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**1998** HSC

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**EXAMINATION  
REPORT**

**Visual Arts**

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# VISUAL ARTS

## 2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

### **Studying Images and Objects**

Questions in the focus area of Art and Culture attracted the largest proportion of responses in Section I of the 2/3 Unit written examination in 1998. Question 5(b) attracted almost twice as many responses as the other recommended area of study, Question 5(a). The next largest response was to a Type C question, Question 3 in the focus area, Art in Australia. This heralds an emergent trend towards the increased popularity of Type C questions in general. Responses to Type C questions have all been comparatively larger in 1998 than in previous years. There has been an increase in the number of candidates who responded to the questions in the Art and Design focus area although the number of responses in this area are still significantly lower than for other focus areas.

Successful candidates in Section I of the paper were those who, in their responses, reflected a sustained and ongoing involvement with the study of Art. Candidates who covered all aspects of the selected question, who displayed skills in critical analysis, who used art specific language in sophisticated and subtle ways to communicate their point of view, who developed cogent arguments firmly anchored in authoritative citation, and who displayed a penetrative knowledge of art values and attitudes were those whose responses were deemed to be excellent.

Teachers and students are strongly advised that more than one focus area should be engaged with comprehensively over both the Preliminary Year and the HSC Year. Students should have experience of the study of Art which encompasses different art forms and styles, different times and cultures, both historical and contemporary. A solid grounding in the focus areas will provide a strong conceptual base and the breadth of knowledge needed for addressing issues in Section II of the examination.

Teachers are further advised that the different types of questions, ie Type A, B and C, require different approaches in terms of teaching and learning as well as different types of essay response in the examination.

In Section II the most popular question was Question 15; half its size was Question 14 and half its size again was Question 13. The most often used plates were Plates 5 (Kevin Connor), 7 (Max Dupain), 9 (Mary Cassatt), and 10 (Tiepolo) in responses to all of the questions. There were less incidences of students using the Section I plates instead of those for Section II. However, for some students who appear to be poorly prepared for Section II of the paper, there are still examples of the use by candidates of Section I plates.

Teachers are strongly advised that students will need to be taught the conventions and forms necessary for a successful response to a Section II question. Students should be taught the skills of critical analysis, should have a substantial art knowledge base and should be practiced in the terminologies and conventions of Section II responses. Familiarity with past HSC examination papers would also advantage students especially in relation to the types of plates used in Section II and the stipulation that Section I plates cannot be used in Section II responses.

Students in the 2 Unit course in both Section I and II questions should be provided with opportunities to develop understandings and skills on making use of citations in their essay responses.

Level	Grade	/20	Attribute	Response to Question	Language & Expression	Use of Examples
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>A</b>	20 19 18	sophisticated complex subtle complete coherent appropriate evidential interpretive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses all parts of the question</li> <li>addresses the question in a holistic manner</li> <li>excellent art knowledge base</li> <li>synthesised argument and explanation</li> <li>response appropriate to type of Q</li> <li>argues position cogently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>art specific vocabulary used in a sophisticated way</li> <li>appropriate understanding and use of art concepts</li> <li>language encapsulates complexities of ideas in art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well chosen examples</li> <li>appropriate to focus area and Q</li> <li>fully interprets, discriminates and explains examples</li> <li>uses examples in a subtle, reflective way</li> <li>explicitly relates examples to requirements of Q</li> <li>in Section II examples may be expanded and made more explicit with reference to other appropriate known examples or question content</li> </ul>
<b>Above Average</b>	<b>B</b>	17 16 15 14	speculative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses most aspects of Q</li> <li>workable understanding of art concepts</li> <li>understands Q types and appropriate approaches</li> <li>chosen position sometimes is inconclusive or inconsistent</li> <li>evidence of study of Focus Area and/or RAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specific vocabulary used to explain in a coherent, logical way</li> <li>appropriate use of art concepts</li> <li>some complexity used in language to sustain argument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples described, explained, interpreted</li> <li>examples sometimes inconsistent and inappropriate to Q</li> <li>links between examples and challenges of the Q made</li> <li>some appropriate engagement of examples with Focus Areas or RAS</li> </ul>
<b>Average</b>	<b>C</b>	13 12 11 10 9	experimental conventional general uneven limited obvious descriptive unresolved cliched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses some aspects of Q or addresses whole Q in a limited and/or general way</li> <li>ordinary response/argument</li> <li>art knowledge base is general and/or limited</li> <li>some indicators of study of Focus Areas and/or RAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language used not systematically art related</li> <li>some art concepts used in a general or conventional or inexperienced way</li> <li>expression descriptive or obvious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited examples some relevance</li> <li>used in a descriptive rather than analytical way</li> <li>conventional explanations of examples speculative rather than grounded</li> <li>in Section II systematic but uneven discussion</li> <li>more conventional, limited or obvious</li> </ul>
<b>Below Average</b>	<b>D</b>	8 7 6 5	naive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may not directly address the content of the Q</li> <li>shows little awareness of the differing Q types</li> <li>simple surface and/or incomplete understanding of the concepts and knowledge of art</li> <li>little evidence of sustained study of Focus Area or RAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little differentiation of vocabulary</li> <li>art concepts alluded to but not understood in relation to Q</li> <li>cliched and obvious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>few examples cited with limited relevance and little or naive description</li> <li>in Section II examples are guessed or assumed rather than analysed</li> <li>examples not used in relation to demands of Q</li> </ul>
<b>Poor</b>	<b>E</b>	4 3 2 1	simple transparent incomplete incoherent projective favouritism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minimal response with little or no understanding of art</li> <li>ignores implications of Q</li> <li>unable to link response with Q requirements</li> <li>no evidence of study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of simple, imprecise, vernacular language</li> <li>no allusion to or use of art concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples alluded to in passing or not relevant</li> <li>examples and/or artist unidentified</li> <li>no awareness of Q prompts</li> </ul>

Judgement	Criteria & Interpretation	Analysis	Contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• judgements based on sound supporting evidence used in sophisticated ways</li> <li>• evidence of coherent, critical evaluation of a range of opinions and positions</li> <li>• student has own views about art which are reflective, articulate and based on sound art knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes refined and appropriate use of internal (about the object) and external (about context) criteria in a self aware and fluent way</li> <li>• makes appropriate, coherent interpretations of a range of possible meanings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyses, evaluates, examines issues raised in Q in a complete and reflective way</li> <li>• uses formal and other analysis to justify judgements and conclusions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places examples in a cultural context as a rich and productive means of more completely knowing and explaining a work in terms of layers and complexities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• judgement based on some supportive evidence used logically</li> <li>• some critical evaluation of opinions of others</li> <li>• some evidence of formation of own views about art based on a working knowledge of art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes coherent use of a range of internal and external criteria as a tool for interpretation</li> <li>• makes logical interpretations of meanings which are probable and possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies Q as the site for particular issues or problems</li> <li>• attempts to develop a position</li> <li>• analyses problem or issue coherently and logically but conventionally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places work in a cultural context which is adequate for exploring more detailed evidence about and explanation of the work</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• judgement of art based on general knowledge and/or opinion</li> <li>• little awareness of critical opinions of others</li> <li>• own opinions about art are conventional and/or obvious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses mainly internal criteria with some reference to external factors</li> <li>• attempts to give interpretation of meanings which is conventional and/or obvious</li> <li>• section II plate citations used only as external criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognises that Q poses a problem and attempts to analyse it in an appropriate but limited way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some references to limited aspects of cultural context of works</li> <li>• uses these references as a tool for explanation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• judgement may be dealt with as description or identification of parts</li> <li>• no awareness of critical opinions of others</li> <li>• judgement based on supported opinion or favouritism</li> <li>• naive, incoherent or attempt at judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some descriptive use of internal criteria and little use of external criteria</li> <li>• attempt at interpretation which is incoherent, incomplete or inappropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognises that Q has a structure and deals with it in a limited, unresolved way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited reference to a cultural context</li> <li>• limited use of these references as an explanatory tool</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal or unsupported opinion</li> <li>• no attempt to make judgements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little or no use of internal criteria</li> <li>• little or no attempt at interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows little appreciation of the structure of the Q</li> <li>• deals with the Q in a simple, transparent way</li> <li>• may ignore the Q</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no reference to cultural context</li> </ul>

## **SECTION I – ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 1**

*Analyse the significance and contribution of TWO OR MORE Australian artists, designers or craftspeople to Australian art and culture.*

*Refer to artworks relating to your environment.*

### **General Comments**

This question was treated broadly with students applying their knowledge in a variety of ways. Very few students covered all aspects of the question, with the notions of ‘significance’ and ‘contribution’ treated at best synonymously or generalised as ‘contribution’. The majority of students indicated that the artworks produced and processes experienced by artists, designers and craftspeople amounted to their contribution and significance to Australian art and culture. Better candidates were able to thoroughly analyse and specify the contributions and significance made to Australian art and culture by their chosen artists, designers or craftspeople.

