their chosen materials. The techniques used were often simple, such as hatching or contour shading, but the expressive potential of the technique showed limited success, although awareness and intention were evident.

The approach to subject matter at this level lacked the concentrated focus of the above-average work but did reveal a pleasing openness and wide–ranging interests and concerns. The traditional concerns of figure studies, portraits and environments were popular choices, but symbolic and thematic narratives were more evident. These were characterised by the selection of symbols and images to represent qualities and attributes, and the pictorial arrangement of these elements.

The resolution of these works was dependent upon the degree of development of the images and their deployment within the drawings. Many were simple or obvious compositions dominated by frontal viewpoints and regularity of placement. Symbolic or thematic works often reflected a sense of students' reliance on the literal meaning of images and of their not exploring the potential of materials and techniques to enhance and develop such meanings.

The sourcing of images is relevant to the expression of personal vision. Many students at this level confined their exploration of images to their initial choice of a photographic source. Work which is wholly derived from photographic sources tends to betray its origins in a tonal flatness and smoothness. In average works, the style of the photograph also tended to dictate each student's expressive response to the image. When using photographs in above-average works, the students used various appropriate and interesting drawing styles in interpreting, for instance, composition or figure proportion from the source. In average works, the students tended to try to reproduce smoothness of tone or other photographic qualities, thus allowing the photograph to dictate the style of drawing.

Many artworks in this area showed the labour of the drawing process. A training in process was evident in many works; for example, pen and ink drawings displayed hatching, cross–hatching and triple hatching as the work developed.

In some works, students showed an ability to handle their materials competently, but media choices were unsympathetic and inappropriate to their subject matter, as in the use of oil pastels to capture a mood of intimacy in a portrait. This is not impossible to do, but the softer tones of dry pastel would have been more sympathetic.

Drawings which were below average were characterised by a simple and unreflective approach to subject matter and limited understanding of materials and techniques.

Subject matter in such drawings was drawn from the same range of figurative trends as was observed throughout the media area, with a greater representation of well–worn and hackneyed imagery such as muscle men and superheroes. Students showed little evidence of exploring a wide variety of sources in selecting imagery or of direct observation in pursuing popular subjects such as their home environment. Many of the images appeared to have been invented or synthesised from memory. Drawings in this category showed a significant interest in pattern making.

The approach to subject matter at this level was difficult to detect; many works gave the impression that subjects had been chosen fairly arbitrarily or simply because they were well known to the student. Little attempt was made to consider the ways in which composition or viewpoint can convey meaning. Viewpoints were invariably frontal and compositions showed little variation beyond central placement in the format.

The use of materials showed a similar cautious, unexplored and inexperienced quality. Graphite and oil pastel were the favoured media. The use of graphite showed a single tonal range, either nervously pale or dark and clumsy. Oil pastels were used in outlining and colouring–in combinations.

Many students in the below-average range showed an attraction to patterning. There is a wealth of historical and contemporary examples of pattern which are readily available and should prove valuable to these, and other, students. Direction to appropriate materials and consideration of themes and concepts associated with pattern and decoration would assist such students.

The trend this year towards a significant number of works in each submission raises two issues which should be considered:

1   Careful consideration of which works to submit and which works are likely to lessen the impact of a submission remains a problem for some students. An uneven quality in works can reveal experimentation and development. If the differences in quality between individual works are great, however, the series can suffer. Careful consultation between students and teachers at this stage of decision–making remains a vital part of the submission process.

2   At the lower range, lack of commitment to work is becoming more obvious.

Students should pay more attention to the drawing surface. The range of papers and other supports should be considered to be as much a part of drawing media as pencils and crayons, and an essential part of individual drawings. Choice of support should be appropriate to subject and meaning. For example, cream–coloured paper can subdue graphite; heavily milled watercolour papers can impose a texture on a drawing which is often inappropriate to both the techniques and subject. The most distracting choices were highly coloured papers with regular machined textures.

Working from photographic sources has been common in drawings, with varied success. Students should be encouraged to see this as part of the drawing process, not as the controlling device of the drawing. The understanding of photographic sources and their effectiveness in drawing can be successful only if students combine direct observation of similar subjects in their diary work. The most successful drawings might rely on a photograph, often taken by the student, either to capture a pose or to facilitate understanding of a particular spatial relationship; the student must also show, however, evidence of direct observation of figures and spaces. This wider experience of looking is most clearly seen in the successful drawing that moves beyond the distinctly photographic rendering of tone.

Film and Video

A small number of students are attracted to film and video as an expressive artform. This year, fewer submissions were produced as computer–generated or animated works, with 110 film and video submissions, but it is hoped that more students will work in this form over the next few years.

Most of the submitted works are shot and edited on video. Common and typical technical features in film and video submissions included the use of a vision mixer to colourise or apply other video paint effects. This is often done to mask poorly shot, boring, or otherwise inferior footage, while letterbox format is a popular option to make works appear more cinematic. Text was a prominent aspect of many works, often being used as a quick flash that was simply black text on white background or vice versa. Soundtracks usually comprise music rather than dialogue or commentary. Black and white is a popular post-production effect.

Subject matter in film video is similar to other forms: the experiences of adolescence (a marked interest in father figures as subject matter was noted, with explorations of student–father relationships, indicating their significant influence on students), the Higher School Certificate, the mass media and figures from television, cinema and the world of art. Increasingly, films are being conceived as narratives rather than video clips. Study of the work of successful filmmakers, and synthesis of methods and ideas while maintaining personal expression and interpretation, was evident in successful works. Some works indicated understanding of various film genres and conventional systems such as the road movie, the detective/murder/spy thriller, the European deeply introspective work and the techno–wiz blockbuster – more often appropriated than successfully produced. The decline in derivative skateboarding films was noted and appreciated.

Candidates deal with videotape presentation and advertising, by decorating and presenting a video cover. Computers are usually used to edit even basic video footage – this should enable more complex expressive works to be produced in the future, with more confident layering and integration of both vision and sound. Text seemed to be only minimally incorporated into those works attempting to spell out their ideas through both words and pictures – more subtlety obviously needs to be developed in its use; it is often unsuccessfully used as a thematic sledgehammer.

Effective integration of sound and vision created dynamic works. The most successful works comprised a clever narrative and/or engaging visual content. In such films, sound tended to punctuate the visuals while camera techniques were wonderfully orchestrated with a great variety of shot types. Scripting and storyboarding developed works with a strong conceptual content as well as convincing technical and practical skills. These are often entertaining or witty productions.

The average works showed varying ability to integrate visual and audio streams or ideas that were often seeking to explore a serious or pertinent theme – suicide, drug addiction, violence, media control. In such works, however, camera techniques were patchy, with insufficient skill or experience or confidence in utilising lens, movement and composition.

These works needed more explanation and further resolution, and lacked appropriate ending. Editing was thoughtful but was not tight enough – some shots were quite unnecessarily long. In these works, some blending and composing of shots was evident, but images did not smoothly lead from one to the other in a visually expressive way. Competent, average works, on the other hand, were predictable. Six minutes is the maximum running time for a film/video submission; works can be shorter, however — there is no minimum time — but abrupt finishes or over–long films reduce the success of the work.

The least successful works showed little evidence of storyboarding or conceptual structure. Camera direction was unsteady, often out of focus or less than engaging. Images were frequently framed as wide shots, with little variety in the type of shots used – for example, there were few close–ups. These works had a minimal narrative basis, were very simple or unresolved. Editing was often not tight enough to maintain pace. Sound was combined in a clumsy way, without layered transitions and little or no integration with the vision. Technical skills clearly need to be refined and extended. Technology was often allowed to control the works rather than student intention and knowledge. Content was often heavily dependent on clichés in the less successful works, while commercial footage, ideas and conventions were evident.

It is recommended that students check that sound and vision are accurately recorded. The tape should be rewound to the beginning of the work, with a countdown being used to indicate the start of the work. Titles and credits must be included; all music sources, video clips and other material used that is subject to copyright must be acknowledged. The final edit must be recorded near the start of the tape – it must not be dubbed halfway into a three-hour tape. Storyboarding is a vital and fundamental process in film and video works, which depend on planning, organisation and good time management. Time is also a very real element of film and video and students must deal directly with time. Filmmakers confront a set of creative problems different from those in other more traditional media areas. This fact needs to be recognised and appropriate plans made.

Graphics

The standard of work submitted in this category was very high. Students appeared to be exploring a wide range of printmaking techniques and to be exploiting the formal qualities of this medium as well as its expressive potential.

It was pleasing to see an increase in high-quality monotypes. These often had a fluent and gestural quality and appeared to be produced by painting either on a surface or by using a multi–plate approach. Their expressive potential was further enhanced by a sensitive application of transparent and opaque inks, applied with a variety of different rollers and brushes in order to produce marks.

There was a slight increase in the number of screen-prints and those submitted tended to explore all aspects of the medium such as direct and indirect stencil techniques including photographic stencils, paper stencils and textures applied directly to the screen. Some silk-screen prints utilised the relatively new high-quality water–based inks rather than using the traditional oil–based inks.

An increasing number of candidates chose to extend or enhance the surface of their prints with various techniques. These included layering the surface with different papers, adding collaged areas, or stitching with threads or fibres. There has also been a strong trend towards integrating photographic imagery into graphic processes. Students here had explored a variety of techniques, including the use of photo release, cyanotypes or the use of liquid light photo emulsion before printing. Students also collaged black and white or coloured photocopies or computer–generated images into their works. The more successful works incorporated the images in a sensitive manner that enhanced the original print.

Block printing remains a popular technique. A wide range of materials was used including lino, end–grain engraving, veneer and craftwood.

Interest was shown in blind embossing as a process. Students need to be aware that a block designed for ink does not necessarily produce a successful embossing. This is a process that relies on a variety of shapes, textures and depths within the block. There was also a notable increase in the number of collographs presented. In many cases, these pushed the boundaries of more traditional collograph techniques, resulting in works rich in surface textures.

Submissions of excellent quality presented a consistently good body of both thematic and technical work. Often the large scale of the additions reflected not only a genuine enjoyment but also a confident mastery of graphic artmaking. Here, many students broke through the traditional boundaries of formalist printmaking by using innovative applications of mixed media. Many of the better candidates tended to adopt a more conceptual approach, often sensitively incorporating text into the work. Such text was often applied in an innovative manner, eg collaged, photocopied or computer–generated, and lino etched with caustic soda. Some text was worked into the surface of the print using the chin collé technique. The better candidates also made a careful and appropriate selection of papers, many choosing to print on transparent rice or tissue papers. An equally careful selection was made of printing inks, with matt, gloss and transparent media being explored to achieve sensitive tonal and colour blends. Size does not determine the final mark. It was, however, interesting to see some outstanding works which were very large (such as bold relief prints measuring 1.5 m by 1 m) and some equally outstanding small works (such as delicate end–grain engravings measuring 10 cm by 6 cm).

Average submissions used some degree of experimentation and manipulation. In these, students often chose to submit a large quantity of work which represented the whole of their exploration and documentation of the chosen medium, rather than a more careful selection of the better prints. Consequently, these submissions were inconsistent in quality, containing stronger and weaker parts.

The poorer submissions showed only limited skill and a lack of preliminary work. In many, a single block or stencil was repeatedly printed in several colours; there was little evidence of research into subject matter and compositions were unresolved. These works conveyed the impression of a first–time printmaking experience, rather than a sustained effort.

Students are advised to be selective in what they include in their submissions. Poor artistic judgement is revealed when every experimental or preliminary piece is submitted, rather than the most crisp and successful works. A sustained and authentic approach to practising techniques, drawing and composing in the Visual Arts Diary will provide a sound basis for an effective and successful body of work. Where mediated images are used as source material, careful consideration must be given to the final work so that it does not become remote and meaningless. While hand colouring remains a popular and effective way of enlivening prints, its application must also be carefully considered, as colour may often create an unwanted distraction or destroy the integrity of the printed surface.

Painting

Painting continues to be the post popular medium/form for submitted artworks and affords a wide cross-section of interests and achievements.

Subject matter and concepts explored in painting included the figurative depiction of the human form and the body or figure as a vehicle for psychological comment and insight. The figure is often employed to support investigations of representational and stylistic concerns such as abstraction, expressionism and metaphysical painting. Cultural issues of identity, feminist theory, race and ethnicity remain popular subjects. The context and experiences of adolescence are expressed in portraiture, often in self–portraits, or through subject matter and ideas about leisure and lifestyle, viz surfing, music, the mass media, subcultures. Many painting submissions were based on current affairs, including the rugby league ownership tussle, and disquieting events such as the Port Arthur tragedy, war, poverty and the plight of refugees.

Studies of artists and their practice, particular artworks and the world of art often provide students with subjects for painting. Recent fascination with post–modern practices and theories, in particular appropriation and pastiche, is increasingly influential. Corresponding with post–modern interests is the use of lettering, words and text as the subject matter of the painting. These works play with the painted surface — adding and layering, building up the form, recontextualising words, disputing and reinterpreting their possible meanings. Writing on the surface of the canvas, often as title, annotation or footnote, furthered or challenged pictorial meaning.

Other studies of the visual arts and design, especially the Focus Areas' Recommended Areas of Study, also provide subject matter for submitted artworks. Consequently *isolation and alienation* and *Romanticism* suggested subject matter and ideas this year. Often specific artworks were used as inspiration and often reworked in line with students' worlds and the Higher School Certificate experience.

The submission of paintings on paper and as scrolls continues. The size of paintings varies from small, even miniature, works, often in series, to large unstretched scrolls and panels. The appropriateness of the scale to the content, the type of painting and the authority of the student is a key expectation. Big is not always better. Selection and rejection of individual works to be submitted in series is also an important consideration. An inconsistent and uneven series of ten works may not be as effective as a smaller sample of the more successful pieces. Works in series are often based on a theme or reference, for example the *Seven Deadly Sins*.

One of the most persistent types of painterly investigation examines the substance that goes into the paint and the painterly surface. The painting medium itself as subject matter provided students with opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency in the exploration of techniques of application and their ability to push and exploit surfaces. Layering of paint, glazing and impasto were frequently combined to create rich, often expressive works. Many students showed an increased understanding of the potential of painting as a medium.

It is interesting to note the decline in abstract painting, with few completely non–representational works; masking tape and hard–edge painting were rarely used and colour–field painting was uncommon. Rather, paintings seemed to cluster around two poles. On the one hand, works might have been the precise, tenacious, deliberate and realist portrayal of a subject, often with a photo–realist disposition; on the other hand, paintings might be driven by an expressionist and neo–expressive manipulation of the media, along with a raw, nervy edge. A smaller and still emergent attitude to painting appeared in works influenced by popular culture and, to some extent, pop art and using these images and processes as they have re–entered the commercial worlds of design and advertising in the cyclic exchange, and diminishing the boundary between *high* and *low*.

Other consistent devices in painting are the box, the grid and the frame. This fact was apparent in works in series that, when displayed, appeared as a sequence of boxed or framed images, as the result of the inclusion of recessed alcoves and boxes built into the canvas to support found objects. Other structures used pediments and architectural apparatus and the structural and ordering device of the grid or the frame. Icons and altar pieces were still popular.

The successful submissions responded to the painting intentions as well as the inquiry or problem identified by the candidate. These works not only reflected confidence, verve, risk–taking and an enjoyment of painting, but also suggested a level of resolution and experience as a result of which the candidate engaged in a sustained way with painting processes, problems, ideas, concepts, materials and techniques. They were confident and assured ventures in representation and/or interpretations of images, ideas and subject matter. Wit, satire and humour, parody and irony were established in many of the better submissions. Often students conveyed meaning in their work through personal signs and symbols and more easily recognised public codes and conventions.

Informed choice was a feature of the better works. Choices of the subject matter and type of painting, the selected media, the scale and the presentation of the work were understood and resolved in an appropriate way in such works. These paintings strongly suggested continuing experience of or practice in painting; they certainly did not appear to be the first and only effort of the student. They were obviously the result of quality teaching and learning — negotiated, collaborative partnerships between teacher and student in pursuit of understanding and accomplished artwork.