Students showed an understanding of the term ‘environment’ on many levels. The majority of students simply addressed their environment to be the physical environment both natural and built, with better candidates exploring other environments such as the social, political, psychological and cultural environments. Many candidates tended to concentrate on historical rather than contemporary artists and their works, their responses relying on discussions about the Heidelberg School and Aboriginal art.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

In excellent and above average responses, students showed that they had fully grasped the complexity and breadth of the question and tailored their answers to the requirements outlined. Responses reflected a sound art knowledge base and an in depth understanding of their chosen artists and their works. Relevant and appropriate quotes were sometimes used by candidates to provide coherent supporting evidence. Students displayed a sophisticated ability to apply this knowledge to the parameters, meaning and intention of this question.

The better students tackled this question by adopting a theme, point of view or issue and they successfully related this to the question by making it the thread or linking agent in their essay. Some themes/issues addressed included urbanisation, Australian identity, environmental issues, multiculturalism, black-white relations, alienation, colonial traditions, ethnocentricity, racism and gender issues. Examples were well chosen from historical and contemporary sources. They were placed within a cultural context which presented a rich and informed picture about the artist, their work, their contribution and significance to Australian art and culture.

The students’ use of language and expression was sophisticated, logical and art-specific and encapsulated the complexities of this question. These responses were in depth analyses which transcended the formal analysis and used other and varied forms of analyses to justify judgements and conclusions. Essay structure was often layered and rarely presented in a formulaic way.

## **Average responses**

In average responses, students addressed all aspects of the question in a very general way or they addressed most aspects of the question. Responses tended to draw on historical works in isolation from their cultural context. Limited examples per artist, designer or craftsperson were discussed, with the student sometimes relying more on descriptions of examples and/or biographies of artists. Points of view expressed in these responses were often inconsistent, with mention of the environment being left until the final paragraph, if mention was made at all.

Notions of 'significance' and 'contribution' were treated in a simplistic way. The average response tended to be more descriptive often relying on a partial formal analysis of the works and/or a list of facts. Some of the information presented was clearly incorrect. Essay structure was often methodical, with the student keeping sight of most of the requirements of the question.

Some students expanded the parameters of the question and equated their environment to mean their own art making experiences. Many of these students were caught on this tangent and strayed from the requirements of the question.

## **Less than average responses**

While there was often acknowledgement of the sense of the question within below average responses, here candidates were unable to argue any sort of cogent response. Most students appeared to have been ill-prepared for the examination by studying a very limited range of artists and their works. In many cases, only one work per artist, designer, craftsperson was discussed (not analysed) in a limited way, using simple, clichéd language with no awareness of critical opinions held by others. Responses were often literal and descriptive and in many cases chosen examples were inappropriate.

Below average responses indicated that students had difficulty in addressing and interpreting the requirements of this question. Breadth and depth of art knowledge was not present.

## **Further advice**

Teachers and students are advised to consider the scope of the Art in Australia focus area in preparing for this question. Students need to come to terms with the broad notion of the term 'environment' when answering a Type A question. It is important to note that the Art in Australia focus area can be examined in many ways and teachers and students are advised to address the options by analysing and investigating a broad range of historical and contemporary artists and their works within their cultural contexts. Students are advised to study more than one artwork per artist, designer and craftsperson.

Students are advised to read the whole question carefully and establish its intent. Some students appeared to have presented a prepared essay no matter what the question. Students should not be encouraged to use this strategy. Students are encouraged instead to apply their knowledge base to the question asked.

## SECTION I – ART IN AUSTRALIA

### Question 2(a)

*Investigate the ways particular regional contexts have influenced contemporary Australian art since 1988.*

*Refer to a range of Australian artworks you have studied.*

### General comments

This question attracted approximately 659 responses and was generally a well answered question. As a Type B question, the students were required to respond to issues raised in the recommended area of study relative to the focus area by asking candidates to investigate the influence of particular regional contexts on contemporary Australian art. The direction in the question to ‘investigate’ encouraged the better candidates to build a systematic examination or inquiry that considered and analysed the relationship between particular regional contexts and contemporary Australian art, defined here as ‘since 1988’. Terms such as ‘particular regional contexts’ required the candidate to nominate and define their chosen area of interest specifically and the inclusion of ‘influenced’ necessitated some examination of the impact of change or an evaluation of the relationship between the context and the artworks, artistic practice or in more sophisticated responses, a broader sense of the character of contemporary Australian art. The specification of a range of examples implied some form of comparison and analysis and the choice of significant examples that illustrated different interpretations of the influence of particular regional contexts was also a key discriminator for this question.

The majority of candidates constructed a response by investigating the work of three to four well-known contemporary artists in an in depth case study comparison of different artistic responses to a nominated regional context. Generally, responses interpreted the influence of regional contexts as the ways in which a particular place or sense of place is reflected in the artmaking of contemporary artists. A few sophisticated responses were able to examine the ways the postmodern world’s recognition of diversity and difference has led to the emergence of art from different regional contexts as voices shaping the character of contemporary Australian art. Less sophisticated responses often confused this question with a Type A question and discussed the influence of ‘my own environment’ on artists they had studied.

Many candidates recognised the significance of 1988 as the Bicentennial year and defined this as a pivotal point that led to the re-examination of the contribution of indigenous artistic traditions. A few candidates noted that since the Bicentennial, Australia had been increasingly identified politically and culturally as a region of Asia and investigated the impact of this relationship on contemporary Australian art. Other candidates considered the ways Australian artists, such as Imants Tillers, from other international regional contexts contributed to more diverse, multicultural voices in contemporary Australian art rather than the single chauvinistic narrative of Australian art that has dominated this century.

Some of the most commonly selected examples included discussion of the work and artistic practice of Rosalie Gascoigne in relation to her physical environment around Canberra, Emily Kame Kangwerrye and her holistic and spiritual connection to her land, contemporary Indigenous artists such as Gordon Bennett, Lin Onus, Fiona Foley who were responding to the socio-cultural

issues of post-colonial identity within regions of Australia, or artists who responded to urban environments and issues such as Rick Amor, Howard Arkley, Mandy Martin and Janet Lawrence. The Bicentennial Aboriginal Memorial Burial Poles featured strongly in candidates' responses.

'Regional contexts' was most frequently interpreted as the physical environment; the land and landscape or a sense of place associated with the physical, emotional or spiritual character of a particular place. Student responses largely fell into a narrow range of interpretations of this recommended area of study and commonly ranged across discussion of European versus indigenous traditions, the bush and the city or suburbs, or direct experiences of a site compared to spiritual bonds or socio-cultural ideas and issues associated with a place or region. Very few candidates examined contexts or artworks that enabled them to explore ideas and themes such as multiculturalism, the influence of the Asia-Pacific region, capital city rivalry, the coast and the centre, the influence of new technologies, postmodern notions of the 'centre' versus regions or the 'other'.

While the question demanded that the influence of particular regional contexts on contemporary Australian art was investigated, the discussion of the influence was not always made specific or explicit or supported by relevant contextual information or informed by current debates. The selection of artists or works that had strong connections with a regional context was often seen as a self evident statement about their significance and many candidates simply analysed the ways artists had used their environment in their artmaking.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

The most successful candidates constructed a fluent and knowledgeable investigation that comprehensively answered the question by clearly defining their understanding of particular regional contexts. They developed layered arguments that systematically explained a number of ways regional contexts have influenced contemporary Australian art. These excellent responses were characterised by a thorough understanding of the content of the recommended area in relation to the wider context of the focus area. Some of these successful candidates were able to consider the significance of the influence and change by reflecting on the traditional or iconic views about Australian art in relation to new perspectives and debates about the character, issues and interests of contemporary Australian art. They were characterised by clarity of argument without compromising the complexity of the relationships and explanations.

Candidates discussed highly appropriate and varied examples of artworks in detail and in comparison in order to illustrate sustained arguments woven through their response. Most of these responses did not simply discuss one work by their selected artists but considered the influence in wider terms that included discussions about the artist's practice, the ways in which the audience responded and was invited to respond, and the impact of particular events and exhibitions. The examples discussed were embedded within a rich cultural context which provided more lucid and sophisticated responses to the question.