The better works in series, often on paper or a panel and board, show that an accomplished submission in painting does not need to take the form of a single master or major piece. Coherently resolved and of a consistently high standard, works in series, when well selected as a group or set of works, are an effective illustration of candidates' achievement, knowledge and understanding of painting.

The average submissions are usually less interpretive, relying on painting as descriptive imitation and aspiring to realism. These works, whilst variously informed by practice, experiment, subject matter, process and perseverance, generally tended to be coloured in, paying most attention to describing or representing the surface appearance of the subject or topic to be described. Frequently, the less successful paintings depended on the copying of a photograph, with little injection of a personal response to painting.

Some of these candidates presented a series of works or panels, yet sometimes appeared unable to decide what should be left in or out and included all works attempted, whether resolved or not. This indicates an understanding of a practice that is more naïve than that shown in the more successful works.

Appropriated images were often dealt with in this range; at times, however, these displayed a lack of consistency in the way(s) in which images were incorporated or integrated into new contexts. Often, the incorporation was an inappropriate means of communicating concepts, while interpretations of such images were more literal than deeply researched and coherently contextualised.

Many students adopted an experimental yet informed approach to media and subject matter. Abstract works in the middle range were typical of this experimental use of media, yet often left compositional problems unresolved or showed a certain clumsiness in their combinations of media and materials.

Candidates in the average range tended to be less discerning about what is possible in terms of composition. The titles of their works were sometimes ambiguous and confusing, suggestive of poor insight into the interpretation of the artworks. The scale of these works was, at times, inappropriate, with compositions and concepts failing to lend themselves to the chosen large scale. Some artworks were large, simply for the sake of being large.

The works at the lower end of the scale often appeared unfinished, and were frequently coloured-in representations of objects, people and animals liked or favoured by the student. Such paintings did not appear to reflect an understanding of the visual arts and the types of histories, problems and practices that, when studied, contribute to each student's ability to respond appropriately.

Many of these works incorporated inappropriate and clumsy combinations of media, clichéd subject matter and a lack of conceptual development. They reflected superficial knowledge or understanding of painting practices and a limited use of formal painting devices. Such works were also characterised by naïve handling of media, with colours often unmixed, straight from the tube and applied in a flat manner that indicated a limited knowledge of tonal modelling. Symbols, if used, were clichéd and stereotyped. Frequently, these works lacked any integration of their chosen materials, which were often inappropriately and unsympathetically combined. They lacked competent experimentation in media, materials and concepts and grappled with few artistic problems.

Photography

The photography submissions reflected a variety of approaches, both conceptual and technical, with the subject matter also highlighting such diversity.

The outstanding works were refreshing in their highly individualised perceptions of the medium, encompassing:

- integration of text
- combination of images
- emphasis on photography as well as some computer manipulation
- photocopy, internegatives, careful and sensitive darkroom manipulations
- studio settings
- deliberate use of scale, from small and intimate to large and expressive.

Many works clearly indicated that candidates were prepared to make innovative decisions, compositionally and graphically, in the context and use of the viewfinder rather than using clumsy experimentation to complete the artwork, indicating a more refined simplicity and maturity in the decision–making process.

Gender and personal identity remain popular issues, while the landscape or the pictorial depiction of nature were less evident as subject matter.

It is of concern that a small number of works relied on direct copying or use of the images of other individuals or photographers, with no evidence of authenticity or support in the process diary.

There was a noted increase in:

- the use of fibre and warm tone papers
- toning techniques indicating a more subtle approach
- full-frame printing of negatives in both 35 mm and medium format imagery to create an overburn as a framing device.

Greater consideration and creative use of matt board framing of images was popular, as were panoramas, mosaics and reconstructionist works inspired by contemporaries such as the Starn Twins and the Douglas Brothers.

The quality of excellent and above-average work was consistent and coherent throughout an entire series or set of works, showing awareness of the importance of judicious editing in terms of resolution of an appropriate scale of imagery, sequencing and the number of works to be submitted. Many submissions again proved intellectually challenging and exciting for viewers, breaking the boundaries of the medium in expressive and meaningful ways. Candidates often simply reflected and drew from real-life experiences, while at all times showing great empathy with their subject during the completion of the submissions.

Candidates continued to show a great awareness of the technical, formal and symbolic potential of photography as well as revealing imaginative and perceptive decision–making in the selection and arrangement of images, from the viewfinder, through all stages of processes, to final presentation.

Works with toning and other image manipulations were important to the final printed imagery and contributed to the power of the series. Text, where applied, was carefully handled and added significantly to the quality and resolution of the work, rather than filling in for photographic deficiencies or voices. Many traditional pictorial works appeared on softer paper and fibre surfaces, which added to the poignancy of more personal themes or ideas. The use of more recent technologies and studio works was balanced by the obvious understanding of traditions and genres in photography.

The variety of imagery also reflected the media areas used within this genre. Black and white, colour C–41, transparency, Polaroid, interneg, montage, photocopying, digitised works, infra–red and high contrast films through to an obscure platinum palladium process, were some of the broad range of techniques handled by candidates.

Photographic works of average quality showed that candidates possessed competent skills and camera–craft, yet their works included a theme or concept that was not fully developed or exploited. Many sets of images incorporated an intelligent sequence, narrative, or skill and technique in handling the genre, but rarely all three.

Whilst the range of approaches in these artworks showed confidence in handling many facets of photography, including a wide range of image manipulation or experimentation, the finished works lacked resolution and, at times, the integrity of this medium was compromised by the submission of many works that were insensitively framed or adorned by pointless sculptural embellishments. Shrewd decisions were also required in the editing process of these works in order to improve consistency.

Below-average works comprised some submissions in which candidates obviously found the technicalities of the medium difficult. Poorly considered judgements in terms of concept and subject matter, as well as repetitive images, tended to emphasise the clichéd nature of works in this category while little or no understanding of the expressive potential of the medium indicated that the candidates' engagement was minimal and inconsistent in relation to subject matter and processes. Themes such as: fairies, Gothic/graveyard and doomsday, basketball, loss of innocence and young children were very common, although the individual candidate's involvement extended to no more than a roll of film or a few random snapshots.

Framing should, at all times, be simple and appropriate to the theme of the work. Items such as paling fences should be avoided, as they prove unsympathetic to any submission. Careful editing and image selection always typify above-average artworks.

Negatives, proof sheets, test prints and exposures etc should be kept and documented in the student's process diary at all times during the experimentation and evolution part of the artmaking process.

Direct copying, theft or use of other individuals' or photographers' images differ from genuine efforts of appropriation and such works are invariably identified during the marking process.

It is also important to build relevant resources for candidates, ie copies of art photography books, journals, videos etc should be acquired so that students gain and develop an understanding or sense of contemporary and historical knowledge, issues and aesthetics both in Australia and internationally.

Sculpture

Sculpture continues to be a strong area characterised by a diversity of candidates' submissions and by the varied range and combinations of media and forms. Students broke new ground in their exploration of forms, often employing traditional techniques in a manner that was contrary to common practices. There has been a strong sense of student engagement, not only with the possibilities of media and sculpture as a form but also with the concept of sculpture as a vehicle for complex concepts and ideas.

Candidates responded to their world in a variety of ways, ranging from the personal and private inner world to that of global issues and concerns. Many displayed an ability to select media and forms which enhance these themes and interpreted them in individual and often quirky ways. Subjects which were potentially sensational were, on the whole, sensitively handled, reflecting student involvement.

Layering was a characteristic of many of the desirable sculptures submitted this year. Humour and wit are tools that were used widely and effectively by candidates. Works ranged from the satirical through to ridiculous pieces where a sense of playfulness engages the viewer. Ironic subtexts were also employed by a number of candidates as a further layering of meaning.

Risk–taking is evident in a significant number of works. This is an encouraging trend which reveals a deep understanding of sculpture as a form and of the potential of sculpture as a vehicle for ideas and statements. Many students exploited the intrusive quality of sculpture — its ability to confront through the invasion of space — as well as exploring the possibilities of scale as an integral and important consideration during the artmaking process. Stronger submissions showed that students worked with a scale that was appropriate to their aims and to the meaning of their work.

The link between the artmaking processes and the world of art remains strong, with many candidates referring to works of art or particular artists or using appropriated art images in their submission. This was most successful in submissions in which the integration of ideas and images was coherent and sustained, rather than being imposed from without.

As in past years, most works were figurative or had a significant figurative component. This year, however, there were some very strong abstract works that coherently explored formal and aesthetic considerations based on a knowledge of contemporary art practices. Where the human figure was selected as subject, stronger submissions showed that it was used as a source of ideas or made excellent use of its inherent expressive potential.

Many candidates employed colour as an expressive device — either as a selective painted surface or by using the colours of selected media and found objects. The large number of ceramic sculptures submitted here also used glazed, burnished and coloured surfaces to advantage, the better works often adding other sympathetic materials to the pieces. There was evidence, however, that, in stronger submissions, students did not attempt to disguise or cover the intrinsic qualities of ceramic media but worked with them, allowing the ceramic qualities to dominate and not overwhelming them with other applied materials.

Many candidates employed text as an intrinsic component of their work. Stronger responses effectively incorporated words with sculptural forms, while weaker works often used text in an attempt to clarify or explain unresolved concepts.

Some students explored forms that were to be mounted as hung works, incorporating electrical components such as lights, sound effects and videos. It is important that candidates consider such additions carefully, as many works are disadvantaged by the use of Christmas tree lights, tape recorders playing obscure sound effects, or a format which is so elaborate that it requires much time, space and expertise to assemble it in order to gain the full effect.

[The works referred to in the following categories appear on the 1997 HSC Sculpture Marking Scale and exemplified the qualities of works that are typical of this level of achievement.]

Excellent and above-average works were sophisticated and confident in approach, reflecting a commitment to concepts together with a level of expertise and familiarity with the media that could have resulted only from sustained exploration, experimentation and development.

These works included such characteristics as surface treatments which enhanced and were appropriate to the chosen sculptural forms. In them, candidates also used forms that obviously incorporated sophisticated conceptual processes. Some works were intimate in scale or were presented on bases which were integral to the concept, adding additional levels of meaning to the pieces and not serving merely as props. They involved the viewer in the exploration of ideas that were informed, subtle and intelligently resolved.

Many of the excellent works proved that excellence can result from the sensitive use of simple, easily accessible materials. Surfaces painted in a considered and restrained manner which related sympathetically to both the forms and the intended message were also widely used at this level.

Above-average works were obviously the result of meticulous planning and research; in them, decision–making was both informed and thorough. These works showed that students were attempting to grapple with challenging themes and concepts with varying degrees of success. Additional text on some works assisted the viewer's interpretation of the concept underlying the work; it was, however, difficult to read at times and the meaning remained unclear. While these were highly personal works that avoided clichéd imagery, they showed many of the inconsistencies typical of less resolved works.

Average works were typified by inconsistencies in choice, less skilful use of media, and ideas which were not fully expressed. Strengths in one part of a work were undermined by weaknesses elsewhere. Often the inventive and well–considered choice of simple, found materials was countered by the insensitive use of form or design.

Below-average works appeared incomplete, often giving little evidence of prior investigation of medium or subject matter and little or no synthesis of medium, process and subject matter. While students showed some understanding of their chosen subjects, only a limited level of exploration, planning and research was apparent. The subject matter was explored in a literal yet realistic manner and, often, though the subject was relevant to the student's life experience, the treatment was superficial.

Overall limitations on size, weight and duration of submitted works must be adhered to. Students are reminded that submitting works that are oversize, overweight and/or incorporate dangerous materials are not allowed, while syringes, with or without needles, are **not** to be used. Instructions for display are important when imaginative pieces or works in a series are submitted and, often, titles can be used to show how the work should be approached.

Wearables and Jewellery

Wearables

Awareness of the body as a site for adornment and the wearable as a sculptural form was very apparent in wearables submissions this year.

Forms of wearables included traditional styles of garment and ensembles such as capes and tabards, and some series of accessories such as headpieces, bodices and brassières. Candidates' works reflected a range of interests and concerns about the environment, indigenous cultures, religious and creation themes, personal identity and the enduring, but sometimes clichéd, themes of sea life and nature. Mediaeval themes continued to be popular.

These wearables, although well constructed, relied purely on the technical aspects of garment construction and communicated few concepts and little, if any, of the students' creative intentions or abilities. There has been a decline in the use of the wedding dress as a metaphoric vehicle for comment.

Many works in the construction of wearable forms made use of less traditional materials, using found and recycled objects such as kitchen utensils, coke cans, ring pulls, CD blanks and sporting equipment. In some works these objects were used as decorative elements to add colour, create texture and reinforce concepts. In others, objects were assembled so as to create innovative accessories and garments that exploited the form of the objects, and used the body as a site for this wearable art. Cars and motorcycles were popular and parts such as handlebars, hub caps and wheel spokes were successfully manipulated to produce wearable forms.

The decoration of the surfaces of wearable art continues to be fully explored and exploited. There has been a decline in the reliance on painted surfaces and an increase in the use of the more traditional skill, of appliqué, to embellish and create interesting textures and effects. Other techniques included free machine–stitching, hand embroidery, beading, application of sequins, *puffer* paint and the incorporation of silk cords and found objects such as shells, small metal objects and photographs. In this section there has been an emerging trend in the use of photographs as a dominant decorative element. Personal and found photographic images were often sandwiched between plastic, or laminated, then constructed into wearable forms. Some works exploited the expressive potential of such photographs by working into them with drawing media and adding threads and stitching to embellish the surface; other works relied purely on randomly placed photographs that were not integrated into the surface nor related to the form of the wearable. There was less of a reliance on rubbish (chip packets, tin cans, plastic bags etc) that was stitched and glued onto wearable forms to communicate concerns about pollution and the environment.

Excellent and above-average works were characterised by emotive subjects that were personal responses and made confident statements. These works were united and sustained by technique, media, colour and concept in all pieces. They were technically sophisticated and challenging constructions that clearly showed an understanding of the conventions of a wearable and the relationship between the wearable and the body. Corsetry techniques were utilised to construct free-standing sculptural pieces representing vegetables, animals and objects.

Feminist themes, womanhood, growth, decay, the Olympics and mythology were successfully explored. The manipulation of surfaces was emphasised through heavy machine–stitching, beading and appliqué. The successful integration of a range of fabrics and objects relied on an excellent control of construction techniques such as binding, stitching, threading and punching. The uses of metals, leather, fur, satin, photographic imagery, plastics, wire and electrical components were explored and resolved. Water-soluble fabrics were used in ways that emphasised their properties as expressive media. A strong understanding of the expressive properties of colour was also shown in exciting combinations and contrasts of tones and hues.

In average works, animals, pollution and the environment were popular and enduring subjects. In this category, works were less complementary to the body form and sometimes difficult to wear, for example square capes, straight shift dresses and cumbersome collections of recycled objects. Ensembles lacked consistency; instead of focusing on designing and embellishing one piece to a high standard of technical competence and concept, candidates often compromised quality in order to present a number of pieces, any of which were highly repetitive, lacked understanding and failed to explore the potential of the medium or concept. Some works, such as mediaeval garments, were technically competent but showed very little relation to the artmaking process. A number relied on painted surfaces; some of these were sensitively produced and obviously resulted from experimentation with techniques. In some works, many techniques were used but candidates were unable to combine these into a wearable form.

Below-average works lacked resolution; some appeared unfinished, were conceptually vague, and communicated little through either title or subject. Works in this range were noteworthy for a random and inappropriate placement of images, objects, fabrics, text, beading and sequins, while the wearable was seen as an item of clothing to be decorated rather than as an integrated artwork. Construction techniques were limited and there was less consideration for the human form. There was little evidence of experimentation with, and understanding of, the possibilities and qualities of either media or techniques. Photographs and photocopies were glued onto fabrics without any consideration of the concept or form of the wearable. Some works communicated a concept, but the communicating media were handled in naïve or crude ways. Subjects such as trends in popular culture, the environment, underwater scenes and Sydney Mardi Gras were handled in a clichéd and naïve manner.

Photographs are essential to the marking process. They provide visual information about how the candidate intended the wearable to be worn. Photographs accompanying wearables submissions should be removed from Visual Arts Process Diaries and presented either in an album, on cardboard or in an envelope.