Importantly, these responses were able to synthesise a range of supportive contextual evidence, opinions about the works, quotes by artists and detailed analysis of examples to produce confident, self reflective accounts that explained precisely the nature of the influence on contemporary Australian art. The responses sustained their argument, that was clearly outlined in the introduction, across three to five specific examples that were thoroughly discussed over the 6–8 pages of the response. Precise art language and accurate factual information enabled these responses to evocatively illustrate the rich relationships between the regional context and artistic practice and works.

### **Average responses**

Average responses attempted to address the question by selecting one example by about three artists and described the ways the artist presented artworks that reflected their regional context. They assumed that the influence of the regional context on contemporary art was evident because the artists they used were contemporary, rather than using the examples to establish an argument about the character and interests of contemporary art in a wider sense. Very little external contextual information was used to support the discussion and the candidates in this range often focused on descriptions of the subject matter and the formal qualities of the work.

### **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses nominated one or two examples that were connected to the recommended area of study. Discussion of these examples was usually descriptive, generalised and non discriminatory in terms of the introduction of relevant information. Candidates only introduced one or two superficial points about the work and presented unsupported value judgements that made tenuous connections, if at all, between a region and one or two aspects of the artwork.

### **Further advice**

Teachers and candidates would be advised to 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. Candidates would be advised to read and discuss a range of well-known and easily accessed texts and articles about the content and examples being studied so they are able to support their responses with relevant contextual evidence. Candidates are advised to indicate an awareness of current information and critical debates in their responses.

## **SECTION I – ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 2(b)**

*Public art and architecture entertains, challenges or engages its audience while satisfying functional needs.*

*Examine this statement, using historical and contemporary Australian examples.*

### **General comments**

This was a complex question with several aspects to cover, including historical and contemporary examples of public art and architecture, an examination of how public art and architecture challenges or entertains or engages its audience and an examination of functional needs of specific examples of public art and architecture. Many students struggled with the notion of public art and often retreated to descriptions of sculptures in public spaces rather than directly addressing the question. Some candidates included an analysis of particular paintings to illustrate an explanation of public art and the audience's perception and reaction to public art; for instance, paintings by Peter Tyndall and the work of Ken Done, including works on canvas, paper and fabric.

It was clear that some centres had learnt a response to the study of this recommended area of study thoroughly and as a consequence many highly similar essays were read from the one centre. Although in such cases studies were often comprehensive and specific, several candidates did not fully interpret the question in the examination paper and relied solely on the statement from the recommended area of study as the question at hand.

### **Excellent responses**

These responses covered all aspects of the question, and showed confident handling of discussion in Visual Arts language used to articulate subtle perceptions of visual qualities of examples in order to examine how the audience is engaged in public art and architecture. Excellent responses placed the examples in context — both cultural and artistic specifically and with references to the wider world of art and showed an awareness of the relationship of the examples to differing audiences — historical and contemporary. These candidates made sensitive interpretations and avoided clichés, they did not spend time describing the examples. Some candidates used quotes — both general and more specific, appropriately providing further insight in their responses. Many candidates wrote with flair and revealed an obvious love for this subject. A diverse range of examples were examined including murals, community projects, street mosaics, sculptures and installations.

Above Average responses were, at times, descriptive but revealed the ability to draw ideas together and examine the statement with examples in a sophisticated way with sound grasp of Visual Arts language. These candidates clearly understood the requirements of the question. The responses went beyond a reiteration of facts and strategies for answering this question memorised in class.

### **Average responses**

A large number of candidates relied heavily on description of the examples and were less able to articulate subtle or comparative relationships within or between examples. The structure of these responses was methodical and some responses made references to other examples without an

appropriate understanding of linkages to each other or to the question, so the response became merely a list of examples of public art and architecture with a superficial examination of how the audience is engaged. Often these responses focused on architecture or other forms of public art and concentrated on the function of these examples. Better responses deduced meanings relevant to cultural and social contexts, using some outside references to support these ideas. Occasionally better answers were enhanced by good use of Visual Arts language, however, these were pre-rehearsed and frequently superficial in examination of particular examples.

### **Less than average responses**

Some responses were logically presented but often only descriptive; these responses read as a General Studies answer rather than a Visual Arts essay and embarked on a description of public art and architecture examples which often read as a promotional or travel document rather than an examination of the statement. Poorer responses were noticeably limited in their understanding of the question requirements and offered little general knowledge of study in Visual Arts.

### **Further advice**

Students need to be advised that the statements of recommended areas of study are not necessarily the actual question for the HSC examination. Although not mentioned, it should be understood that students are expected to study historical AND contemporary examples. The recommended area of study should be interpreted with the statements in the syllabus on the focus area and Studying Images and Objects.

Students should not be given formulaic answers to memorise.

## **SECTION I – ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 3**

*Evaluate the relationships between your artmaking and the Australian art that you have studied. Refer to two or more artists and their works.*

### **General comments**

This question requires an analysis of ‘relationships’ as applied to the students’ understanding of the Art in Australia focus area and the students’ own artmaking. While straightforward in its instructions, the question does require an evaluative technique in which qualities are explored and merit is judged. A definition of the term ‘relationships’ could involve a literal translation or a more conceptual response which then requires support through the essay with evidence clearly referenced to artists and artworks as well as to the students’ own artmaking.

In evaluating both their own and the artists’ works students needed to show an understanding that the process of inspiration starts before the HSC Major Work and that it is often one which has evolved over a length of time. The question requires the candidate to distinguish and analyse those elements which acknowledge the artist as mentor, thus showing their ability to discern and interpret philosophic links as well as visual and aesthetic ones.

In a range of responses some candidates showed a good understanding of the nature of presenting a critical discussion of first-hand experience which required personal observations and an established point of view. The appreciation of artists and artworks, requiring a response supported by thorough, considered and perceptive description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation was often thoughtful, imaginative and perceptive.

Some responses were obviously prepared for the examination and, while a body of knowledge was evident, the creative insight of applying previous learning to the specific requirements of the question was often lacking. Some students could find artists to relate to but found the process of evaluating the relationships difficult and responded at a simple descriptive level. Tenuous links only were often established without consideration for how the work of other artists affected their own exploration of issues, themes, symbols, metaphors, analogies or concepts.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent responses drew sophisticated links between the students own work and that of other artists, sometimes analysing the social significance of works and the artists’ use of satire, irony and paradox. The nature of the relationship was often defined at the start of the essay and was often conceptual, concentrating on more esoteric relationships and the effect on the evolution of a personal style/outlook/raison d’etre.

In these responses students demonstrated wide reading with a depth of understanding of the work of a number of Australian artists. Knowledge was sophisticated and used many examples of artworks, sometimes relating these to artworks, artists and styles from the wider context of art history. These essays were well planned and coherent, logically developing informative explorations supported with quotes and annotated sketches. Evidence was presented, in some cases, of the writer’s knowledge of the social, political and economic context of the artworks and used the appropriate vocabulary to

describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate them. Excellent responses applied informed, well researched and substantial knowledge of the work of other artists to the impact apparent on their own work.

In making these responses which often worked on different levels of interpretation, students revealed a passionate involvement with the artmaking process and a genuine understanding of the processes employed by other artists. Inherent in this understanding was the philosophy of belief in developing one's own artmaking through research and study at a very personal level.

### **Average responses**

Average responses were more descriptive, limited in knowledge and often very personalised. Failure to discuss the students' own artmaking in depth or with conceptual understanding resulted in essays that were often repetitive, vague and unfocussed. Reference was made to the required number of artists but rarely went beyond the superficial. While historical knowledge was evident and some reference was made to specific artworks, interpretation was lacking and the aspect of relationships was limited to the elements and principles of design. Students' answers were generally less structured in this category and did not address the question fully, displaying little knowledge of specific examples and interpreting artworks in a naïve manner. Some attempted to place artworks in frames of reference in simplified ways, drawing on rote learning and vague historical knowledge to support basic descriptions. Attempts to go beyond the two artists required sometimes resulted in works being placed out of context and historically incorrect information being supplied.

### **Less than average responses**

In below average responses students were obviously ill prepared. Some candidates used the plates from the printsheet even though they were obviously not relevant to their own artmaking. Opinionated responses reinforced a lack of understanding or of any depth of knowledge. Some respondents felt little relationship between their own work and that of other artists and demonstrated a naïveté which personalised their feelings towards artists' works. Most candidates were able to refer to the two artists required but there was little evidence of more than superficial depth of study. A lack of understanding of what the question required was obvious. Answers tended to be scant, subjective and often inaccurate.