Visual Arts Process Diaries should not be submitted. Statements of intent should not be included with submissions. Works should not be submitted on mannequins.

Consideration should be given to the safety of all submissions and to the practicalities of wearing and marking the work. Dangerous objects must not be part of any submission.

Jewellery

This attracted a small number of 14 submissions — a decrease from the number in 1996.

Jewellery submissions recognised and challenged the conventions of body decoration in diverse ways. Submissions explored traditional and established techniques and styles and also experimented with combinations of disparate materials to make innovative and exciting sculptures that complemented the body.

The range of media used included silver, brass, copper, glass, paper, leather, wood, plastics, semi–precious stones, perspex and found components from watches and machinery. There was a strong emphasis on the manipulation of wire that was twisted, bent, bound and coiled with other materials. Metal surfaces were transformed by beating, etching and embossing.

Excellent and above-average works reflected a sustained and accomplished involvement with processes and a sound knowledge of the expressive possibilities of the selected media. There was a variety of subject matter, while media and works were well finished. Some dealt with issues of the environment and nature and the extinction of species of plants and animals, while others referred to specific artists and artworks, architecture and indigenous traditions. Depending upon how and where they were intended to be worn, such works challenged traditional conventions of jewellery design.

Presentation of works was sophisticated, with some jewellery pieces incorporating photographs that related to and emphasised the concept of the work. An informed selection process was apparent and only the best pieces were presented.

Average works were less consistent in technique and subject matter and the selected media had little relevance to the concept of the work. Pieces were generally easy to wear, but less attention had obviously been paid to finish and experimentation with media, while pieces within a collection did not relate to one another and lacked consistency. There was some evidence of experiments with glass, printing on paper, folding and bending techniques and adventurous attempts to incorporate moveable parts into individual pieces.

Below-average works were difficult to wear because of their size and weight and had little relevance to the body. Designs were naïve and based on literal interpretations of themes, while materials appeared to be chosen arbitrarily rather than for their expressive or visual qualities. One technique was often repeated, with no evidence of development through experimentation.

Jewellery submissions should be accessible to markers and not secured in boxes. As jewellery is a form of body adornment, the weight of the piece, sharp edges and finish should be carefully considered.

Photographs accompanying jewellery submissions were helpful in showing how pieces should be worn.

Textiles and Fibre

Artworks in this form were noteworthy for their passion for the possibilities inherent in textiles and fibre. Appliqué was the most popular form. There were few examples of tapestry and embroidery and a decline in batik and gutta submissions. There were no submissions of weaving or printed fabric.

There was a greater emphasis on the combination of a variety of media and decorative techniques rather than reliance on one single medium or technique. Artworks combined screen and block printing, machine–stitching, appliqué, quilting, beading, dyeing and silk painting to create exciting images and innovative surfaces. Complex techniques were handled well; some works were simple in concept but the use of media was highly sophisticated and successful.

Popular subject matter included fish and sea life, animals, landscapes, religious themes and themes dealing with creation.

Artworks were generally larger in scale and in series submitted, evidence of discrimination in the selection of works was apparent.

Beliefs and ideas were translated into quilts, wall hangings and other functional objects; other works were purely decorative. There was a greater emphasis on figurative works and few artworks dealt purely with the qualities of fabrics and abstraction.

There was a predominant use of machine–stitching in a painterly manner and also as a drawing tool. Overlays of stitching were used to create rich textural layers, with both a blending of colour and modelling of form. There was less emphasis on silks and precious fabrics and a greater investigation into the use and possibilities of found objects and fabrics such as hessian, calico and offcuts of material and scraps. As in past years, little use of handmade papers was made.

Excellent and above-average artworks reflected both sophistication and confidence in the selection of media and subject matter. These works recognised and explored the visual, textural and symbolic qualities of the media used. In a single work, a number of techniques were explored and successfully integrated to create rich surfaces that invited further investigation.

Appliqué was the most popular technique. Artworks utilising it were expressive and dealt sensitively with emotive subjects and personal responses to the female image, personal and cultural identity, magic and ritual, and concerns about banking and industry. These works emphasised freedom of expression rather than submitting regimented displays of acquired skills. Fabrics were selected for their relevance to the concept and the intention of the artwork. There was evidence of experimentation with the evocative objects. This was apparent in a confident layering and juxtaposition of fabrics, for example organza and silk–screened imagery with lurex and netting, and a sophisticated handling of media and processes.

Photographs, when used, were sensitively incorporated into the work and complemented it. The expressive potential of colour was explored and recognised in many works; some explored the sculptural qualities of fabrics, and relief constructions of subject matter, such as architecture, were successfully created.

Average works attempted to combine a variety of materials and techniques such as printmaking, machine- and hand–stitching, felting, beading and appliqué to represent ideas and themes. Subject matter chosen was literal, with many depictions of animals and sea life, portraits of groups of friends, the city and landscapes. There were attempts to create interesting compositions, but many works were repetitious, with techniques and media not being fully exploited. These works appeared to have been resolved to a certain level but not pushed beyond a safe point.

Many artworks in this range showed an understanding of how media and processes can be used, but such processes were not sustained throughout the whole work or series and these candidates lacked the technical expertise to complement the concept.

Some inappropriate judgements were made about the size and scale of works. Students should note that large-scale works are not necessarily the most successful.

Tapestry and embroidery works attempted to represent the qualities of nature, country life, the environment and comic characters through successful combinations of different threads and fibres. The use of a variety of stitch techniques and discrimination in the choice of materials created some surfaces that both improved the composition and added interest.

Batik and Gutta works in this range showed some understanding of the pattern–making qualities of, and the detail achievable with, this technique. The symbolic qualities of colour were explored, while some works experimented with gradations and mixing of tones. Salt-resistant and other inherent qualities of the batik and gutta method were not fully explored, however.

Below-average works interpreted clichéd images of animals, sunsets, fish and other sea life in very basic ways. There was little regard for composition and less consideration for the presentation and finish of works. Fabrics were placed randomly in a badly conceived fashion and there was reliance on the use of glue as the chosen method for integrating objects onto the surface. In this category, works showed little understanding of the subtle qualities of many textile media and artmaking processes and ignored the qualities of colour and surface texture. It was pleasing to note that there were fewer works this year that used glitter and purchased sequined objects and motifs as methods of decoration.

Batik and gutta works relied on simple concepts such as good, evil and religion. Gutta was crudely applied, with little apparent understanding of its expressive possibilities, while colour–mixing and application were naïve.

Mat mounts are recommended rather than elaborate framing that may not enhance the work. No glass or rigid plastic framing should be used.

Photographs and instructions for viewing works may be submitted, but statements of intent will not be read.

Visual Arts Process Diaries should not be submitted.

Integrated Visual/Verbal Studies

(3 Unit only)

Only 28 candidates chose Integrated Visual/Verbal Studies as a 3 Unit option. Responses ranged from the more sophisticated, which combined intellect with visual skills, often with the addition of humour and wit, to those which had little or no text and which showed little resolution or engagement with chosen themes. Gender issues, stereotypes, relationship to the land, personal themes, the post–modern condition and personal interpretations of specific art movements were the dominant themes. A range of artmaking processes were used, including video, graphics, computer–generated images and combinations of more conventional two–dimensional media.

Excellent and above-average responses were noteworthy for an inventive and fresh approach to unpacking concepts that lent themselves to a full analysis and to the selection of appropriate media. The standard of skills in the use of materials and techniques was outstanding, while the use of humour and satire reflected individual interpretations. The viewer/reader was drawn into consideration of the themes by challenging judgements and skilful manipulation of media.

Average responses presented a theme and relevant artist(s) with an honest, but often conservative, statement in both the artmaking and the text. They were characterised by a working knowledge of artmaking and art criticism but the resolution of the theme was not sustained throughout the work. Themes chosen were somewhat more superficial than those in the above-average range and many did not contain an accompanying text.

The below-average responses failed to deal with the theme at other than a superficial level or to choose a media form which supported and complemented it. Some simply paraphrased lengthy excerpts of text taken from historical art sources or presented simple descriptive information. The artmaking was generally of a poor standard or resembled exercises displaying little involvement with the processes necessary for a successful form of visual/verbal presentation.

Students who submit an Integrated Visual/Verbal Study are urged to choose concepts which lend themselves to this form and, having done so, to make a thorough investigation of the chosen concept, supplying a written transcript, and to choose a medium which will support and advance the theme or concept. A balance between the artwork and the text, as well as an incisive interpretation of a chosen topic reflecting depth of understanding and a display of appropriate use of media skills, should be aimed for.

Studying Images and Objects

2/3 Unit (Common)

The Recommended Areas of Study in the Focus Areas Art in Australia and Art and Culture continue to attract the greatest proportion of responses in Section I of the 2/3 Unit written examination. Question 2(a) attracted the largest number of responses and, in Section II, Questions 13 and 15 were twice as popular as Question 14, with students responding well to the bulleted points of these questions.

Successful candidates in this part of the examination were those whose study of the theoretical aspects of art history and art criticism had been sustained over a period of time. There was evidence of research and study in these responses; interpretation and analysis, as well as a depth of knowledge and skills and judicious choice of artists and artworks, were apparent. These responses were characterised by expression which was stylistically suited to the types of questions and an impressive ability to communicate knowledge and evaluations about art in reasoned yet expressive and well-chosen terms.

It is again pointed out that the written component of the examination is worth the same as the submitted artwork (50%). Preparation for the written examination should lead on from work done in the Preliminary year and should be constant throughout the two-year course. It is also emphasised that one or more of the Focus Areas should be dealt with comprehensively over both the Preliminary and Higher School Certificate years. Recommended Areas of Study should be chosen to develop further understandings gained in the Preliminary year; these can also be used to provide a wide knowledge base for dealing with issues in Section II of the examination.

The Recommended Areas of Study which are published in the *Board Bulletin* each year must be read and interpreted in conjunction with the appropriate Syllabus Focus Area and Examination Specifications. (See Official Notice BOS 34/98, *Board Bulletin*, June 1998, for Recommended Areas of Study for the 1999 Visual Arts HSC examination.) The Recommended Areas of Study **do not replace** the Focus Area but direct teachers in planning and articulating selection of content for study in the specific Focus Area.

Details of the Focus Areas in the syllabus should be carefully examined. It should be noted that the study of Australian Art should not occur within the Focus Area of Art and Culture.

The marking guide applied to students' responses in the written examination follows.

Level	Grade	1–20	Attribute	Response to Question	Language & Expression	Use of Examples	Judgement	Criteria & Interpretation	Analysis	Contexts (Artwriting Studying)
E X C E L L E N T	A	20 19 18	sophisticated complex subtle complete coherent appropriate based on evidence interpretive	Identifies and addresses all aspects of the question; displays excellent understanding of knowledge base of art; uses synthesised argument and explanation to explore the question; response appropriate to type of question; chooses a position, eg either depth or breadth; argues position cogently.	Differentiated and art–specific vocabulary used in an expressive, subtle and/or sophisticated way; strong and appropriate understanding and use of art concepts; condenses language used; encapsulates complexities and layering of ideas in art.	Well chosen examples; appropriate to Focus Area and question; fully interprets, discriminates and explains selected examples; uses examples in a subtle, reflective and sophisticated way; explicitly relates examples to requirements of question; in Section II, examples expanded and made more explicit with reference to other appropriate examples.	Judgements based on sound evidence used in sophisticated and subtle ways; evidence of coherent, critical evaluation of a range of opinions and positions; has own views about art which are thoughtful, articulate and based on a sound art knowledge.	Makes appropriate use of internal (about the object) and external (about context) criteria in a fluent way; makes appropriate, coherent interpretations of a range of possible meanings.	Analyses, evaluates and examines issues raised in question in complete and reflective way; uses formal and other analysis to justify judgements and conclusions.	Places examples in a cultural context as a rich and productive means of greater knowledge and explanation of a work in terms of layers and complexities.
A B O V E A V E R A G E	B	17 16 15 14		Identifies and addresses most aspects of question; displays a workable understanding of art concepts; understands question types and appropriate approaches; chosen position sometimes inconclusive or inconsistently applied; evidence of study of Focus Areas and/or Recommended Areas of Study.	Differentiated and specific vocabulary used to explain in a coherent, logical way; appropriate use of art concepts; some complexity used in language applied to sustain argument.	Examples described, explained, interpreted, though not always appropriate to question; links between the examples and the challenges of the question made with some inconsistencies; some appropriate engagement of the examples chosen with Focus Area, or Recommended Areas of Study.	Judgement based on some supportive evidence used logically; critical evaluation of the opinions of others; evidence of formation of own views about art based on a working knowledge of art.	Makes coherent use of a range of internal and external criteria as a tool for interpretation; makes logical interpretations of meanings which are both probable and possible.	Identifies question as the site for particular issues or problems; attempts to develop a position; analyses problem or issue coherently and logically.	Places work in a cultural context which is adequate for exploring more detailed evidence about and explanation of the work.
A V E R A G E	C	13 12 11 10 9	speculative experimental conventional general uneven limited obvious descriptive unresolved clichéd	Deals with some aspects of question or deals with whole question in a limited and/or general way; ordinary, speculative, or experimental response/argument; understanding of art concepts and knowledge base is general and/or limited; some indicators of study of Focus Areas and Recommended Areas of Study.	Language used not as systematically art related, specific or differentiated; some art concepts acknowledged and used in a general or conventional or inexperienced way; expression descriptive and sometimes obvious.	Limited examples with some relevance used in a descriptive rather than an analytical way; conventional explanations of examples which were speculative rather than real; in Section II systematic but uneven discussion of more conventional, limited or obvious examples.	Judgement of art based on general knowledge and/or general opinion; little awareness of critical opinions of others; own opinions about art are conventional and/or obvious.	Uses mainly internal criteria with some reference to external factors; attempts to give conventional and/or obvious meanings of factors.	Recognises that question poses a problem and attempts to analyse it in an appropriate but limited or conventional way.	Some reference to limited aspects of cultural context of works; use of such reference as a tool for explanation.
B E L O W A V E R A G E	D	8 7 6 5		May not directly deal with the content of the question; shows little awareness of the differing question types; simple, surface and/or incomplete understanding of the concepts and knowledge of art; little evidence of sustained study of Focus Areas or Recommended Areas of Study.	Little differentiation of vocabulary; art concepts alluded to but not understood in relation to question; answer couched in clichés.	Few examples cited; limited relevance and little or only simple description; in Section II, examples were guessed at or assumed rather than analysed; examples not used in relation to demands of question.	Judgement may be dealt with as description or identification; no awareness of critical opinions of others; judgement based on justified opinion or favouritism; naïve, incoherent attempts at judgement.	Some descriptive use of internal criteria but little use of external criteria; some attempt at interpretation which is incoherent, incomplete or inappropriate.	Recognises that question has a structure and deals with it in a limited but unresolved way.	Little reference to a cultural context; limited use of such references as an explanatory tool.
P O O R	E	4 3 2 1	naïve transparent incomplete incoherent projective	Minimal response with little or no understanding of art; ignores implications of question; unable to link response with requirements of question; no evidence of study.	Use of simple jargon–type language; no allusion to or use of art concepts.	Examples either alluded to in passing or not relevant; examples and/or artist unidentified; no awareness of prompts in question.	Personal or unsupported opinion; no attempt to make judgements.	Little or no use of internal criteria; little or no attempt at interpretation.	Shows little appreciation of the structure of the question and deals with it in a simple, transparent way; may ignore the question.	No reference to cultural context.

Section I   Art in Australia

Question 1

Australian art shapes our understanding of the environment.

Discuss this statement with reference to TWO OR MORE examples from your local environment. You could consider painting, sculpture, architecture or design.

This question proved to be very broad, allowing students to apply knowledge in a variety of ways. It also enabled students to adapt their studies from the Recommended Area of Study (Question 2(a)) easily. The local environment was often ignored, however, in terms of artworks selected, with content often more appropriate to a more general response. Another common trend was to provide a chronological response to White Australian art, often with little reference to the question. The better responses, however, were able to show a broad understanding of the capacity of artworks to function within a variety of contexts, eg as reflections of current issues, as historical records etc.

Excellent and above-average responses showed a positive attitude to the question and were able to adapt information to answer it. Here students were able to show a sound knowledge and understanding of the visual arts and to apply these to the question in sophisticated ways. In many responses the examples chosen were not always the obvious ones; works and artists were discussed with layers of meaning and depth beyond the initial, obvious interpretation. Students adopted a very broad interpretation of environment to include the physical, social, cultural and psychological elements. Much relevant detail was given as students explored a range of ideas rather than simply listing facts. Artists were well chosen to reflect the cultural and historical viewpoints taken, with responses often discussing their philosophies and their effects on the students themselves. Frequently, more than two examples from each artist were given and candidates also referred back to their own environment to explain the relevance of the artists' work to themselves. Responses that included discussion of Aboriginal art were original, thought–provoking and very good. Those who approached the question by means of architectural examples also produced responses based on sound knowledge, showing excellent understanding of the relevance of the works to their environment and the way that the environment is understood.

Average responses tended to discuss historical and contemporary works in isolation from their cultural context, often relying more upon descriptions of examples and biographies of artists. Arguments within these responses were often inconsistent, with mention of the environment being left until the final paragraph, if mention were made at all. Moreover, very little consideration was given to the cultural context. These responses tended to be more descriptive, relying upon a list of facts. Some of the information given was clearly incorrect. Generally, such responses lacked depth of understanding and interpretation, making only minimal efforts to interpret the statement in the question. They appeared to rely heavily upon artworks covered by the Recommended Area of Study in Question 2(a), and often confused the two questions in the process.

While there was often acknowledgment of the sense of the question within below-average responses, here candidates were unable to argue any sort of cogent response. They frequently agreed with the quotation, usually provided images in support of it, but could give no explanation. Often short lists of names and/or works were accompanied by brief descriptions. Little reference was made to the question, which was usually answered indirectly. These candidates were rarely able to interpret the question or to understand its implications, showing little/no understanding of art concepts and art history. Those who did attempt to work through the question did so in such a literal way, eg using the school car park as an example, that they were at a loss to find supportive examples of other artists and artworks. In another approach to this question, candidates simply reverted to description of the plates, only occasionally mentioning environment.

In answering, students need to ascertain the intent of the question. In preparation, they need to move beyond mere description and develop understanding of an artist's works and philosophies and the effects of these within art history and upon both the student and the broader cultural sphere. Students need to develop strategies to adapt what is known, eg prepared responses for the Recommended Areas of Study in order to provide better answers to other questions within the Focus Areas. The Frames from the Years 7–10 syllabus should enable students to adopt different positions and give them the tools for discussing and critically evaluating.

Question 2(a)

Examine how isolation and alienation have defined the character of Australian art.

Refer to examples of historical and contemporary artworks. Look at Plates 1, 2 and 3. You could use ONE OR MORE of these plates in your answer.

This question attracted over 3000 responses and was the most popular question in Section 1. It required students to respond to issues raised in the Recommended Area of Study relative to the Focus Area by asking them to 'examine how' isolation and alienation have defined the character of Australian art. The direction in the question to examine how encouraged the better candidates to build reflective arguments and discussions that showed their understanding of the content of the Recommended Areas of Study in relation to the Focus Area. The requirement for candidates to consider how the key concepts of the Recommended Areas of Study, viz. isolation and alienation, have defined the character of Australian Art discriminated strongly between candidates who had limited their study of isolation and alienation to a few examples and those who had considered the function, meaning and purpose of examples studied within the wider context of the Focus Area. Similarly, those who called on a range of historical and contemporary artworks as examples on which to build their arguments were more able to provide answers in keeping with the spirit and scope of the question.

In their answers the majority of candidates discussed well-known examples in a chronological survey of different instances of the themes of isolation and alienation in Australian art. Some of the most commonly selected examples included colonial works by the Port Jackson Painter, John Glover and Von Guerard, works by McCubbin such as *Lost* and *Down on His Luck*, Drysdale's *The Rabbiters*, Tucker's *Victory Girls* and Bennett's *The Outsider*. The majority relied on material studied in class and used the plates provided as another instance of a similar approach.

Whilst the question required that works significant in establishing a sense of the character of Australian art be examined, the discussion of the contribution of the selected works to defining the character of Australian art was not always well grounded, supported by relevant contextual information or informed by current debates. The selection of works that had strong images of isolation and alienation was often seen as being a self–evident statement about their significance and many candidates simply analysed the ways in which artists presented these images. It was surprising, at times, that discussions of works such as McCubbin's *Lost* were often limited to descriptions of subject matter without reference to information such as contemporary newspaper accounts, the Victorian taste for the melancholy, or nationalism and the bush myth, to assist in explaining the interest in isolation and alienation in that work. The better candidates used many of these iconic artworks and contextual explanations about the works as bases on which to build a narrative explanation of the character of Australian art.

This Recommended Area of Study offered many possibilities for studying different approaches to the themes of isolation and alienation. Most responses presented discussions about the isolating and alienating experience of the landscape as presenting a significant and defining theme of Australian art and this was often shown through the chronological survey. Responses also focused on the psychological experience and considered artists such as those from the Angry Penguins group — Brack, Dickerson or Blackman or, less frequently, Bill Henson — who examined alienation and isolation as part of the human condition or as the result of modern life in Australia.

Ideas about the tyranny of distance for the colony and the subsequent sense of cultural and artistic isolation for antipodean artists were also discussed, most often in relation to early colonial artists such as Watling and, in a few cases, in relation to the debates in the fifties about the Antipodeans. Many candidates considered the concepts of isolation and alienation in terms of marginalisation of particular minority groups in Australian history and society. It was argued that the presence and/or absence of groups such as Aborigines, immigrants or women in the history of Australian art helped to define Australian art. Some responses considered the ways in which contemporary artists such as King Smith, Rea, Nickolls and Bennett questioned the accepted theories about Australian art.

The most successful candidates constructed a fluent and knowledgeable narrative that answered the question by examining how ideas about isolation and alienation have defined the character of Australian art. These excellent responses were characterised not only by a thorough understanding of the content of the Recommended Area in relation to the wider context of the Focus Area but also by precise, rich and often evocative language and accurate factual information. In them, candidates discussed and compared appropriate and varied examples of artworks in order to illustrate sustained arguments woven through their responses. Importantly, these responses successfully combined a range of supportive contextual evidence, opinions and discussions about the works and about the wider issue of the character of Australian art in order to produce layered and self-reflective accounts. Many successful candidates who dealt with iconic examples and themes were also able to examine critically and deconstruct the place of these examples in accepted narratives and considered the contribution of other perspectives in contemporary debates about the character of Australian art.

Above-average responses generally dealt with the key aspects of the question fairly consistently, using a range of examples to discuss different aspects of isolation and alienation. In these responses, candidates used some contextual information to support their discussions and, in order to build their arguments, relied more on the specific examples selected than a strong line of discussion. Some instances were discussed well while others were handled only vaguely.

Average responses attempted to deal with the question by selecting a single example by two or three artists and described the ways in which the artist conveyed an image about isolation and alienation. Very little external contextual information was used to support the discussion and responses in this range often concentrated on descriptions of the subject matter and the formal qualities of the work. The choice of particular examples was seen as being self–evident in terms of their significance and there was very little explanation about their contribution to defining the character of Australian art.

Below-average responses nominated one or two examples that were connected to the Recommended Area of Study. Discussion of these examples was usually descriptive, couched in general and non–discriminatory terms in regard to the introduction of relevant information. Candidates introduced only one or two superficial points about the work and presented unsupported value judgements that made vague connections between subject matter and ideas about isolation and alienation.

It is recommended that students study content from Recommended Areas of Study in relation to the broader issues and concerns of the Focus Area. Examples selected could be seen as instances of particular significant issues or themes that might encompass the scope of the Recommended Area of Study rather than as sufficient and exclusive pockets of study. Students would be advised to read and discuss a range of well-known and readily available texts and articles about the content and examples being studied so that they can base their responses with relevant contextual evidence as well as indicate an awareness of current historical information and critical debates.

Question 2(b)

Analyse the features and meaning of internationalism and cultural exchange in Australian art.

Refer to a range of artforms in your answer.

The wording and intent of this question presented an intellectual challenge to students who studied both this Recommended Area of Study and the Focus Area. The majority appeared to have understood the demands of the question, were well prepared and were reasonably successful in their responses. Students were challenged to show their understanding of concepts and issues of internationalism and cultural exchange in Australian art, with particular reference to a range of artforms. The question offered students the choice of a number of approaches in defining their understanding of the terms *features and meaning*, as well as a relevant range of either historical and/or contemporary artforms.

In excellent and above-average responses, candidates showed that they had fully grasped the complexity of the question and tailored their answers to the requirements outlined. Their responses gave evidence of thorough research and understanding of the terms *features and meaning* in relation to the concepts and issues. They also referred to a wide range of artforms, including painting, photography, sculpture, film, architecture and modern technologies, as well as other means of cultural exchanges such as exhibitions, art journals, artists in residence programs and the Internet. Popular topics for discussion included the Australian Impressionists; Yellow House exhibition; Angry Penguins; Annandale Realists and Aboriginal Art (especially Gordon Bennett and Tracey Moffatt). These students supported their discussions with informed judgements showing how each specific artform related to either of these concepts. Some of the more sophisticated essays provided reasons for the strong influence of international input into Australian art, ie by referring to Australia's isolation from other parts of the world. As well, many fully explained various ways in which internationalism and cultural exchange occur, for example through travelling exhibitions, through artists going overseas and returning with new ideas, or through European artists coming to Australia, and subsequent innovative approaches that can be introduced. An example of this would be the social realism of Yosl Bergner and Danila Vassilieff. The better students showed their familiarity with a wide range of artists and their works and were able to link the influences of other cultures, styles and periods to Australian art.

In average responses, candidates based their answers on sound knowledge, but answered in much less depth. Often the concepts and issues of internationalism and cultural exchange were not fully defined. These responses relied on descriptions of selected artforms which were usually taken from an historical context but were limited in range and merely analysed the formal qualities of the examples. Others listed artforms and artists, making little link to the question and their responses tended to be based on a set formula. Focus of the analysis of features and meaning was limited. Some approaches made superficial reference to the borrowing of different cultures and the range of cultural exchanges that occur between Australia and the rest of the world. The better responses referred to a wide variety of differing artforms, with thorough analysis of each Australian artform and its international counterpart.

Below-average responses were in the minority. In these responses, candidates made little reference to the question and relied heavily on descriptions of a limited range of artforms. They contained little knowledge, poor analytical skills and no valid discussion of the features and meaning of internationalism and cultural exchange. Judgements were confined merely to describing the selected work, that was generally from only one artform, and opinions were unsupported.

Students are advised to consider the scope of the Art in Australia Focus Area in preparing for this question. Definitions of internationalism and cultural exchange need to be clarified and concepts and issues explained in greater depth. The definitions of the keywords, features and meaning should also be clarified. Candidates need to refer to a range of artforms in their response. Many referred to only one artform, predominantly painting, and provided analysis of a variety of works from that one form. An expanded base of knowledge, reference to historical and contemporary areas and to a wider range of artforms were essential in this Recommended Area of Study.

Question 3

Explain how the study of Australian artworks has affected the exploration of issues and themes in your artmaking.

In your answer, refer to specific artists and their works.

This question required students to show their understanding of the Art in Australia Focus Area in relation to issues and themes dealt with in their own artmaking. In a range of responses, candidates answered the question in a confident and knowledgeable way, showing a good understanding of issues and themes in Australian art and how these have influenced their own artmaking. Common issues and themes addressed were feminism, death, racism and the environment. Other responses reflected a good knowledge of artists and their influences; nevertheless, in them, candidates misinterpreted the question and discussed artists and artworks in terms of techniques, materials and visual qualities, without dealing with issues and themes.

In answering this question a number of responses identified and discussed the Art in Australia Recommended Areas of Study referring to alienation and isolation. While these responses were well prepared and knowledgeable in their discussion of a specific range of artists — Drysdale, McCubbin, Smart, Boyd, Hester and Whiteley — some students showed only tenuous links between their own artmaking and such artists and did not clearly explain how the artists' works had affected their own exploration of issues and themes. Many responses discussed artists and their works but referred to effects on their own artmaking only in the conclusion of their response.

Excellent responses dealt with all aspects of the question; they reflected a depth of knowledge and analytical understanding and synthesised this understanding of issues and themes in Australian art with an account of their own artmaking. In discussing, interpreting and analysing a wide and varied range of artists and artworks from historical and contemporary contexts, these responses showed a broad knowledge of Australian art; an ability to contextualise issues and themes such as social and political events was also shown. In these responses, candidates showed a sound knowledge of how visual expression communicates ideas.

Artists and artworks cited were relevant and appropriate to the development of the students' artmaking and the issues and themes discussed. Convincing connections linked sophisticated art terminology and vocabulary, diagrams and quotations to support concepts discussed. A number of contemporary image–makers such as Imants Tillers, Jenny Watson, Julie Rrap and a range of Aboriginal artists and designers were referred to.

In making these responses which worked on several levels of visual interpretation, students revealed a passionate involvement and understanding of their art study. They also discussed artists from the wider world of art in order to explain fully the influences of issues and themes referred to in their artmaking.

Average responses showed some understanding of issues and themes in the Focus Area Art in Australia. Many responses referred to issues of alienation and isolation; a number of students, however, found this difficult to resolve when relating it to their own artmaking. Evidence was given not only of a sound knowledge of artists and artworks but also of attempts to apply this information to answer the specifics of the question, with links made between artists and artworks and the students' own artmaking. Artists regularly referred to were Whiteley, Drysdale, Streeton and Done. In general, two artists and examples were discussed and placed in a historical context. Responses offered a narrative interpretation and artworks were described in detail, but students were unable to explain conceptual meanings and how these related to their own artmaking. There was a focus on description which indicated that students found it difficult to express the relationship of their art study to their artmaking in terms of issues and themes.

In the below-average responses, candidates had difficulty in applying knowledge or researched information to the question. They discussed artists and artworks, using very simple descriptions and making little or no mention of issues and themes and how ideas seen in these works have influenced their own artmaking.

Limited art knowledge was expressed in a descriptive, simple and sometimes naïve style that included no understanding of concepts or how visual language can express and foster meaning. There were detailed process–based descriptions of the students' own artmaking with little reference to artists' issues, themes and works. Works were not placed, however, in a historical or stylistic context.

There were a number of responses which referred to the Plates for Section 1, Question 2(a). In such responses, descriptions were superficial, offered narrative interpretations of the selected plates and made little, if any, reference to the question.

Diagrams and annotated sketches were most useful in providing visual links to reinforce discussions of the students' own artmaking and to illustrate points relating to specific artists.

Responses to this question were, in many cases, limited to the Recommended Areas of Study. It should be noted that the Focus Area allows for a broad and thorough investigation and understanding of many facets of art in Australia. The wide and varied possibilities for interpretation of this Focus Area should be considered when making and studying artworks.

Question 4

Explain how particular artworks or buildings are made as a response to cultural contexts.

Refer to TWO OR MORE examples from your environment that suggest traditions from outside Australia.

Although this question attracted only 43 responses, it was, on the whole, reasonably well answered. In their answers, candidates referred to both artworks and buildings, some using a combination of both, defining *your environment* as either their local environment or the wider context of the whole of Australia.

In excellent and above-average responses, candidates placed their choice of artworks and/or buildings within the cultures that produced them. They also cited two or more appropriate examples from their own environment and linked them, using art–specific language, to artistic and architectural traditions from Europe and America in ways that revealed a sustained study of such traditions.

Average responses were characterised by a more limited ability to link the chosen examples with traditions outside Australia and to explain the relationship of the production of artworks and/or buildings to their cultural contexts. There were inconsistencies in balancing discussions of the chosen examples with the need to link them to non–Australian traditions.

Below-average responses relied upon supported descriptions of the chosen examples with only tenuous links being made to either the cultural context or non–Australian traditions. These responses were often characterised by the use of inappropriate examples and referred to traditions of art and architecture within Australia.