There were a number of centres whose candidates all used the same artists in their responses, even though the media used in each Major Work was different. These interpretations were sometimes narrative and superficial, making little reference to the question. Often responses such as these relied heavily on detailed process-based descriptions of the students' own artmaking with little or no reference to the question.

### **Further advice**

Diagrams and annotated sketches were very useful in providing visual links between the students' work and that of influencing artists in the responses to this type of question.

There were wide and varied opportunities in this question for students to display a depth of knowledge about the artworks of others and to explore the unique quality of the artist/mentor relationship as it applied to their own artmaking. Research as a learning tool and a more conceptual approach to the value of the process in artmaking would result in more involvement in the response to the specifics of the question.

## SECTION I – ART AND CULTURE

### Question 4

*Explain how the study of international exhibitions, publications and/or art movements has informed your understanding of the local environment.*

*Refer to a range of examples.*

### General comments

This question was attempted by a small percentage of the candidature with approximately 70 responses. The candidature's responses were quite polarised at either end of the scale with many well-prepared and considered responses in the excellent and above average range and an almost equal number of responses that did not understand the particular demands and scope of the question. There were fewer responses in the middle range than at either end.

As a Type A question, the question requires that students discuss matter of aesthetic and/or conceptual concern within their local environment in relation to images and objects associated with the focus area studied. In this Art and Culture question, candidates are required to examine content from regions outside of Australia and consider the ways this study has informed their understanding of the local environment. The scope of the question covered individual artists, artworks, art movements, exhibitions and publications dealing with content from the Art and Culture content as a basis for discussion. The prompts in the question 'the study of' and 'informed' give clear directions to candidates that their response should be a knowledgeable discussion that analyses and gives reasons for the influence of the international world of art on their understanding of the local. Candidates could have opted to answer this question without direct reference to Australian art but consider broader issues and values within society and culture.

Candidates could have accessed many sources of cultural interchange and exchange in texts and publications, in the collections of National, State or Regional collections, through contemporary exhibitions such as the Australian and International Biennales, Documenta Kassel, Asia Pacific Triennial or through the impact and profile of international travelling exhibitions including 'blockbuster' shows such as Turner and Rembrandt. Access to international galleries and exhibitions or virtual galleries and museums through the Internet could provide candidates opportunities to consider from contemporary perspective how this has had an impact on our understanding. This could also prompt candidates to compare and explore the ways particular historical exhibitions such as the Herald exhibition and publications on Post Impressionism and Modernism had impact on the local environment of Australian art and culture.

The question was largely explored in a more direct manner with a large number of the responses considering the architectural influences from international sources on specific sites in their local environment. Some candidates outlined their understanding of Japanese garden design principles and styles and the ways in which this has informed the design of the gardens at Cowra. They were able to explain the contrast between Japanese garden design and the Australian landscape and the ways in which these principles and styles were applied and adapted to an Australian context. They were also able to extend their discussion to include a sensitive consideration of the historical and contemporary relationship between Japan and Australia.

Another well researched area was the study of many European and English influences from the turn of the century on examples of Federation domestic architecture that were part of the students

accessible environment. Architecture was also used as a study of the influence of specific European styles on local civic or public buildings, eg Gothic architectural styles on churches or Italianate Renaissance palazzo styles on Post Office buildings. Painting movements such as German Expressionism were used to examine the influence of European modernism on Australian art, specifically in relation to the Angry Penguins as well as on the thinking about Australian society and culture. The responses to the question indicated that the candidates saw a direct relevance between non Australian art styles and practices and the Australian experience.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

The responses in the excellent range selected well chosen examples of instances of international influence in their local environment and explained their understanding through a detailed and knowledgeable discussion of artists, artworks, movements exhibitions or publications from outside of Australia. They were able to build sustained comparative accounts that were not merely causal or simplistic in their links between influential works and Australian examples, but were able to explain the relationship through strong contextualisation. These candidates used external criteria such as historical context or critical debates to interpret and account for the influences. They were able to personalise their understanding in reflective and critical ways as well as articulate this explicitly in their response. Information used was accurate, specific and the descriptions and explanations used precise terminology and rich evocative language.

### **Average responses**

Average responses tended to rely more heavily on a subjective analysis of the relationship between the international and the local. These responses provided descriptive accounts of the relationships without a sustained line of explanation or critical analysis. Connections were seen as direct and causal or were not articulated but left as assumed or self evident. The candidates discussed artworks descriptively and used art concepts in a generalised and basic manner. There was a tendency in this range to rely heavily on Australian examples without clear and specific reference to Art and Culture content. The examples selected, such as Monet and Van Gogh, were often mainstream and obvious and their influence was generalised.

### **Less than average responses**

In the less than average responses, the examples selected had no relationship with each other or the question. The poorly selected examples meant that the candidate was unable to relate to the cultural aspect of the question or explain any understanding of their connection to their local environment. Some examples were rambling, lacking structure or understanding of the demands of the question. Examples were only briefly and superficially discussed.

### **Further advice**

Candidates who attempt this question would be advised to know the particular demands and scope of a Type A question and particularly one in the Art and Culture focus area. As there was some ambiguity about the term 'local environment', candidates need to be aware of its use in the syllabus, the outcomes and the question type discussions. They also need to be able to define their understanding of the local environment specifically.

## **SECTION I – ART AND CULTURE**

### **Question 5(a)**

*Analyse how representations of the spiritual reflect the culture in which they were made.*

*Refer to historical and contemporary examples by artists or groups of artists from a region or regions outside Australia.*

### **General comments**

This was a popular and, generally well answered question selected by approximately 1200 candidates. This is a type B Question relating a published topic to the Art and Culture focus area. While there were many centres and individual students who evidenced a traditional approach to the spirit of the question, it was encouraging to see more innovatory responses selecting a diverse range of examples from Western, Asian, African and Oceanic cultures. The use of modernist examples including the work of Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Abramovitz, Barnett Newman, Frida Kahlo, Marc Chagall, Frank Lloyd Wright, Anselm Keifer Francis Bacon, Salvador Dali, Antoni Tàpies among others indicated a non stereotyped approach to the concept of the spiritual.

Historical examples ranged from African, Buddhist China and India, Moghul, the Christian traditions of the West exemplified by Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, El Greco, ancient Egyptian cultures to name but a fraction of the range. Candidates usually offered thoughtful definitions of spiritual which ranged from organised religion and cultural rituals to the contemporary ideas of personal belief and individual faith. William Blake, Francesco Goya, Casper David Friedrich, Edvard Munch were popular historical choices reflecting teacher strategies of beginning with the Romanticism recommended area of 1997 and extending student learning from this topic. A shrewd and efficient learning strategy which is to be commended.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Responses to this question in the Excellent range showed qualities of completeness by addressing all parts of the question in a synthesised manner, demonstrating the use of integrated language and ideas in a resolved and reflective way. Essays were coherent, using examples to explore the scope of the question in a fashion appropriate to the demands of the type B question and the focus area of study. The interpretive judgements made were logically and coherently explained and demonstrated student abilities to analyse the concept of the spiritual using several approaches.

Analysis and discussion acknowledged the complex, multi-layered character of artworks. The excellent responses problematised the topic and identified issues explored in relation to the discriminators (representation, reflect) of the question. Internal and external perspectives were used to explain the question and to contextualise selected examples. Candidates demonstrated an intentional and reflective point of view. Many of the best responses restricted the scope of the cultures considered but analysed the issues in depth. Spirituality was defined and then interpreted on many levels through use of examples.

These candidates took full advantage of the known nature of the topic and were well prepared to apply their studies to the requirements of the question.

Selected examples were culturally contextualised to describe and analyse the representation of spiritual ideals in cultural terms. Explicit connections were made as evidence using specific aspects of selected works. Differentiated, art specific vocabulary was deployed appropriately to

elucidate the candidate's point of view. Within the scope of the topic candidates evidenced an extensive and sophisticated knowledge of art history, particularly in terms of the focus area Art and Culture. The commentary was often insightful and interesting to read, a coherent and resolved point of view was sustained throughout the entire response.

Candidates in the above average range understood the demands of the question type and were able to relate their studied examples to the particulars of the question. The middle and higher parts of the range included responses which demonstrated a point of view or argued a position which was either conventional or innovative. The level of resolution and the sophistication of the interpreted scope of the question distinguished the top of this range from responses in the Excellent range of the scale. Resolution of above average responses was limited; however, the discussion was usually lucid, logically structured, reasonably coherent while often conventionally positioned. Interpretation often relied on description and candidates attempted to approach the question critically. The issue of representation was often not addressed however, candidates attempted to contextualise examples relative to cultural setting and time.