Students should be aware that the response to a question which has several parts to it requires each part to be answered, while their knowledge of what constitutes a cultural context should be clearly explained and used in any question placed within the Focus Area Art and Culture.

Question 5

Give an account of the characteristics of modernist and contemporary art practices in Asia, Europe or America.

In your answer, refer to a range of significant examples from your selected region.

This question was generally well answered, with candidates carefully choosing significant examples in their responses. The question was couched in the terms from the *art and culture* Recommended Area of Study. Many candidates approached it chronologically, dealing with modernist then contemporary practices in one selected region. The majority focused on modernist practices. Responses dealing with contemporary artists were generally not conclusive and were written as shorter accounts. On the whole, candidates who discussed modernist and contemporary art practices equally provided clearer and more systematic accounts of the question. Europe and America were the most popular regions selected and contemporary art practice was often defined as being post-modern. In accounts of Modernism, two–dimensional forms dominated, whilst in contemporary art three–dimensional performance forms were popular. As required by the question, the majority of candidates selected one region as the major focus for discussion. Some chose to refer to influences from other regions, for example an Asian artist influenced by a European.

Many interesting and accomplished responses used contemporary Asian examples, particularly from Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and Indonesia. Contemporary Asian art practice was often identified as being a return to traditional indigenous themes and materials. Political struggles, colonialism, assimilation and military conflicts in the context of the Art and Culture Focus Area of this question also featured in selected examples from Asia. Some candidates found it difficult to include references to Modernism or modernist practices of Asia. Excellent and well-constructed responses using Asian examples included Modernism in their understanding of Western or European influence and the relatively recent contact of some artists and regions with the West.

There were over 400 responses to this question, the majority of which were long. Length of response may possibly reflect the level of preparation for a question derived from a Recommended Area of Study. In addition, the wording of the question closely followed the Recommended Area of Study and many candidates responded well to the requirements of the question; their answers were well constructed and allowed candidates to present a review of the shifts, contrasts and progressions from modernist to contemporary art practices. Those who presented an evaluative viewpoint and used significant examples to contrast and compare modernist and contemporary practices showed a perceptive understanding of selected artists and artworks.

Some candidates did not distinguish between modernist and contemporary art practice or discussed only a narrow range of styles and examples. For example, Modernism was treated as Abstract Expressionism and contemporary art as Pop Art. In attempting to produce a sequential history, many candidates did not connect the chosen artists with the characteristics of related styles, movements, cultures or the selected regional landscape.

Excellent responses were characterised by the ability of candidates to define terms and identify the characteristics of modernist and contemporary art practices. Modernism was generally considered to have begun in 1870 or 1900, continuing until the 1960s. Other successful candidates began with Impressionism or, for architectural examples, the Chicago School, and gave reasons for their definitions and choice of examples. Contemporary art was variously defined as being post–1945, post–1960 or as belonging to the last 10 years, although other definitions are possible.

In the most successful responses a range of significant examples was carefully selected to illustrate ideas, themes, connections and shifts in art practices over a period of time. As examples, some candidates included key moments for a particular artist, art movement or style, as well as shifts in ideas, methods and technologies. The most successful candidates linked discussion of critical art theory, political and economic contexts and gave examples of significant modern and contemporary artists. An excellent general knowledge of modernist art history and an ability to discuss at length key artists and artworks showed such candidates' insight into, and understanding of, the visual arts.

Many above-average responses showed a fresh perception of the question and discussed a number of interesting and connected art movements and examples such as Surrealism, Dada, Pop and Contemporary Performance Art.

The better responses were well informed, quoted outstanding examples, showing their connection with the cultural context of the region and its art culture. Many responses gave a detailed account of at least four significant examples and referred to others in general terms, identifying differences between modernist and contemporary art in a range of ways. European examples were generally selected because they were pivotal indicators of change, for example Picasso, Matisse, Munch, Duchamp, Dada and the Surrealists. Some popular contemporary examples included, Trockel, Kiefer (Europe); Haring, Koons, Christo, Sherman (America); Yi Bul, Zhang Xioghang (Asia).

Art practices were characterised in various ways by these candidates and were often used to organise an essay structure within the context of the Art and Culture Focus Area, including:

• the use of selected examples to illustrate knowledge of a range of art practices

• art practice as an art movement or style, for example Cubism

• their use philosophically as an organising theme, for example existential contexts and examples

• technological breakthroughs (in the wider society and the visual arts) and innovations such as the invention of the camera, computer–generated graphics

• innovative ideas and changes to the conception and reception of the art object, such as Duchamp's *Urinal*

• art practices as breaks with traditional ways of working with materials, processes and visual ideas, often linked to the candidate's choice of significant examples

• art practices within art movements and styles/periods, for example the art practices of particular artists belonging to the Expressionist School

• reflective art processes linked to art history and theory.

Many of these excellent responses were well researched and covered a range of significant examples, which were discussed in depth, then related to a wider cultural, philosophical and artistic debate such as feminism, American culture and mass production, popular consumerism and cultural icons. Placing modernist and contemporary art practices and works into a cultural context was a feature of the stronger responses. In discussion of Asian examples, cultural understandings comprised traditional themes and concerns with spirituality and nature as well as a more contemporary focus on the exploration of political themes and militaristic regimes. Contemporary examples were a highlight of responses which dealt with the Asian region and included artists and examples from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Fiji, Bali, Vietnam, China and the Philippines.

Average responses presented a potted, textbook history of Modernism, focusing on mainstream examples of European art since 1945. Many of these responses chose a narrow, contextual view of objects, artists and artworks, rather than examining wider artistic, social or political issues. A number of candidates submitted a knowledgeable essay with examples of artists and their artwork which were related to the selected region; many, however, did not define terms such as *modernist* and *contemporary*. Athough these responses did respond to most areas of the question, they tended to rely too heavily on either modernist or contemporary art, without balancing the analysis. Many candidates presented facts but were unable to connect the features of styles, artists and artworks or to link understanding to a cultural context. There was a tendency to concentrate on more obvious, generalised and mundane features, with much description of artworks and periods but no depth of discussion. Often such responses did not evaluate works for their significance or explore issues connected with the question.

Below-average responses neither defined the terms *modernist* and *contemporary* nor linked the terms with relevant artists from their selected region for study. Practice, other than doing it or listing a few examples, was not recognised. Examples selected for discussion were rather obscure, and lacked knowledge of the artist's style, artworks and cultural context. Many candidates chose only a few artists, relied too heavily on regurgitation of facts and were unable to grasp the full implications of the question. The provision of a cultural, artistic, political, social or historical background to their account of the characteristics of modernist and contemporary art practices was lacking in many of the less successful responses. Students discussed European/Asian/American art but obviously possessed little general knowledge of Modernism and scant experience of contemporary debate on art in general. A few of these brief and unresolved responses seemed to be from candidates who had not prepared for the Recommended Area of Study.

The following points are emphasised.

- Study of Asian Art, particularly references to Modernism or modernist practices in Asia, using Asia–Pacific journals and Triennial catalogues, is encouraged.

- Recent philosophical debate and issues of practice in the visual arts should be clearly defined.

- The Recommended Area of Study must be read with the implications of the full statements and engagement with the Focus Area being carefully deconstructed, investigated and presented; in this question, Art and Culture is a framework for studying a relevant range of examples.

- Students should clarify terminology in the Recommended Area of Study, for example *modernist*, *contemporary*.

- One region only should be selected; influences may be discussed, but only as influences.

- Students must understand terminology that may come up in the Recommended Area of Study.

- Students must study a good range of examples, with their significance being indicated.

- Students are to be encouraged to be versatile in their research and their practice responses, so that they do not rely too heavily on only a few chosen examples.

Question 5(b)

Romanticism evokes the mysterious and the divine in real and imagined subjects.

Investigate this statement, considering the persistence of romanticism in the visual arts.

Refer to historical and contemporary artworks from regions outside Australia.

This question, which was not a simple rewording of the Recommended Area of Study, required candidates to adapt what they had studied and to show their understanding of Romanticism as being more than a simple historical narrative. It was a complex question which required candidates to work with a quotation to consider the *persistence* of Romanticism in the visual arts in historical and contemporary contexts. The quotation confused some candidates, who struggled to identify the *mysterious* and the *divine* within their known examples. Others were able to use the quotation as a prompt and referred to two of the themes underpinning Romanticism, using their knowledge to investigate and extend them to other themes. Historical contexts were, on the whole, handled better than contemporary contexts, with many candidates interpreting *contemporary* to mean modern (early 20th century) rather than post–1945, working/living now or belonging to the last 20 years. Many included Australian artists despite the statement *from regions outside Australia* in the question and the syllabus note for the Art and Culture Focus Area *... should not include Australian art.*

As was to be expected from a Recommended Area of Study, most candidates discussed Romanticism adequately and showed some understanding of Romanticist practice. Using fairly conventional examples *Raft of the Medusa*, *Liberty Leading the People* and *The 3rd of May*, candidates defined Romanticism and discussed character, then went on to consider the persistence of Romanticism in a range of contexts — Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dadaism etc. Very few candidates considered forms other than painting.

In excellent responses, candidates worked from the quotation and were not restricted by it, focusing on the philosophical attitudes of Romanticism as a way of engaging with their chosen works and highlighting the important link between the artist and his/her audience. They identified Romanticism in the context of its time and place within the Romantic Movement of poetry, writing and music, using appropriate, uncommon and relevant examples taken from a range of contexts. Here, candidates showed involvement with the question and discussed the quotation in relation to, and within, chosen parameters, often identifying the physical and metaphysical dimensions of Romanticism and using themes or subject matter as an investigative device. These candidates worked from the quotation and were not restricted by it. The nature of this Recommended Area of Study encouraged candidates to write often richly descriptive and lively responses that placed Romanticism within the rebelliousness of the historical contexts.

Average responses were characterised by more obvious interpretations of known artworks and showed a limited involvement with the question. While many candidates showed a sound knowledge of Romanticism and its persistence, they were often either unable to direct their answers towards mysterious and divine aspects successfully or ignored these aspects, other than repeating them in an introductory definition of Romanticism. Many of these responses dealt with the question adequately in terms of a historical survey, drawing on historical and contemporary examples for factual information and interpretation. Few of these responses investigated contemporary artworks as thoroughly as the historical examples.

The below-average responses were characterised by a naïve understanding of the Recommended Area of Study, and included limited investigation of the quotation in relation to the examples given. Such responses were frequently descriptive and contained little analysis; while there were attempts to place Romanticism in context, any statements were left unresolved and unsupported. They followed a conventional, historical approach with little discussion of the notion of persistence other than the obvious. Here, candidates had difficulty in identifying the *mysterious* and the *divine* within known examples and often attempted to nail down the quotation by tacking the words onto their descriptions.

The syllabus definition of the Focus Area Art and Culture, with its identification of cultural areas outside Australia, must be referred to. There should also be no expectation that the Recommended Area of Study will be examined simply as the statement presented in the *Board Bulletin*. Students are advised to have some understanding of how the Recommended Area of Study connects with the broader intentions of the Focus Area.

Question 6

Evaluate how reading about and seeing the work of artists from regions outside Australia have contributed to your artmaking.

Refer to TWO OR MORE artists and their works in your answer.

In this question, candidates interpreted the wording *reading about and seeing* quite broadly. Responses varied according to their individual experiences in researching information. These included their use of the Internet, the media, magazines, texts, journals, exhibitions and overseas travel. Some categorised *regions outside Australia,* identifying the difference in geographic locations and the possible stylistic changes evident within the one region.

The term *evaluate* was a keyword in this question; students were invited to interpret the work of artists and, through reasoning, arrive at some conclusion as to how these artists had indeed contributed to their own artmaking. A range of issues were considered, with candidates addressing the contributions artists had made to the development of their own work. These included: the choice of media, technical advice, and the insight gained from the artists' philosophical, historical, political, social, religious and conceptual intent. The most popular artists selected were Dali, Magritte, Duchamp, Picasso, Munch, Van Gogh and Warhol. Non–European and contemporary artists were rarely considered when post-modern artists were dealt with, however the responses were very complex and sophisticated.

By its nature, a type C question may be perceived by some candidates to invite prepared answers; what separated the excellent responses from the less successful, however, was the students' ability to apply their knowledge to the requirements of this question.

Excellent and above-average responses revealed each candidate's ability, through engaged research, to interpret the intent of an artist's work. The knowledge gained was evaluated and clearly translated to add new meaning to the student's artmaking. Ideas were not merely borrowed from other artists and cultures.

Some responses were illustrated, with quotations from texts researched by students which showed an awareness of the critical context within which they were working. Excellent responses often used sketches or diagrams that were coherent and informative; these responses were logically constructed and fluently argued. Students clearly showed an understanding of artists' philosophies, techniques and approach to their work and related them to their own thoughts and artmaking. The selected artists were carefully considered and discussed with understanding. Background information relating to an artist's work was relevant and applied accurately to meet the specific requirements of the question. Some candidates were able to refer to the wider field of arts or culture, for example music, dance and literature, to support effectively a sound argument incorporating complex analysis.

Average responses covered most aspects of the question, but in less detail. A substantial number of candidates discussed artists and artworks appropriate to their artmaking experiences. Language used was descriptive and sometimes analytical, revealing some familiarity with the conventions of critical analysis.

In such responses, some candidates tended to be anecdotal, revealing only a superficial understanding of artists' work. Other candidates discussed artists and their work without understanding the philosophies, concepts or processes inherent in such work; as a result, some inappropriate choices were made. Some prepared responses appeared, with irrelevant biographical detail; moreover, their relevance to the question was limited. Most prepared responses provided a very basic but, at times, adequate analysis of the work of artists from outside Australia and the contribution of their work to that of the candidate.

In the below-average responses, candidates showed their inability to interpret or evaluate critically the work of artists from regions outside Australia. These students did not discuss the specific requirements of the question. The source of their research, ie *reading about and seeing*, was not dealt with. Discussion was limited to descriptive comparisons between the candidate's artwork and that of the artist, saying, for example, *Van Gogh used yellow and so did I*. Copying various aspects of an artist's work (when appropriation was not intended) was often considered by students as being influenced; statements such as *I like (artist's) work, so I borrowed it* were made without giving any reason for the statement. If a drawing were used, little consideration was made to combine the image with information relevant to the question. The content was generally not sufficient; some candidates did not relate an artist to their own artmaking or referred to only one artist, giving no examples.

Students should understand the purpose of a type C question and not misinterpret its function as being to provide an opportunity to relive the process of making a major work without considering its specific requirements and this Focus Area. Those who simply resorted to their prepared response overlooked the directive *Evaluate*. Such students did not successfully link their understanding or analysis of an artist's work to their own artmaking. Their judgements, as well as their reasons for researching an artist's work, appeared, too often, to be both speculative and shallow. A broader range of artists, especially including more contemporary examples, did distinguish some responses from the majority. In them, students dealt with the question in a most stimulating manner.

Question 7

Artists, craftspeople and designers make objects and images to represent ideas that we recognise from the world around us.

Explain this statement, using a range of examples that you have studied. You could consider:

- **media and materials**
- **signs and symbols**
- **meaning and purpose.**

In this question, Section 1 plates were often discussed in the candidates' responses. Sophisticated responses started by indicating how the question would be dealt with and then guided the reader logically through each section.

Candidates frequently wrote about the work of people from one or two art movements. Pop Art and Dada artists were discussed as artists who had used ideas from everyday life in their own artmaking. Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe*, Lichtenstein's comic strip images, as well as the work of Hamilton and Jasper Johns, were frequently referred to. The work of such artists was discussed more frequently than that of designers, or candidates wrote about the work of painters more frequently than that of people working in other types of media.

Differences in the type of work produced by artists, designers and craftspeople were rarely indicated. Such artists, designers and craftspeople were obviously considered to belong to the one generic group.

Generally, the work of three artists was referred to, with discussion focused on the recognisable and easily understood visual qualities of the selected examples, rather than the philosophical implications of the question or the significance of selected examples. Sophisticated responses comprised a diverse selection of artists and discussed various interpretations of an idea in different historical and cultural contexts.

The wording *that we recognise from the world around us* proved difficult, as it required candidates not only to discuss ideas intrinsic to the work of artists, craftspeople and designers that reflected the world of these people, but also to link these ideas to the candidate's own world.

Well-prepared responses were comprehensive, often referring at length to artists who had been well researched. Those who were not adequately prepared for this question frequently presented responses that were quite inadequate.

Excellent and above-average responses were characterised by extensive discussion of the work of artists, craftspeople and designers and referred to well-chosen examples that were linked to the world of the candidate as well as to the complex messages that pervade these works. Above-average responses were noteworthy for appropriate use of specific language, expression and reference to art concepts and art terminology, and contained astute comments that showed a deep understanding of the work of specific artists, craftspeople and designers.

These answers referred to a wide range of examples that were used to substantiate views about statements in the question and the suggestions therein. There was also evidence of the candidates' broad understanding of media, materials and signs and symbols in art and the use of complex, yet layered, ideas. Here, candidates explained the question excerpt comprehensively, dealt with it in reference to each bullet point and revealed reasons for selecting and discussing particular examples in relation to the requirement of the question.

Above-average candidates shaped their responses in accordance with the wording of the question in order to show their well-grounded interpretation of the question. Their responses also included well-researched comments that showed a sound understanding of art movements and cultural contexts in relation to selected examples.

These candidates showed a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between a specific art object and the representation of ideas and also commented on ideas that explained parts of *the world around us*, eg consumerism and popular culture, as well as on different schools of philosophy in relation to these artworks, and explained how these have been incorporated into artworks, referring to a wide range of artworks as a way of explaining the nature of the numerous ideas to be found in *the world around us*. They explained the unfixed nature of ideas and how different time periods, cultural and social values alter ideas. Changing imagery was often referred to as an example of the manifestation of the mercurial nature of ideas in artworks.

In average responses, candidates discussed the work of artists but made little reference to that of craftspeople or designers and did not distinguish or discriminate between the work of artists, craftspeople and designers, commenting frequently on the three bullet points in the question while making only passing reference to the opening statement. They made limited, generalised comments that were justified with reference to only a small range of examples. The latter were described rather than analysed, so that the response was disjointed.

Examples were listed in the response, but the relevance of the selection or nature of each example in relation to the requirements of the question remained unclear. Here, candidates responded to parts of the question by referring to general knowledge rather than judgement based on knowledge of visual arts. This knowledge was often incomplete or even irrelevant.

Some candidates adopted an inconsistent position in their response to the question and dealt mainly with media, materials, signs, symbols. Meaning and purpose were frequently not commented on.

In below-average responses, candidates discussed one or two examples, making only slight comments couched in general terms, with little use of language specific to art. These responses were characterised by descriptions of artworks that did not relate to the requirements of the question. These candidates reworded the question but their responses failed to answer it. They mentioned artists' names but made no comment on their work, or made statements that did not answer the question or were not related to it. They included superficial, vague, rambling comments on their personal position in relation to the requirements of the question, making statements that were often confusing, too basic and/or incorrect.

Statements were justified with only passing reference to the candidate's own artmaking and insufficient and/or unimportant information was included in the response; this, however, did not enable the reader to understand the candidate's intent fully. Many of these candidates did not comment on the meaning or purpose of the response or of the ideas represented in it.

It is emphasised that students must be acquainted with a wide range of artworks and their contexts and associated artists. Their responses must include additional visual arts knowledge that can help them to justify the views expressed in answering the question. The nature of the Visual Arts examination needs to be fully explained to students so that they can show their understanding and knowledge of visual arts in the examination.

Questions must be strategically selected so that they provide candidates with enough opportunity to show the extent of their engagement with, and understanding of, the visual arts. The use of appropriate examples to justify statements strengthens responses, which must be logically constructed so that they are convincing. Prepared essay responses do not always answer the examination questions.

Question 8(a)

It has been argued that art and popular culture have changed places in the twentieth century.

Analyse this statement, using a range of examples.

Refer to signs, symbols, images and/or materials in your answer.

The quotation in this question was designed to challenge a point of view. Candidates were asked to analyse the statement and this could have been done by developing an argument and showing knowledge of the Recommended Area of Study. The question also gave additional prompts, any number of which could have been referred to.

Candidates were asked to refer to a range of examples, which gave them scope either to refer to a number of artists and their works or to a number of works from the one artist. In answering this question, they could make either a narrow or a broad interpretation of the stimulus.

The types of response tended to fall into two broad categories:

1 well prepared and researched responses which were lengthy and included quotations and a range of appropriate historical and contemporary examples

2 vague responses that tended to include much personal opinion.

Most responses showed that candidates had studied the Focus Area and Recommended Area of Study in depth, and so were able to use a range of relevant approaches and examples in analysing the question. As many candidates were pre–prepared, however, there were a large number of responses which were allied more to the Focus Area than to the question.

Due to the demands of the Focus Area, the small number of candidates attempting this question were extremely well prepared. Generally they were of a high standard and knowledgeable, discussing an interesting and appropriate range of issues, artists and art styles. Some students, however, found it difficult to differentiate between the concepts of *changing places* and *exchange* and the different connotations of each.

The excellent and above-average responses were stimulating and engaging reading. They were informed, articulate, organised and sophisticated. In them, candidates developed a position or point of view relating to the essay statement, and then clearly explained this view, using either an interesting and varied selection of artists, or chronologically comparing art movements and artists. Many of these responses challenged the statement, showing a breadth of understanding of the issues, reinforcing their opinions with a range of significant and relevant examples.

The Focus Area was interpreted in a number of different and interesting ways. Some of the issues discussed included definitions of, and exchanges between, high and low art, popular and fine culture, mass media and unique art, and the use of mechanical reproduction techniques to transform images into high art. The use of collage and found objects as art media and the influence of art on advertisements, film, theatre and magazines were also discussed. Although the Pop Art Movement was discussed by many candidates, other references included Picasso and Braque's collage, the caricatures of Grosz, the found objects of Duchamp and Schwitters, and contemporary artists Koons, Haring, Sherman, Kozic, Kruger and Mambo.

In the average responses, candidates showed their study of the Recommended Area of Study by writing about what they had studied and prepared. Most candidates attempted to respond to the question, but relied more on their pre–planning than on the concepts of the question. These responses tended to be good in relation to the content, facts and general awareness of the Focus Area. Relevant examples were cited and described, often being based on considerable knowledge; some candidates were, nevertheless, unable to respond to the question or to construct a strong, clear analysis with supporting arguments. Explanations were often descriptive, dealing, for example, with everyday objects, but failing to deal with deeper issues. Many made obvious judgements and reached unjustified conclusions. Although responses showed evidence of research, they generally lacked highly developed interpretative skills in relating back to the Recommended Area of Study.

Many average responses related the question to Pop Art when referring to the fact that art and popular culture have changed places. Typical background information was given in relation to the Pop Art Movement and relevant artists were cited such as Warhol, Lichtenstein and Hamilton. Some also referred to a range of contemporary Australian artists.

The standard of a few responses was below average. They were very superficial in their analysis of the opening statement to the question, while their interpretation of it was often limited and shallow, with responses to the opening statement being either guessed at or assumed rather than analysed. Some were vague, relying on general knowledge and making sweeping and unsupported statements, referring to one or no artists or examples. Some included general facts about Pop Art without relating this information to the question, while others misunderstood the prompts given and became sidetracked.

In some of the poorer responses, candidates appeared to have made a bad choice of question, since they were unable to give evidence of their experience of this Recommended Area of Study. Often, personalised and irrelevant opinions were expressed, which provided little or no supportive evidence.

Although the Recommended Area of Study expressed no time frame in terms of *historical* and *contemporary*, or *20th Century* art, students must study a broad range of examples and art styles. Some candidates had obviously studied the area in great depth, but were disadvantaged in their responses to the question by concentrating on pre–20th century examples, rather than answering it fully. By studying a wide range of artists, students are better prepared to develop an essay in which artworks can be placed correctly into historical and social contexts.

Question 8(b)

Examine how artists have used conventions and symbols to represent individuals and groups in artworks.

Refer to at least ONE historical and ONE contemporary example of painting, photography and/or sculpture.

This question from the Art and Media Focus Area related to a Recommended Area of Study. In spite of the known nature of such questions, the standard of responses to 8(b) was disappointing.

The original Recommended Area of Study was:

> The way symbols and conventions have been used in representations of individuals and groups in painting, photography and/or sculpture in historical and contemporary contexts.

This was straightforward and well within the mainstream of issues particular to the Art and Media Focus Area. It allowed teachers to commence study, using resources identified from previous Recommended Areas of Study such as the 1995 *woman as sign*, the 1994 *characteristics and significance of visual conventions, symbols and media in historical and contemporary artworks, objects and images*. Additionally, the recent exhibition exploring the theme of The Body at the Art Gallery of New South Wales provided opportunities for relevant and direct student experiences.

Fewer than 90 candidates chose this question, and a significant proportion appeared poorly prepared for the task. Many failed to read it or to deal with the required explanation of individuals and groups, thus referring to conventions and symbols. Those who made this kind of error frequently appeared to hybridise the requirements of the accompanying 8(a) option, in effect writing and answering their own question. A small number of candidates dealt with individuals OR groups in artworks but not both. The majority, however, successfully selected historical and contemporary examples. Most candidates dealt with paintings to illustrate their explanations; photography was also a popular choice but sculpture was less commonly selected.

The characteristics of excellent responses included ability to identify all parts and requirements of the question and to set out a brief definition which described terms and indicated the elements of the Recommended Areas of Study. Here, candidates attempted to link their chosen examples with each other and with the elements of the question, thus providing an account which was both coherent and complete, and which showed a conscious approach to the challenges of explaining concepts in relation to particular examples. The challenge of the question proved to be the concept of a convention and excellent responses were notable for examining this idea in terms of the examples. The prompt context signalled a connection between media and culture and most excellent responses recognised this, frequently adopting a thematic approach, as did above-average responses.

Above-average responses discussed media demands and talked in terms of the traditions of representation of single and multiple figures. Relevance characterised these responses, which showed understanding of the concerns, traditions and innovations of the artist as well as the role and reaction of audiences to these images. The selected examples were often used to illustrate larger, more abstract ideas such as gender, the nude, identity and cultural values. Several answers included relevant quotations from John Berger, Linda Nochlin, Kenneth Clark or Robert Hughes as grounds for their views.

Some candidates constructed satisfying accounts based on a comparison of Charles Meere's *Beach Patterns* compared conventionally with Anne Zahalka's photographic quotation of Meere's image. A complementary comparison of Max Dupain's *Sunbather* and the contemporary Zahalka appropriation rounded out these accounts. Other successful responses provided an examination of individuals and groups in religious subjects, eg *The Crucifixion, Lamentation* and *Pietà* were contrasted with images of the Virgin, Virgin and Child, saints and donors. Changing representations of the figure, the nude and artistic preoccupations with the body were also popular choices. Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, the fetishist images of British pop artist Allan Jones and the photographic work of Cindy Sherman were all successfully quoted as examples. The impact on audiences of historical works such as August Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* and François Rude's *La Marsellaise from the Arc de Triomphe* were imaginatively examined. Appropriately described historical examples included the Hellenistic *Laocoon*, Roman senatorial sculptures of Augustus and Egyptian funerary portraits such as the individual Old Kingdom sculptures of Prince Rahotep and his wife Nofret.

Thematic approaches and use of relevant examples characterised excellent responses. In contrast, an application of chronological approaches and a somewhat uneven selection of illustrative examples typified answers in the average range. Some candidates were determined to start at the beginning with the *Venus of Willendorf* and move through the cultural history of representation or figuration. Chronology often dominated, to the detriment of the explicit requirements of the question, causing candidates to give, at times, an irrelevant response to its demands. Average answers usually did not deal with all the aspects of the question, or, if that challenge were met, they did not go beyond the particularities of specific examples to explore bigger issues such as conventions or the cultural impact of representation.

Poor responses were characterised by incomplete and sometimes irrelevant responses to parts of the question. Many parts were ignored, either in part or in total. Some work which scored poor marks, despite being written well, comprised obviously prepared answers which bore almost no relation to the question asked. Students should be cautioned against adopting such strategies as part of their examination preparation. A well-written but irrelevant or inappropriate answer will not be favoured over a relevant and appropriate answer from a less fluent candidate who has systematically attempted to deal with the task at hand.

Poor answers neglected significant aspects of the question. They often did not select a historical *and* a contemporary example or failed to select an example dealing with an individual and one dealing with a group. Popular but poorly handled choices included a group of candidates apparently armed with information about van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait* and Picasso's *Guernica*. As *Guernica* is a work executed in 1937, it is difficult, on even the most generous interpretation, to regard it as contemporary.

Poor responses also frequently ignored the actions implicit in the writing of an explanatory account; there was no sense of an introduction or of a definition of terms, the selected examples were neither related to each other nor even to the main components of the question. These essays tended to stop rather than to conclude, and never rose above the level of description.

In preparing to engage with Recommended Areas of Study, students are advised to examine closely the descriptors and spirit of the Focus Area and to spend some time in examining the nature and meaning of keywords. Discussing and defining the words *historical* and *contemporary*, for instance, enables individual students to work on their own examples, secure in the knowledge that they are giving examples of the larger conceptual requirements of the Recommended Area of Study.

Question 9

Give an account of how artists' use of conventions, images and visual codes has influenced your artmaking.

Refer to TWO OR MORE artists and their works in your answer.

This was a well–answered and reasonably popular question. A range of historical and contemporary artworks were chosen by students in their discussion of their own artmaking. Although few candidates defined *conventions, images* and *visual codes,* the terms were implicitly understood and explained in excellent and above-average responses.

Excellent responses were characterised by the choice of more than two artists and artworks that had influenced the candidates' own artmaking. They successfully isolated and discussed fully aspects of these artworks pertaining to conventions, images and visual codes that were apparent in their own artworks, or from which they had been able to learn and on which they had been able to expand. These responses clearly showed candidates' ability to discuss objectively, using the principles of art criticism and art history.

Their own artmaking continually showed links with the artworks of other artists. They showed an understanding of the concept of influence as being not always direct but, although more tenuous, nevertheless potent and discernible in their own art and practice.

Average responses were characterised by coverage of most parts of the question, but usually revealed difficulty with the term *visual codes*. These responses were less detailed, using description rather than analysis and interpretation. Candidates found difficulty in successfully linking their own artmaking and that of their chosen artists, often making fairly superficial connections. Many responses in this range were inconsistent, citing only two examples or focusing mainly on students' own artmaking.

In below-average responses, candidates often made only passing reference to the terms of the question, having great difficulty in linking the artists they chose with their own artmaking, which was described subjectively.

Students need to practise discussing their own artmaking as they would that of others, and using the criteria of the question. They should be able to analyse and interpret their own artwork, making substantial and relevant connections with the examples of other artworks they have chosen.

Question 10

Mass-produced design should incorporate an awareness of the environment.

Explain this statement with reference to a range of significant design examples from your local environment.

You should consider:
•   **urban planning**
•   **product design**
•   **interior/exterior design.**

This question was attempted by a relatively small candidature. It required the candidates to show knowledge and understanding of *mass-produced design*. The majority of below-average responses ignored or misinterpreted this concept. The bulleted points were provided as triggers or prompts to further assist the candidates in ascertaining the character of what an interpretation and explanation of mass-produced design might be. The prompts were not prescriptive but were used in excellent and above-average responses to frame the candidates' explanation. A number of candidates also used architectural examples in their responses.

Excellent and above-average responses explored the statement in its entirety, discussing equally mass-produced design and sensitive awareness of environmental factors in the design process. A wide range of design examples were chosen, including mass-produced prefabricated materials used in architecture as well as Bauhaus designs translated into *the everyday*, eg Brauer's chairs and Alessi kettles; an environmentally aware and sensitive focus was incorporated into their responses. Some candidates made effective use of annotated sketches to support the examples, which they were also able to include in historical and cultural contexts to further demonstrate both depth and breadth of understanding.