### **Average responses**

The average range of responses to this Type B Art and Culture question exhibited characteristics of an uneven attempt at the question. Indicators of this level included descriptive or unresolved accounts. At the higher end of the range students were speculative and experimental in their responses but tended to be inconsistent or without development of a 'point of view' or position relative to the intention of the question. Language in average responses revealed experience of art but in a conventional or unproblematic way. Candidates in this range were likely to address only some of the demands of the question. There were a variety of uneven characteristics within the development and resolution of essays in this range. The average response frequently retreated to the survey, chronological style, with dry conventional information only sporadically linking back to the question while covering a range of histories.

At this level candidates often did not address the contemporary demand of the focus area relative to the question. Some art knowledge was usually evident, but with little evidence of awareness of the demands of the question and the discussion was often without critical opinion. These essays were frequently general narratives which read as prepared accounts rather than an application of learned knowledge to the requirements of the question. Often a limited sense of cultural context was developed and responses were conventional in style referring to required concepts in a limited way. Average responses failed to link the characteristics of the culture they discussed with the unique characteristics of spiritual representations.

The level of knowledge in this response was often naïve, transparent, compartmentalised and descriptive. The language was often limited and simplistic and responses remained at a personalised level. Art concepts are frequently assumed rather than explicitly defined, described or explained.

### **Less than average responses**

The small number of poor responses ranged from the candidate rewriting the question, giving brief responses which reflected a struggle with the demands of the question to extremely minimal attempts evidencing no engagement with the subject or with a prepared focus area and topic of study. Typical of this range were responses which were incomplete, minimal, naïve, simple, no interpretation, use of only one example and with virtually no indication of knowledge gained from two years' study of the subject.

## **SECTION I – ART AND CULTURE**

### **Question 5(b)**

*Heroic and tragic themes in art have often been used to address the hopes, values and fears of a society.*

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

### **General comments**

This question required candidates to use their specific knowledge of the recommended area of Study in relation to their more general understanding of the Art and Culture focus area.

The stimulus for the question presented a position, or point of view, about the relationship between artists' use of heroic and tragic themes and the cultural context in which these themes gain meaning. 'Hopes, values and fears' served as prompts to define important aspects of the cultural context. Candidates were directed to 'investigate' this point of view. This required a systematic examination using 'a range' of examples. An evaluation of the validity of the statement was not called for, though some responses did present an argument. A 'range' of examples implied that the candidates should choose a sufficient number of artworks to support their investigation. The dual nature of the theme 'heroic and tragic' ensured that most responses used two or more artworks. Responses which focussed in detail on the artistic and cultural contexts of a limited range of artworks and broader responses to a wide range of artworks were both acceptable.

On the whole tragic and heroic images were not clearly differentiated, candidates perhaps thinking that this was necessary because of the duality of the theme in many archetypal Western artworks. For the greater part responses focussed on well known artworks from the Western canon such as Goya's 'Third of May', Gericault's 'Raft of the Medusa' and Picasso's 'Guernica'.

The question was felt to have been successful in discriminating between candidates. It encompassed a broad spectrum of social issues from hero worship to tragic human dramas. How the visual arts responds to these aspects of the human condition was explored with some powerful and original writing.

The markers felt that the question discriminated well at the top end of the responses. Candidates who were experienced critical thinkers, familiar with the issues and concerns of the focus area, stood out. Middle range responses showed excellent and detailed preparation but failed to address the question criteria in a sophisticated manner.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

These responses addressed the stimulus statement with a sophisticated and holistic recognition that it represented a position taken on the recommended area of study. They established a thorough and thought-provoking outline of the heroic and the tragic in relation to the visual arts and in relation to society's need to reflect this in artworks.

Such responses frequently linked artworks either chronologically, culturally or thematically, displaying a depth of study which allowed them to select works which best illustrated their

approach to the stimulus. The cultural context of the artworks was established in appropriate and accurate detail. The more iconic examples of the Western tradition were well represented in these responses. Excellent responses frequently combined monuments of Western heroism and tragedy, such as David's 'Oath of the Horatii' with surprising and less obvious choices such as Eddie Adams. Even though the question did not stipulate contemporary artworks, reference to artists such as Anselm Kiefer, Jenny Holzer and Yasumasa Morimura indicated a wide ranging spirit of inquiry and supported sophisticated positions of investigation.

Excellent and above average responses deconstructed selected artworks to establish complex representations of historical and contemporary issues. The use of art language was rich in its evocation of the emotional impact of artworks and precise in establishing relationships between artworks and the culture of their production and reception.

These responses addressed the most complex aspect of the question; issues of artistic intention, the social and cultural production of meaning and the notion of the audience.

### **Average responses**

These responses were characterised by a sound knowledge base which was well prepared for the examination. Essay responded to the separate parts of the question rather than to the full implications of the whole question. The more complex implications of the stimulus statement were touched upon by implication rather than by a considered position.

The typical essay in this category was a prepared, descriptive, narrative response. Historical contexts were established but without a fuller cultural understanding. Occasionally a stylistic context was offered in great detail but without a wider sense of cultural or societal implications.

Artworks chosen for discussion were, for the most part, well-known and conventional. These works supported a definition of heroic and tragic which was usually more literary than artistic and responses favoured the 'twinned' aspect of the theme rather than differentiating the specific qualities of the terms.

The notions of heroism and tragedy were seen as largely uncontroversial and identified primarily as a function of subject matter. Descriptions of the artworks often displayed a level of familiarity with art language but less knowledge of the issues which characterise the Art and Culture focus area.

### **Less than average responses**

Most less than average responses all but ignored the stimulus statement of the question and recounted information about a number of artworks. These responses identified heroism and tragedy as the subject matter of the artworks without supporting this identification in any way.

Less than average responses were characterised by their brevity and the simple statement of the subject matter of artworks.

### **Further advice**

Students and teachers are advised to become familiar with the analysis of the exact wording of recommended area of study questions. Examiners frequently challenge students by adopting a position which requires students to respond and selectively apply their knowledge. The

appropriate selection of prepared knowledge is a skill worth encouraging. Students can, for instance, lose valuable time in discussing the visual characteristics of a style, or specific biblical allusions, without considering how they support the intention of the essay. Teachers are encouraged to present students with both conventional and less obvious artists and artworks in their study of the recommended area of study. Knowledge of a wider variety of artworks was associated with more complex approaches at all levels. Wider knowledge of the focus area is always evident in the fluency with which candidates can utilise their knowledge in response to examination questions.

## **SECTION I – ART AND CULTURE**

### **Question 6**

*Critically evaluate how issues and/or themes used by artists from a region or regions outside Australia have influenced your own artmaking.*

*Refer to a range of examples.*

### **General comments**

Candidates conveyed some confusion over the terms of the question ‘critically’ coupled with ‘evaluate’, often launching into a description of particular artworks rather than making connections through issues and themes. The rider to the question ‘refer to a range of examples’, was interpreted by candidates in a number of ways, eg several artists, generally; limited artists, many artworks; range of issues and ideas. Many essays lacked structure and coherence as responses did not provide sufficient detail to fully explore the issues of the candidates own artmaking. Instructions emphasize the exclusion of Australian artists. This was often overlooked. Candidates usually selected mainstream European artists such as Munch, Van Gogh, Dali, Picasso and reflected this year’s recommended area of study in Art and Culture such as Blake, El Greco and Gericault. Non-European and contemporary artists were rarely considered however when selected the responses were usually considered and sophisticated.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

These responses addressed all parts of the question choosing examples which were appropriate to the candidates’ interest and thus providing opportunities for in-depth understandings. Qualities of these chosen artworks were analysed using sophisticated art specific vocabulary. Sketches, diagrams and quotations were often used to demonstrate the students extent of research and preparation. These candidates interpreted the historical and cultural context of the artists work and were able to reflect on and value the artists contribution to society at the time. These students were able to re-contextualize the artist’s practice and write fluently about their own art making. These responses demonstrated strong, personal and appropriate views about art.

### **Average responses**

In average responses, knowledge of artworks was evident though often only well-known examples were described and interpreted. Many of these answers were unbalanced, the candidate unable to adequately critically analyse and show clearly influences on their own art making. The theme of spirituality from the recommended areas of study was explored by many candidates who usually discussed two artists and a limited number of their works. Illustrations sometimes used often did little to enhance the response.

### **Less than average responses**

In less than average responses candidates misinterpreted the question and by using artists from Australia did not address the focus area. These responses demonstrated a poor knowledge base containing only naïve superficial understanding of artists and their work and relying mainly on

extensive description. There was a strong tendency for these candidates to name only one artist or artwork or to include mostly description of the candidates own artwork with very brief mention of other artists. Many candidates believe that it was sufficient to link their artwork to chosen examples by stating that they 'liked' some aspect of the work and therefore 'did this' in their own making without giving any reason or further critical evaluation.

### **Further advice**

Students who answer this Type C question need to indicate how their artmaking reflects or has been enriched by their study of art and culture. In referring to their own artmaking, students should express clearly what they made and how it was made, discussing the technical and conceptual aspects of the artwork. Annotated sketches can be beneficial. Students need to explain their intention, themes and issues explored and communicated, their use of signs, symbols and codes as well as chosen forms/media. Attention needs to be given to answering the whole question. Students should be able to contextualise studied artists culturally and historically and explain how the technical/conceptual practices of these artists influenced specific dimensions in the evolution of their own artmaking process and outcomes. By making connections with contemporary art practice responses could be strengthened.

## **SECTION I – ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 7**

*Art gives creative expression to the signs, symbols and images that are already present in the environment.*

*Investigate this statement, with reference to the work of TWO OR MORE artists.*

### **General comments**

This question invited students to link their study of art to their environment; this could be real or imagined and accessed through the direct inquiry of a survey, case study or thematic approach.

Most candidates investigated the environment of their chosen artists, rarely responding to how a study of art has helped them understand or interpret their environment. Some candidates addressed the mass media as an environment that provided students with the opportunity to investigate images from their own world thus also serving as a direct reference point to the focus area Art and Media. The most popular works were selected from the modern period and displayed a clear understanding of the society and times from which modern art emerged and with it the signs and symbols of that time.

The question required students to investigate the statement provided. The better candidates responded to this task by providing a detailed inquiry or systematic examination on the work of two or more artists. Within this statement the prompt ‘art gives creative expression’ invited students to argue a point of view. The better candidates usually responded by outlining a broad range of opinions such as; art gives artists’ freedom to express ones feelings, values, beliefs and artistic philosophies. The term environment was linked by the students to anyone’s environment existing within the cultural, religious and technological perimeters of life.

Within this focus area Art and Media candidates were also required to address ‘signs, symbols and images that are already present’. The term ‘already present’ was understood by most candidates to mean some aspect that exists within the environment. Signs and symbols were addressed as reference points and provided opportunities for candidates to formulate a discussion through comparisons, analogies, metaphors and associations to discover the meaning inherent in artists’ work.

Reference to TWO OR MORE artists was a requirement that concluded this question. The better candidates convincingly fulfilled this. Some students interpreted this question through an examination of various artists that belong to a specific art movement and provided a detailed analysis on their style, this approach was also valid.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses demonstrated a distinct understanding of the specific requirements in this question. In particular, the excellent responses were logically and systematically constructed. These candidates clearly outlined their position providing a sustained inquiry. The overall analysis of selected artists was complete and appropriate, illustrating the candidates thorough research and comprehension of the terms signs and symbols. This was further evident by their excellent choice of examples that were clearly identifiable.

Students were then able to refer to more universal meanings for these symbols and interpret them with the selected works being discussed.

Many candidates discussed the changes in society, culture, technology and the modern world in general as influencing factors that affect one's environment. The signs and symbols analysed in artists' work were confidently linked to this point of view. Responses from this range were reflective demonstrating a clear understanding that the artists creative responses are a result of their environment. Some candidates stated that artists have been 'artistically influenced', therefore having learnt from their environment.

Above average responses remain conscious of the question defining and reinforcing all aspects. The point of view taken is logically argued and developed throughout the essay. Better candidates tended to refer to more than two artists, providing a thorough analysis of the symbolism within their images and further discussing how they are reflective of the artists physical and psychological world. Candidates from this range usually define signs, symbols and environments within the context of the question and the artists whose work they select.

### **Average responses**

Average responses address some aspects of the question and often reflect a sound knowledge of the artists work. The overall judgements are appropriate but lack the subtle and multilayered sophistication of more discerning candidates. Generally, these candidates have prepared answers but show little insight into the meaning of artists' works. Less successful candidates in this range merely rephrase the question and provide a limited or generalised description of the artists' work. These candidates have difficulties in identifying a symbol and interpreting its meaning.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses revealed the candidates limited knowledge; these students did not address the question and in most cases candidates were unable to make references to works studied. A limited understanding of art was evident, with candidates being unable to address key prompts such as signs and symbols. In some cases answers were inconclusive, incorrect and incomplete.

### **Further advice**

Knowledge of the focus area Art and Media advantaged the student who was able to make informed judgements particularly concerning the possible meanings, signs and symbols conveyed within the context of artists' work. Students who relied on the Section I plates (designed for question 8a) revealed a limited understanding, often making naive, simple and generalised comments. Those students who prepared for this Type A question and addressed the specific requirements of this question provided responses that were highly engaging and sophisticated.

## **SECTION I – ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 8(a)**

*Give an account of the different ways signs and symbols have been used in twentieth century art and architecture to represent modernity.*

*Look at plates 1, 2 and 3.*

*You could use one or more of these plates with other examples you have studied.*

### **General comments**

The range of responses to this question were clearly divided by:

(i) those that were well prepared and informed, who were able to respond to this recommended area of study with substantive knowledge and a clear understanding of signs and symbols contextualised by modernity;

(ii) a significant body of students who had not prepared for this recommended area of study yet still responded to the question with a ‘Section II – unseen plate’ analytical approach, hence the resulting response was unable to address the requirements and content of the question.

Most candidates understood the time frame that modernity constituted; however, some students displayed a misunderstanding of the term ‘modernity’, often confusing it with modern or modernism.

Candidates appeared comfortable with the narrative approach to the essay structure that ‘give an account’ could provoke.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses displayed an outstanding degree of knowledge. These sophisticated and complex responses showed a sound understanding of the meanings of signs and symbols as well as concepts aligned to modernity.

Very specific and articulate language was utilised by these students.

In placing works in a cultural context some candidates used a breadth of historical knowledge, citing many artists/works in a chronological manner while others used their depth of knowledge to focus on fewer artists and works in a comprehensive manner.

Generally, these candidates were able to cite many and varied artists and architects appropriately and confidently, while the plates were packaged as part of a larger, complex response. These candidates also explicitly related well chosen examples to the requirements of the question and did not wander off task into unnecessary descriptions.

The excellent and above average responses showed sound understanding and real evidence of study of the recommended area of study.

### **Average responses**

There were only a small number of average responses, indicating that candidates were generally well-prepared for the requirements of the recommended area of study. These average responses tended to address only some aspects of the question, referring to often excellent knowledge of Modernism rather than the signs and symbols that represent Modernity.

When signs and symbols were mentioned they tended to be superficially explained or glossed over. Responses to both art and architecture were often not discussed or addressed.

### **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses showed little or no evidence of study of the recommended areas of study. These candidates treated the question as an ‘unseen plate’ response indicating these students used the prompt: ‘Look at Plates 1, 2 and 3’ as a way of picking a question to respond to, simply to answer something from Section I.

Responses were short descriptive narratives which indicated little or no knowledge of modernity and the depiction of signs and symbols.

Appropriate art language was minimal and the awareness and study of other examples was also limited or not cited.

### **Further advice**

Candidates would be well served by not attempting this question if it has not been a focus area for study. Regrettably, a number of candidates felt they could answer this question despite clearly not knowing the demands of the question. This is evident in being unable to differentiate between Modern – Modernism – Modernity or understanding the uses of signs and symbols. Above average and excellent responses usually defined these in the opening paragraphs of the essay.

## **SECTION I – ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 8(b)**

*How artists use virtual realities and material objects has consequences for artistic practice.*

*Discuss this statement, using a range of examples.*

### **General comments**

This question, which related to the recommended area of study from the Art and Media focus area, attracted responses from less than 90 candidates.

However, a significant proportion of the responses displayed extensive knowledge, research and understanding of artists who use virtual realities and material objects in their artmaking. This question proved to be complex and challenging, as it identifies three different considerations in the given statement. Virtual realities, material objects and consequences for artistic practice were the concepts that needed to be addressed by the candidates.