Average responses focused their discussion on an awareness of the environment but tended to ignore the mass–produced element and the intention of the question. Consequently, key issues such as consumerism and functionalism were rarely introduced or were often replaced with generalised discussion that revealed a conventional knowledge of art at the expense of an understanding of design. Typical responses quoted Murcutt and Cox. Whilst the explanation of the work of these men was competent, their appropriateness to the criteria of the question was questionable. Annotated sketches, where used, were satisfactory, but either lacked detail or failed to illustrate/illuminate the points raised.

Below-average responses were characterised by generalisations about the failings of society on issues pertaining to the environment. Few, if any, references were made to examples from the world of art or design. Secondary criteria of urban planning were explored in very general terms. Also, many interpreted *local environment* as being their immediate environment (home/community) without recognising the significance or possibility of Australia's being local.

Over–prepared responses that failed to deal with the question seemed to indicate a body of candidates who were attracted to this question yet paid little attention to the criteria. All of these must be dealt with, even if not equally.

Question 11(a)

Analyse the function and character of innovation in urban design, including housing, streetscapes and public spaces.

Refer to TWO OR MORE examples in your answer.

Although the number of responses to this question was small, the quality was excellent. Evidence of a highly engaged study of this Recommended Area of Study was revealed in the selection of appropriate, well-chosen examples from local sites, which were coupled with shrewd selections from broader Australian and international contexts. It was quite obvious in the excellent and above-average responses that the candidates had a vast repertoire of art knowledge and a range of examples from which to choose. In the question, candidates were required to do more than merely recount knowledge gained from their study. Analysis of the function and character of innovation and renovation invited them to debate the broader issues of the influence of political, aesthetic and economic contexts on urban design, viz. the driving forces behind it. Case studies such as the Pyrmont and Woolloomooloo redevelopments were appropriate.

Excellent and above-average responses were characterised by the informed and structured manner in which they dealt with all/most of the question criteria. In these responses, candidates showed a clear understanding of the concepts of innovation and renovation and chose both local and international examples. Usually more than two examples were examined and accompanied by annotated sketches. Issues such as large-scale and small-scale planning were examined, as well as domestic and corporate issues/needs, and the private and public aspects of urban planning and design both internationally and in Australia.

Average responses were usually non–specific, narrative and descriptive. Here, candidates explained the question criteria and/or discussed examples taken from their local environment. Understanding of key terms and concepts, eg *ecology, renovation, environmentally friendly*, when included, were superficially treated and/or misunderstood. These responses did not discuss specific known examples — instead they dealt with the personal and very local environment. Logical, though unsophisticated, responses referred to examples of houses and streetscapes that were described purely in relation to the local environment.

Below-average responses were few in number. They were very brief, comprising generalised and naïve interpretations of urban design, with little or no reference to well-known examples. In them, discussion was often based on unsupported personal preference which revealed a very cursory study of this Recommended Area of Study.

Question 11(b)

Select ONE design movement before, and ONE design movement after, World War II.

Compare and contrast the characteristics, contexts and significance of each design movement.

In your answer, refer to specific examples.

This question was well structured and straightforward and related well to the Recommended Area of Study. It provided opportunities for candidates to treat their chosen design movements as case studies using the criteria of the question to define the contrasts and comparisons between the two design movements. Well-prepared candidates used appropriate quotations and examples in their responses. Popular choices of design movements were Art Nouveau, Bauhaus, Art Deco, America in the 50s and 60s (Hochschüle Für Gestaltung at Ulm) and the International Style.

Excellent and above-average responses were characterised by candidates' extensive knowledge and understanding of their chosen design movements, which they showed by exploring in detail the contextual reference in the question with consideration of factors such as war, politics, propaganda, cultural change and/or technology. These responses compared and contrasted the movements to give a complete picture of how they influenced each other and where the differences lay. They used sophisticated language and successfully discussed the significance of their similarities and differences.

Average responses were detailed and well informed, revealing a careful study of the Recommended Area of Study. They tended, however, to ignore the *compare and contrast* nature of the question and, instead, provided information about the two design movements without comparing and contrasting. Their chosen examples were often not specific, generally referring to designed objects such as chairs, furniture, kitchen utensils and buildings.

Below-average responses were submitted by ill–prepared candidates who often named movements but failed to give details or specific examples. They showed little understanding of how to locate their chosen design movements historically.

Students should practise applying their information and knowledge to the criteria of the question. Many responses were well written but did not make comparisons.

Question 12

Explain how the study of design practices has influenced your artmaking.

Refer to specific designers and their works.

You may use sketches in your answer.

This question required candidates to explain how designers develop their ideas, generate a brief and construct forms, and how this has influenced their own artmaking. There was a tendency for candidates to choose this question wrongly. Many showed little or no understanding of the nature of design practices and quoted fine art exemplars rather than known design practices, movements and objects. They described their own artmaking, showing little regard for the question criteria within the Focus Area. Some, however, used this question effectively to show their breadth of study of the Recommended Area of Study and also how this was related to their own artmaking. Sketches were rarely used effectively in answering this question, however.

There was a limited number of excellent and above-average responses; these placed the candidates' own design work in context through the discussion of the historical background of design movements and the designers discussed. These responses were usually design process orientated and structured, keying into the work of influential practitioners in the field, and were, therefore, able to refer to this information in providing sophisticated responses that were rich in detail and dealt with the specific criteria of the question. Designers/movements described consisted mainly of Murcutt, Kee, Jackson, Done, the Bauhaus, Art Deco and Art Nouveau.

Average responses, which were in the majority, dealt with the question in a limited and often sketchy manner. Here, candidates either discussed their own artmaking in depth and provided a more basic explanation of the influences upon it or, conversely, provided a prepared discourse on designers, making little or no reference to their own artmaking. Often the selection of examples was poor or inappropriate, while links between the candidates' own artmaking and the design practices chosen were weak and unsupported. References to the comic strip genre were common and tended to be narrative, displaying little awareness of (graphic) *design practices*.

Below-average responses tended to be autobiographical, resorting to prejudiced, clichéd personal discussion. Examples chosen were often commonplace or so deeply personal that they were obscure. The question was poorly understood, eliciting a little factual information and responses that were couched in undifferentiated art language. Candidates in this range described their own artmaking but either made no reference to specific designers or gave no explanation or interpretation of their practices. Sketches, where included, were not annotated or relevant and appeared to be fillers — to flesh out the response.

Question 13

Look at Plates 4–11.

Critically analyse TWO of these plates.

You could consider:
- **aesthetic qualities**
- **communication of ideas**
- **expressive qualities.**

This question required students to write a critical analysis of two of the Section II plates (4–11). The bulleted points were offered as optional cues to guide essay content and structure. The three cues are drawn from the perspectives listed for consideration in Studying Images and Objects in the 1987 syllabus (p 34) and familiarity with their meanings appears to be widespread. There was, however, no requirement for students to use all or any of the cues, but the majority of students used some form of them in their responses.

The structure of the question was simple and straightforward and many students appeared to find it a friendly question. The responses to this question were perceived to be of a higher standard than those to similar questions in previous years, and students seemed to have a clear understanding of the demands of Section II questions.

Confidence was shown in a more widespread use of specific art vocabulary, varying understanding and degrees of preparation for the task of critical analysis, a general awareness of the potential value of citation information in supporting interpretation and a wider use of reference to related artists and movements. Most responses showed some familiarity with methods of critical analysis. For the greater part, these were generic formats which progressed through the identification of elements of art in the chosen plates. An ability to discriminate between the most appropriate elements in relation to the chosen plates was less evident.

The level of art knowledge was lower than the knowledge of generalised art language. Most responses showed a preference for images of the human form, with immediately apparent formal and expressive qualities. Fetting's *Man Ironing II* was the most popular image. Many candidates could identify stylistic affinities between this image and movements such as Fauvism and Expressionism and offered interpretations of the image in relation to gender politics. The plate most often coupled with the Fetting was Nam June Paik's *Cage*. Most responses could analyse the plate in relation to the impact of television and technological change, though its relation to art movements or concepts was less successfully indicated.

The Chief's Stool was the next most significant choice. With a few notable exceptions, the necessary cultural background to place this work in context was absent. Nevertheless, most students could discuss the communication of ideas on gender in the stool and many responded sensitively to the aesthetics of the sculptural form.

Excellent and above-average responses reflected study and understanding of art at a high level. These essays reflected familiarity with contemporary art issues and developments and this often indicated the enrichment of general art knowledge with specific knowledge based on study of the Focus Areas and Recommended Area of Study.

These responses showed a sophisticated and articulate familiarity with the critical vocabulary of art and an ability to focus and control the discussion of both plates in relation to each other and to a thematic argument or thesis established within the essay.

The critical themes established were characteristic of wider art issues rather than of the relation of artistic evidence to social issues. Issues of representation and of the social context of meaning in art objects were explored in relation to the chosen plates. Thus, the Tyssen photograph *Wonderland, Sydney, 1978* was analysed in terms of art's ability to explore emotion, memory and desire. The Elsie Bulung *Mat* was discussed in relation to Aboriginal visual traditions and their continuing vigour.

Characteristic of these essays was the ability to discuss the chosen images in relation to broader contexts and critical issues and also to convey a sense of the works as unique instances. This was achieved by the selective and appropriate analysis of expressive, aesthetic and communicative qualities in the works. These responses used the format of the question to do part of the work of critical analysis. Careful selection of plates contributed to the solid, grounded quality of these essays; plates were chosen for their potential to emphasise the meanings of each other through simple, but appropriate, devices such as comparison or contrast.

The average responses handled aspects of the question with some competence. There was evidence both of preparation for Section II and of subject learning in the use of art vocabulary associated with critical analysis. Diligent use of analysis formats was present in many of these responses, as was an attempt to relate elements such as composition, line, colour and tone to aesthetic and, to a lesser extent, expressive qualities. The ability to synthesise this analysis of elements and to relate it to the communication of ideas was not as successful, however.

The level of description here was often good. A lack of sophistication was evident in the application of the terms of formal analysis; without any carry–through to the creation of meaning or of effect, analysis of elements becomes a specialised form of description rather than a critical engagement with the artwork. Thus, the description of the colour in Fetting's *Man Ironing II*, in terms of intensity and saturation, shows knowledge, but, without consideration of the expressive or communicative value of the use of colour, it remains a specialised technical description rather than a critical analysis. Interpretation in these responses was often presented as a concluding element tacked on at the end of description rather than being an engagement with the work resulting from description and analysis.

Conversely, many other average responses tended to use the artwork as a springboard for engagement with wider social issues. Whilst many of these essays were personal, interesting and knowledgeable, the synthesis of extrinisic and intrinsic engagement with an artwork needed consideration. These responses failed to examine how the social meanings, references and allusions were revealed in the artwork, or how the artworks communicated ideas. This type of response tended to choose the Fetting and Nam June Paik plates and to discuss the work on the level of subject matter only. As with most average responses, the level of description was both competent and appropriate.

Average responses tended to treat the analysis of the two images as separate exercises and often showed an uneven treatment of them in terms of confidence or of time spent. This is possibly a symptom of a real struggle to produce the best possible work under examination conditions. It should be stressed that these responses gave evidence of learning and preparation and contained many interesting and authentic reactions to artwork unfamiliar to the candidates.

Below-average responses did not take advantage of the cues for analysis offered in the question, but relied upon description of the appearance or subject matter of the artwork. Citation information was used as material to extend description rather than as material to place in context speculation on the meaning or effect of the artwork.

Where analysis was present it was couched in general terms and concentrated on describing an obvious aspect of the artwork, eg usually a list of the colours used. The possible meanings of the plates chosen were ignored or discussed in sweeping generalisations.

It should be noted that too many students are still using Section I plates for Section II responses. The direction to look at Plates 4–11 is part of the question; failure to do so is considered to be an incomplete response to the question and disadvantages the student.

A lack of experience in looking at and discussing architecture, sculpture and artforms other than painting can restrict a student's access to the full range of plates offered in the paper. There is no mandated prescription for the forms of artworks which will appear in the examination from year to year, and the syllabus prescribes the study of *a wide range of images and objects*.

Use of systematic formats of critical analysis is widespread and is obviously perceived to be a solid foundation for students' preparation for Section II. Many would benefit from a more flexible and selective use of these formats. These formats are generic and, more often than not, heavily biased towards formal analysis. In order to prepare for unfamiliar artworks, students need to include elements which are not appropriate to the understanding of particular artworks. The diligent use of a checklist of elements of art is time–consuming and can lead to distractions such as the desperate attempt to discuss the use of tone in Nam June Paik's *Cage*, or to negative catalogues of elements not present in an artwork. The training in selecting appropriate aesthetic and expressive elements to discuss needs stressing, since some very competent candidates are substituting formulae for critical analysis.

Question 14

Give an account of the way processes, materials and technologies have been used to represent ideas in TWO OR MORE plates.

This question was straightforward, the emphasis being on the discussion of how artworks are made and how they represent ideas. The most difficult concept in the question was that of technologies, which most students defined in a very narrow sense, seeing it as being only a very recent phenomenon, thus limiting their responses to very naïve or superficial interpretations.

The better responses were shrewd in their selection of images, thus providing the students with a platform for engagement with all aspects of the question. The most popular plate was *Cage* by Nam June Paik. Many students identified this work as being a comment on the contemporary technological age and discussed our dependence on technology as well as the ironical way in which it causes us to conform and reduce our individuality. Another popular plate was *Man Ironing II*, by Rainer Fetting. Many responses to this plate discussed gender equality.

Outstanding responses were characterised by discerning interpretations of the images and the ability to place them into historical and cultural contexts. These responses showed sophisticated understanding of issues such as gender bias in presentation of subject matter, aspects of feminism, consumerism, capitalism, multiculturalism, post–modernity, Indigenous peoples issues or ironic subtexts in the work.

Good responses also provided appropriate evidence to support subjective opinions. These responses explored fully the meaning of the term *technology*, referring, for example, to technology as a tool, as a cultural/gender division of roles, as a symbol of modernity or as a milestone in art history. These candidates were also able to place works in historical, cultural contexts, using political and social examples that influence the availability of materials and freedom of expression.

Average responses comprised literal or superficial descriptions of the selected plates, with little reference to external criteria. Many of these interpretations saw *Cage* (Nam June Paik) as a robot or made tenuous links between the television sets and technology and interpreted *Mat* (Elsie Bulung) or *February* (the Limbourg Brothers) as being examples of primitive technology. Such responses were often inconsistent in their handling of each part of the question, with some students showing great perception and sensitivity when responding to one of the plates, but not to others. Similarly, some students concentrated on only one part of the question, giving an account of the processes, materials and technologies used but completely failing to discuss how their use represented ideas. On the whole, although these candidates possessed some understanding of art terms, which they supplemented with a wise use of the terms given in the question, they had difficulty in placing their chosen images into a wider context.

The less successful responses either failed to show any understanding of the terminology of the question or completely ignored it. These candidates merely rephrased the question, discussed one plate only or simply gave a superficial or cursory description of the plates in general.

Students need to understand, and become confident through practice with, terms that occur frequently in Section II questions. They also need to realise that Section I and Section II questions are weighted equally. Many of the responses were very short and seemed to indicate that not enough time had been allocated for the question.

Question 15

Look at Plates 4–11.

Discuss how ANY TWO plates reveal different attitudes and approaches to the visual arts.

Refer to:
- **subject matter**
- **cultural influences**
- **meaning and purpose**.

The wording of this question was unambiguous and easy to interpret, with bullet points to guide students in their responses and to help them deal with all aspects of the question, in which they were required to select carefully from Plates 4–11, with consideration for different attitudes and approach being indicated by the bullet points. The question was complicated in its intent and required interpretation by the candidate so that all aspects were linked and dealt with logically and concisely. In it, students were offered the opportunity to show a wide range of knowledge in historical and cultural contexts. The majority understood the connection between culture, subject matter and belief, and wrote thoughtful answers that reflected varied interpretations which were well supported with appropriate examples.