Virtual realities were explored using a broad range of practices — from historical perspective as in the illusionistic qualities of Renaissance painting, through to 20th century luminaries such as Marcel Duchamp, the Dadaists, Surrealists and Jackson Pollock and his action painting. The most common definition for virtual reality was the electronic media, from Nam June Paik with his television installations and audience interaction, through to Yves Klein, Stelarc, and finally the shared nature of digital computerised interactive media.

Material objects were addressed as the ‘real and tangible’. Many responses included examples such as Marcel Duchamp’s ‘Bicycle Wheel’ and ‘Fountain’ to Pop Art, and then to Klein, Stelarc, Orlan, Beuys and Parr who used ‘the body’ as a material object in their artworks.

Consequences for artistic practice were explored by candidates who generally recognised the extended boundaries of artmaking and issues such as the role of the museum, the audience and the question of authenticity and originality (eg the works of Jeff Koons and Yves Klein).

### **Excellent and above average responses**

The excellent and above average responses came from a broad and relevant art base. Candidates were able to interpret ‘virtual reality’ and ‘material objects’ in a variety of ways. These options were fully supported by thoroughly researched examples of work. These candidates adopted a wide variety of philosophical viewpoints and were able to sustain their arguments. The use of appropriate and lengthy quotes reinforced their knowledge and were supported by their perceptive judgements.

### **Average responses**

There were very few average responses, as it appeared evident that the candidates who selected this question had extensively researched this recommended area of study. However, in this minority group, these candidates revealed difficulty in relating their definitions of ‘virtual realities’ and the connections with artistic practice.

In some responses the candidates did manage to describe some chosen examples of artforms as 'material objects' (eg Duchamp's 'Fountain'), and at times were able to relate the artworks to a particular theme (eg Jill Scott — ideas on feminism in her video installation).

### **Less than average responses**

The less than average responses failed to comprehend the concepts inherent in the question. These responses relied on simplistic, personalised views which were largely descriptive. Little reference was made to pertinent artworks and artists. However, the number of these 'less than average' responses were very minimal.

### **Further advice**

The demands of this question were considerable but accessible for the well informed candidate, who was able to access a wide range of postmodern artists within the recommended area of study. Teachers are advised to ensure that candidates studying this focus area have a depth of knowledge and understanding from both an historical and contemporary viewpoint as well as using a philosophical basis.

## **SECTION I – ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 9**

*Explain how study of the use of materials, techniques and imagery has influenced your artmaking practice.*

*Refer to specific artworks by TWO OR MORE artists.*

### **General comments**

The question was generally well answered. Overall, students responses were well informed and directly answered the question. Some students digressed from a standard approach to the question. Instead they built their essay upon exploring the materials; learning techniques from this and only using imagery as an obvious ‘bonus’ from the influencing artists.

Students used a wide range of artists — both less and well known. They used contemporary and 20th century artists with noted recurrence of the influence of film makers.

Many responses presented as pre-prepared answers with many making no reference to HOW artists had influenced their work. Instead they gave an historical account of the artist’s life.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent responses were discerning, showing a deep and sustained study of usually more than the minimum two artists required. Specific references were made to the use of media, techniques and imagery with direct links to their own artmaking. References to these were made consistently in a logical and sequential manner. Critical responses to artists works were made using appropriate, sophisticated art language. Many excellent responses also used a variety of artists using different media as their influences. For example, not all painting for a ‘painting’ student but also perhaps photography and drawing for style, technique or compositional influences.

### **Average responses**

Average responses were characterised by a lack of detail, and with some reference to the question. Many students did not explore HOW the artist influenced their own artmaking. Links between influencing artists and candidates own works were often hastily done at the end of the response — almost as an afterthought.

Often too much space was devoted to description of other artists with insufficient reference to candidates’ own artmaking. Many candidates made statements such as ‘this influenced me’ but they did not elaborate. There was minimal use of art language along with generally poor expression. Concepts were hinted at, but often there was an inability to expand upon them, and relate them back to the question.

### **Less than average responses**

In below average responses, there was incorrect usage of art terms along with statements of ‘fact’ that were also incorrect. These candidates usually made no reference to ‘how’ influences evolved,

or they neglected to discuss their own artmaking practice. Links with their own artmaking were obscure or very limited. Some students relied upon Section I plates, merely relying upon the information accompanying them and description.

Overall, these responses were disjointed and lacked continuity and a full comprehension of the requirements of the question.

### **Further advice**

In preparation for Type C questions, students should begin by analysing their own artwork. They might then recognise problems and search for solutions through their research of other artists. Students need to clearly understand the requirements of the focus area, and develop skills to clearly understand the particular requirements of the exam question. Teachers need to assist students with understanding basic art concepts. Also, it would be expected that students who prepare for a Type C response, would know the correct spelling of influential artists names. They should also have skills in critical analysis of both their own works and the works of others.

## **SECTION I – ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 10**

*Examine how designers demonstrate awareness of function and context in TWO OR MORE examples of design from your local environment.*

*Refer to significant examples of architecture, and/or domestic, and/or industrial, and/or graphic design.*

### **General comments**

Very few candidates answered this question. Local environment was variously interpreted by the respondents in ways such as the ‘immediate and directly accessible, encountered by the candidate on a daily basis’ to the wider geographical area governed by cities and states — Sydney, NSW, Australia.

The discriminators of function and context within the question were addressed and understood by the majority of the candidates and applied in varying degrees. These were discussed with reference to architects and architecture, the works of Murcutt, Cox and Utzon being popular.

The notion of ‘significant’ in the candidates’ chosen examples was problematic, especially when used with ‘domestic’ examples. These were largely unidentified and often only referred to briefly and therefore it was often difficult to ascertain their significance.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses were characterised by a sound understanding of the question and embraced the terms of ‘function and context’ in relation to significance. These were defined with reference to particular designers within the broader context of Australia. Usually these responses used architects and architecture as the chosen examples. Creative opinions on the value of context and an awareness of the notion of function, in many ways, determining form were expressed in confident and coherent responses that applied and used appropriate external criteria to demonstrate a wider understanding of the intent of the question.

### **Average responses**

Average responses were characterised by limited or uneven discussion which were, at times, descriptive. Some analysis and interpretation was made but usually in the form of a predetermined format with incidental regard for, and to, the question. Few links with the question were made in the examination of both the function and context and these revealed an inability to differentiate between the specificity of each. Candidates seemed to key into ‘function’ in discussing their chosen examples of design from their environment and neglected or misinterpreted any contextual referencing.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses were very descriptive and rarely connected to the intent and content of the question. They tended to be disjointed and naïve with little awareness or understanding of the

focus area of Art and Design. Examples chosen were frequently generic and did not grasp the concept of ‘significant’, while chosen from the candidate’s local environment. These included bus shelters, speed bumps, road signs, blenders, and cappuccino machines. Discussions of these were opinionated and usually unsupported by critical analysis.

### **Further advice**

Candidates are advised when they answer this type of question to demonstrate an understanding of the question intent by connecting to key concepts and terms within the question to frame a response. They should choose, carefully, appropriate examples, expand on these and, where possible, link them to other styles and contexts to support and reinforce their point of view.

## **SECTION I – ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 11(a)**

*An awareness of the environment has a fundamental impact on the character of design.*

*Discuss this statement, using significant historical and contemporary examples of ecologically sensitive design.*

### **General comments**

This question attracted a small number of candidates. It required the candidates to have an understanding of ecologically sensitive design, know some historical and contemporary examples, and relate these in a discussion about how an environmental focus shapes design.

Most candidates responded to the question with architectural examples with Philip Cox and Glenn Murcutt popular choices and frequently analysed. Responses usually related the architectural sensitivity of designers to the immediate environment, population and history with well chosen examples related to a discussion of materials and processes.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

In the excellent and above average responses candidates were able to explain and have an opinion and attitude towards and about 'ecologically sensitive design'. They demonstrated a deeper understanding and a comprehensive knowledge of examples which held greater relevance to the demands of the question.

Usually the candidates referred both to time frames of wide-ranging historical periods and included Eastern and Indigenous cultures as models for the notion of 'ecologically sensitive'. Many responded with the need to comment on environmentally friendly technologies but were aware of the function of these designs and provided comprehensive description and analysis of their relevance to ecologically sensitive design. Strong links were often given between ecologically aware designers with the use of suitable art and design technology. There was mention of 'arcology' which aims to balance human and environmental needs. Selected examples were well discussed, relating the design solutions to the environmental concerns.

### **Average responses**

In average responses the candidates were often able to demonstrate an understanding of the principles of ecologically sensitive designs. This seemed to be because the example being discussed was from their local area. The responses further revealed a superficial knowledge of wider examples which were less well discussed and with a confused understanding regarding modern architects such as Le Corbusier.