In excellent to above-average responses, students successfully defined *attitudes and approaches* in interesting ways that included relevant examples. They supported and used these definitions as the basis for interpreting the chosen works, successfully linking internal and external criteria within the parameters of the question. These students used well-considered plates as the starting point for discussing *differences*, then went on to refer to other related artists, art movements and wider issues which referred to the plates and/or to the bullet points. Their use of art language was sophisticated, logical and reinforced by a strong knowledge base. The better responses took into consideration aspects such as time frame, and wide–ranging attitudes that were philosophical, conceptual, religious, emotional, intellectual, cultural or gender–based. These students understood the fact that the question required critical analysis of the two chosen plates and they successfully linked the different sections of the question in relevant and logical ways in order to reinforce their judgements.

In average responses, students showed some awareness and understanding of some parts of the question. They often made an informed choice of plates and their answers were descriptive, but used narrative rather than critical analysis as the device for exploring speculative interpretations. These students did not establish a point of view and made choices of plates in which interpretation was not linked to cultural context or to the bullet point guides. Some relied on using art knowledge which was not relevant to the question. Their answers often lacked depth, with no reference being made to relevant artists or artworks, art movements, styles or cultural backgrounds. Although some involvement with the implications of the question was evident, divergent aspects were not explored. It was often apparent that such students had run out of time, while others had obviously prepared formulated responses. Often, in these instances, all aspects of the question were not dealt with and reliance on rote learning was apparent, rather than production of a considered answer which showed students' ability to apply their knowledge within the guidelines of the question.

Below-average responses were often very short and showed a poor choice of plates, sometimes with plates from the wrong section of the paper being chosen. Students relied, to a large extent, on guesswork, offering naïve opinions which showed no understanding of the issues raised by the artists in the chosen works. Subjective, biased and repetitive responses couched in simple, often irrelevant language showed a failure to deal with the question and a general lack of understanding about the requirements of an essay in Section II. These students were unable to place the plates historically or culturally and failed to deal with the bullet point guides by using any relevant information or knowledge of art language. Many frequently wasted time and effort by copying out the question and, often, misinterpreting the information given. Description only, with unconnected and badly expressed comment, characterised lesser responses.

Students need to become very familiar with Section II of the examination paper. Knowledge of the layout will help to eliminate the confusion that is still evident in the choice of plates from Section I to answer Section II questions. Confidence in writing a critical analysis should be developed so that interpreting images, and not only describing them, is possible. Becoming familiar with art terminology through reading art reviews and articles should be a priority. Students need to practise interpreting questions from past papers and applying appropriate art knowledge in ways that help to justify an opinion. Wider reading will help develop broader historical knowledge and an understanding of cultural contexts. Students need to consider each part of the question carefully, using the descriptors and pointers as a guide, and must also learn to organise their time.

3 Unit

In the responses to the 3 Unit written examination paper, the majority of candidates selected European, North American or Australian artists and works to discuss. Many successful candidates showed a thorough understanding of Modernism and of post–Modern developments, which they were able to adapt successfully to answer questions in all of the Focus Areas.

The Art in Australia and Art and Culture Focus Areas proved to be the most popular, with Questions 3, 4 and 5 attracting the largest candidature. These questions will therefore be analysed in greater detail in the report that follows.

Generally, however, above-average 3 Unit candidates selected questions which they clearly understood and could answer effectively and fully, adapting their knowledge to suit the requirements of the question. In so doing, they referred to an appropriate range of artists and to specific artworks in a way which clearly demonstrated their analytical and interpretive skills. They were able to use sophisticated language and art terminology, and showed a thorough understanding of the significance and cultural contexts of their chosen examples, while their responses were argued thoroughly and convincingly.

Average candidates were able to answer most aspects of their selected question coherently and logically, although in a rather more limited and obvious fashion. They were generally able to place selected artists and some specific examples of their works in a cultural/historical context.

Many below-average candidates appeared to have misunderstood the terms of reference or terminology used in the question and, therefore, were unable to answer it successfully or to select appropriate examples of artists and artworks. These candidates used more limited language and relied on description in responses which were less coherent, synthesised and interpretive.

Section I   Art in Australia

Question 1

Evaluate the significance of figuration in twentieth-century Australian art.

Refer to particular artists and examples of their work.

In the more successful responses, candidates dealt with all aspects of the question and showed their ability to evaluate the significance of figuration in Australian art of the twentieth century, using a range of appropriate historical and contemporary examples such as Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, Arthur Boyd, Russell Drysdale, Vicki Varvaressos, Julie Rrap and Jenny Watson. Examples were discussed in a manner that clearly communicated an understanding of the meanings of the selected works. Some candidates developed their personal response to the broad theme of *figuration*, eg from a feminist position, or from an Aboriginal perspective, dealing with the transition from the 'noble savage' portrayed by Glover and Duterreau in the nineteenth century to more sympathetic images in Boyd's *Halfcaste Bride* series and culminating in a knowledgeable discussion of contemporary works by artists such as Tracey Moffatt and Gordon Bennett. The best responses incorporated an awareness of the sources of twentieth-century figuration in earlier traditions and conventions, while emphasising the most appropriate examples in their answers.

Average responses capably discussed a range of twentieth-century figurative examples, but failed to appreciate the significance of the word *evaluate* and, instead, provided a historical survey, tracing figuration through the century, in many cases with great thoroughness.

A small number of below-average responses selected inappropriate or irrelevant examples, in some cases confusing *figuration* with *abstraction* or other genres.

Question 2

Look at Plates 1, 2 and 3.

Visual myths define and illustrate the nature of our existence.

Examine this statement with reference to ONE OR MORE of these plates, and/or other works by Australian artists.

Many candidates used this question to provide a chronological survey of Australian art and issues of national identity and nationhood. In most responses, works prior to World War II prevailed over more contemporary examples. The more successful candidates combined their chosen examples to provide an excellent response to the question, which showed a thorough understanding of the term *visual myths*. Many used examples of contemporary artworks to explain how earlier visual myths, eg those relating to women, or to ethnic minorities, are now being redefined.

In average responses, however, candidates selected a more limited range of slightly less appropriate examples, while, in below-average responses, candidates often referred only to the plates, while providing an answer not unlike those to Section II of the 2/3 Unit paper.

Many average and above-average responses showed that candidates were able to adapt successfully knowledge gained from the 2/3 Unit Recommended Area of Study *isolation and alienation*.

Question 3

Look at Plates 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Analyse how ONE OR MORE of these and ANY OTHER Australian artists or architects you have studied have responded to urban, and/or suburban environments.

The most successful responses to this question reflected a clear understanding of the terms *urban* and *suburban* and the implied contrast between them. They selected interesting and relevant artworks to discuss, using eloquent and sophisticated language and displaying an awareness of the social/historical contexts of selected works. Many candidates wrote well about the plate depicting Danila Vassilieff's painting *Street Scene with Graffiti*, successfully placing it in its historical context.

Average responses made very little distinction between *urban* and *suburban*; the artists selected, however, were appropriate and were well known to these candidates. Chosen plates were described, analysed and interpreted in a somewhat speculative manner.

Many below-average responses ignored the words *urban* and *suburban* altogether, developing, instead, a general essay about the ways in which some artists have responded to their environment. Examples chosen were not always appropriate — eg Heidelberg School, Russell Drysdale — and, in many cases, candidates appeared to confuse *urban* with *rural*.

Question 4

Australian art reflects a people who have not understood their past and are uncertain of their future.

Argue a case about Australian art, architecture or design that supports or opposes this statement.

Refer to a range of examples.

This question was generally well answered, with most candidates illustrating their arguments by referring to well-chosen artworks. Very few chose to discuss examples of architecture or design.

Above-average responses used sophisticated language and appropriate examples to answer the question with a confident, well-expressed and sustained argument, showing an excellent understanding of the range of issues with which artists may choose to deal and a thorough understanding of their cultural context. Many of these responses included an awareness of Aboriginal, multicultural and/or gender perspectives within the context of 200 years of European settlement. Popular artists were Gordon Bennett, Imants Tillers, Maria Kozic and Tracey Moffatt. The most successful responses combined breadth of knowledge in a survey response with a selection of interesting and suitable examples which were discussed in detail. Average responses reflected a thorough knowledge of Australian art but were less successful in applying this knowledge to the requirements of the question, referring to a more limited range of examples.

Less successful candidates made little reference to artworks, in essays which did not answer the question. Language used was more basic, without the confident use of art–specific terminology which characterised the better responses.

Section II   Art and Culture

Question 5

In the twentieth century, many artists have utilised art as an effective means for disrupting and challenging cultural traditions and conventions.

Discuss this statement with reference to a range of examples from a region or regions outside Australia.

This question attracted the largest candidature of the 3 Unit paper and was generally answered well. Many candidates chose to discuss Early Modernist Movements such as Cubism, Dada and Futurism, together with later developments like Pop Art. A few interesting responses discussed Taiwanese and Mexican artists, or German Expressionists who fled from fascism to North America. Some linked examples with particular issues, such as feminism or the environment, that challenge society, while a number incorporated an awareness of contemporary issues which have galvanised the art world, such as the controversy surrounding Adres Serrano's *Piss Christ* at the National Gallery of Victoria.

Excellent responses used sophisticated language to establish links on a number of levels between selected examples and the question, discussing works sympathetically. These responses showed an ability to use appropriate art terminology; to interpret works by exploring layers of meaning; and to make sound artistic judgements. Here, candidates showed an ability to use sophisticated analogies and comparisons, interpreting works in ways that were original and innovative in addition to being well researched.

Average responses were general rather than specific, many treating the question as an opportunity for a chronological survey of Modernism, which was a somewhat limited approach to the issues raised in it. These responses were, therefore, not specific, and the examples chosen were not always appropriate or discussed with understanding.

Less successful responses were couched in very general terms, dealing with one or two very obvious examples (Picasso's *Guernica* was a favourite), discussing them with little awareness of their context or significance and using language which was not art–specific.

Question 6

Look at Plates 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Explain how artists have represented sorrow, death and mourning in ONE OR MORE of these plates and ANY OTHER artworks from outside Australia.

Almost all works selected by candidates in answering this question were Western examples. Few responses referred to architecture and those that did so were generally rather poor, showing little understanding of the form. This occurred in the responses to other questions also.

Excellent responses dealt with all aspects of the question in well-structured and well-expressed explanations of well–chosen examples. Many of the less successful responses ignored aspects of the question, or chose less appropriate examples to illustrate their discussions.

Question 7

The artist alone does not give the artwork meaning; it is cultural context that adds meaning and value.

Explore this statement with reference to a range of examples from a culture or cultures outside Australia.

Although this question evoked a range of interpretations, answers were largely fairly linear and conventional. Candidates selected artists, works and/or movements and attempted to show how they reflected the cultures outside Australia from which they came.

In excellent examples, candidates discussed in some depth a selection of appropriate examples which illustrated the fact that the artist as well as his or her work is a product of a particular culture. Many of these responses successfully argued that many artworks function as a challenge to dominant cultures, and may influence their direction. Such candidates understood the terms *meaning* and *value* and applied their understanding to their chosen examples.

Less successful responses were not as well constructed and did not deal as pertinently with the frames of reference of the question. In many cases they appeared to be hastily adapted prepared responses and, consequently, were less successful in meeting the demands of the question.

Question 8

Evaluate the cultural contribution of TWO OR MORE art styles or movements you have studied.

Refer to examples from any culture or cultures in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and/or Oceania.

Successful responses used sophisticated language fluently to deal with all aspects of the question. A clear understanding of the cultural/historical contexts of selected appropriate examples was apparent in essays which were well constructed and logical.

Section III   Art and Media

Question 9

Assess the place of the visual arts in a society dominated by the mass media.

In your answer, refer to specific examples.

Most candidates interpreted the question as requiring an assessment of how mass media may be used in the visual arts. Popular examples ranged from Pop Art to contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Jeff Koons and Rosalie Gascoigne.

Excellent responses revealed a depth of knowledge and an ability to develop and sustain a logical argument. Many of these took an unusual or unconventional stance and argued their position effectively, using appropriate and interesting examples as illustrations. Some argued art's function as a force for change, while others saw art as reflecting societal values on issues such as gender, war or economics against a cultural background in which the mass media is a dominant force. Chosen examples were analysed in depth and a range of meanings were discussed in language which was both sophisticated and art–specific.

Less successful responses described, with some degree of knowledge, a range of artists and artworks which were not always entirely relevant to the question. Such responses sometimes contained errors of fact, or very simple interpretations.

Question 10

Contemporary art is eclectic, appropriating imagery and symbols, and techniques from art of the past, and adapting them to new purposes.

Discuss this statement with reference to the work of TWO OR MORE artists.

The better responses reflected a sophisticated understanding of the complexities of contemporary artforms. Examples used ranged from the films of Peter Greenaway to works by Julie Rrap, Imants Tillers, Gordon Bennett and Barbara Kruger. These responses were based on wide reading and a confident command of art criticism and of art–specific language. Many of these candidates approached the question from a post–modern perspective, in some cases including appropriate and well–chosen quotations from artists and philosophers.

Less successful responses appeared to be from candidates who did not understand the demands of the question and failed to select appropriate artists for their discussion.

Question 11

Look at Plates 12, 13 and 14.

Analyse how the artist in ONE OR MORE of these plates and ANY OTHER artworks you have studied has used images and materials to represent aspects of the world that are personally important.

Many candidates used Plate 14, Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, as a starting point for an essay on feminist artists such as Susan Norrie, Vicki Varvaressos and Julie Rrap. Very few chose to discuss Duchamp's *Large Glass* or the work by Odilon Redon.

Excellent responses analysed the images and materials in great depth and with sophistication, placing works accurately in a historical context and making effective links with other artists who contributed varying personal interpretations of a common theme. Some responses lacked awareness of the demands of the Art and Media Focus Area so that, whilst they were knowledgeable and well written, they did not deal with sufficient emphasis with the requirement of the question to discuss *materials*. Less successful responses did not adequately deal with all aspects of the question, failing to interpret the images and materials used by the selected artists.

Question 12

Photography will cause the death of painting.

Investigate this claim by discussing the relationship between photography and painting in the nineteenth and/or twentieth centuries.

In your answer, refer to a range of examples.

Very few candidates selected this question. Above-average responses attempted, with some success, to argue their case, supporting it with well–chosen examples and basing it on a sound body of knowledge. Less successful candidates referred to a very limited range of examples in very general answers, which lacked depth. Few candidates confidently discussed both painting AND photography with equal success.

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Question 13

A single building can celebrate a better world, or signify a change in direction for society.

Explore this statement by referring to TWO OR MORE examples of historical and/or contemporary architecture.

This question was generally well answered, although candidates were able to present an argument which dealt with the question fully. Many were able to explain the significance of selected architectural examples, without, however, successfully linking this to social issues. A sound knowledge of construction techniques, use of materials and architectural intentions typified these responses.

Less successful responses made little reference to the question, embarking, rather, on a description of a number of architectural examples without considering their cultural significance.

Question 14

Look at Plates 15, 16, 17 and 18.

Examine how the idea and look of the 'modern' was largely a product of design.

In your answer, refer to ONE OR MORE of these plates and ANY OTHER examples of twentieth-century design.

This question was attempted by a very small number of candidates, who discussed and defined Modernism, using examples ranging from architecture to product design, including Charles Eames' *Stackable Chair*. Very few ventured past Plate 15 to discuss Plates 16, 17 or 18. All those who attempted this question showed obvious evidence of research, background reading, knowledge and understanding in the Art and Design Focus Area.

Question 15

In the past the link between art, craft and design was taken for granted. Today the expressive, the technical and the practical are often isolated from each other.

Discuss this statement with reference to examples of historical and contemporary design.

Only one candidate attempted this question.

Question 16

Design is a tool of nationalism in cultures eager to communicate a national identity.

Investigate this statement with reference to TWO OR MORE designers and their works.

This question was generally very well answered, with many responses referring to Seidler, Cox and Murcutt and their debt to Frank Lloyd Wright, the Bauhaus and de Stijl. In some, candidates discussed fashion designers such as Jenny Kee and the Mambo group and successfully analysed the ways in which their Australiana designs might communicate a sense of national identity. Less successful responses showed a limited understanding of the phrase *a tool of nationalism* and, therefore, experienced some difficulty in sustaining a well-reasoned argument supported by appropriate examples.