Some art terminology and knowledge was evident but a limited awareness of the dimensions and demands of the question coupled with little indication of a personal viewpoint in discussions that were systematic and obvious were more characteristic of responses at this level. Comparative analysis, where evident, was often descriptive.

### **Less than average responses**

In below average responses there was little evidence of a sustained engagement with or study of the Art and Design focus area or the recommended area of study. These often revealed a transparent understanding of the concept of ecologically sensitive design. They were often incomplete and unresolved, restricted to general knowledge and with very little reference to the environment and its relationships to human kind or cultural contexts.

### **Further advice**

Students are advised to consider the scope of the Art and Design focus area in preparing for this question. A definition and understanding of ecologically sensitive design and historical and contemporary need to be clarified. Candidates need to consider a broader range of examples other than architecture in order to demonstrate a sustained study of this recommended area of study.

## **SECTION I – ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 11(b)**

*Examine functionalism as a theme in the work of specific twentieth-century architects, designers or groups.*

*Refer to a range of significant examples.*

### **General comments**

This question was constructed in a straightforward manner. Consequently, the intent and demands of the question were fairly transparent and accessible, attracting a number of well-prepared candidates who provided lengthy and well-constructed responses. The majority of these demonstrated knowledge of the Arts and Crafts Movement and an awareness of previous contexts. Candidates were able to explain the philosophy of functionalism and cited the Bauhaus as the main exemplar of it. Quotes such as ‘form follows function’ and ‘a building is a machine for living in’ were common. The purpose of the Bauhaus, from what sources it grew and the lateral movements that affected it were also discussed. Selected examples were appropriate with architecture and chairs being popular choices.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses were characterised by the candidates’ ability to distinguish between functional and aesthetic movements. They often used functionalism as a thematic springboard to reflect the historical and socio-economic rationale of the Bauhaus and DeStijl.

Responses were articulate and expansive demonstrating knowledge of architects and designers with candidates often choosing a point of view, thus creating layers of information. Detailed evidence of their points of view were provided through examination and evaluation of a range of examples and their relationships to functionalism and the placement of these into a cultural as well as historical context. Quotes were used, indicating some awareness of the critical and philosophical opinions of others. Candidates were also often able to make effective links between influences, movements and changes that had occurred demonstrating their breadth of knowledge. Some responses in this range also examined ‘non functional’ movements providing contrast and delineation to functionalist movements, influences and reactions as appropriate usually with reference to contemporary postmodern design works.

### **Average responses**

In average responses candidates demonstrated a body of knowledge which was related and understood from a chronological and developmental perspective. Selected examples were chairs, usually well described and analysed according to the requirements of the question. Salient characteristics and comparisons were made.

The role of functionalism was often not discussed or perceived as an influence on 20th century design or a major effect on the society we live in. Decorative styles and movements such as Art Deco and Art Nouveau were examined inappropriately with little attempt to explain their inclusion or relevance to the candidates’ position in relation to the demands of the question.

Quotes from architects Mies Van Der Rohe and Le Corbusier were used in a non specific manner and sometimes confused as to the author and were not written to justify, add or introduce an opinion or explanation of a design style.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses were characterised by a poor understanding of the intent of the question and little knowledge of the manifestation of functionalism. Examples selected were inappropriate and non specific and often only discussed in a general and descriptive manner.

### **Further advice**

Students are encouraged to build on knowledge of design movements and move beyond chronological surveys. This could be done by considering cultural contexts and through examination of a broad range of examples including Australian designers and relating functionalism, its particular meaning and specific connotations to the works studied.

## **SECTION I – ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 12**

*Give an account of how the study of different design styles has enhanced your artmaking.*

*Refer to a range of significant examples of design.*

### **General comments**

This question required the candidates to account for the ways in which the study of design styles had impacted on their artmaking. Even though these requirements were explicit the question was answered poorly by the majority of candidates who tended to choose inappropriate examples, not design-based or with little or no emphasis or interest in design concepts. Responses which related the candidates' artworks to other artists and their media, techniques and processes were common. Responses also tended to be generalised and descriptive concerning one aspect of the question only — design styles, their artmaking or chosen examples.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses were few. They were characterised by an understanding of the concept and processes of design and the ways in which designers work as opposed to painters and sculptors. Candidates used appropriate examples of different designers and linked these back to the question. The responses were balanced in the discussion of the candidates' own artmaking and the chosen examples revealing connections and influences throughout. The language was sophisticated and there was evidence of the candidate having studied a recommended area of study in the Art and Design focus area.

### **Average responses**

In the average responses candidates understood the connections between their own work and those they cited. The connections seemed to be genuine, rather than an arbitrary choice of artists, who had some relationship with their work. Design examples were not always chosen and descriptive accounts of artworks and artmaking processes were common. Supportive sketches enhanced the description of the candidates' artwork which was characteristically more complete than the descriptions of the chosen examples. The responses in this range were speculative, simple in structure and limited in the use of art specific language.

### **Less than average responses**

In the below average responses candidates were unable to link their response to the requirements of the question. They related artworks and artists rather than designers and examples of design to their artmaking. Influences were introduced and treated superficially and often with a lack of understanding in terms of processes and media.

### **Further advice**

Students should consider the scope and breadth of the focus area of Art and Design when considering this question. They should be able to refer to examples of design and link their understanding or analysis of these examples to their own artmaking.

## SECTION II

### Question 13

*Look at Plates 4 – 11.*

*Compare TWO OR MORE plates in terms of the artist's use of materials and technologies.*

*In your answer, refer to:*

- *processes*
- *media*
- *styles.*

### General comments

In this question, which was the least popular in terms of numbers of students attempting a response, there were some excellent responses which fulfilled all the requirements of the question. These candidates brought skills in critical analysis to bear in teasing out the many parts of the question in a comparison of the plates with each other and making reference to other similar artworks to support the comparisons.

However, there were also some excellent responses which could not achieve excellent marks because the candidates did not fulfil all the requirements of the question. That part of the question dealing with technologies posed a difficulty for many candidates. Candidates tended to be confused by this term and often combined processes and technologies under the rubric of technique. Some candidates chose not to deal with technologies at all.

Unfortunately, the selection of plates from Section I occurred on a regular basis and this was seen as possibly due to the comparative nature of the question.

### Excellent and above average responses

Excellent responses showed the ability of candidates to use the question as a springboard for perceptive comment about the uses by the chosen artists of technologies and materials. Artworks were compared using both internal and external criteria in explorations of the question which were often subtle and insightful.

Excellent and above average candidates addressed all aspects of the question in a synthesised manner, integrating discussion about materials and technologies with specific referral to the bullet pointed prompts, processes, media and styles. These candidates defined a broad understanding of technologies providing insight into different materials and technologies and their application. Well chosen plates and other similar artworks, appropriate in terms of the prompts, were placed into their cultural contexts as these informed the use of technologies and materials and integrated comparisons were then made.

The language used was sophisticated and art-specific and in many cases the use of integrated comparisons helped candidates to expand on issues and themes related to technologies and materials identified by them and to make their meanings and arguments more explicit through comparison.

## **Average responses**

The candidates who produced average responses addressed most aspects of the question and attempted a comparison. They usually discussed the plates in terms of media and styles, relying on description and formal analysis rather than integrated comparison. The structural frame was used for analysis of plates. Processes and technology were frequently alluded to but not necessarily discussed in an authoritative way. At this level judgements were based on speculation and indirect association rather than a knowledge of Art concepts. Average responses often contextualised works in terms of art movements but frequently did not refer to specific artists or artworks. The differences between technologies and materials were often not understood or discussed.

## **Less than average responses**

In less than average responses there was a very limited understanding of the nature of a comparative type question. These responses rarely referred to the prompts. Language used was non-specific, naïve and showed a poor understanding of art concepts and terminology.

In terms of answering this particular question there was often an inappropriate choice of plates and these were described in a simplistic, superficial manner with little attempt at comparison. Judgement was usually based on personal opinion which was unsupported and speculative in an uninformed way. Illogical and confused interpretations were made and students often used the information provided with the plates as the core of their response to processes and media. The knowledge and understanding of technologies was limited, for example, the use of trucks and cranes in the construction of buildings. Little or no external criteria were applied and no historical or cultural references were used.

## **Further advice**

Teachers need to identify and teach the different types of Section II questions from previous papers and encourage students to identify and define key terms. Students need to familiarise themselves with the format of the paper so that Section I plates are not used for Section II. It is important that all parts of the question are addressed. The use of an essay plan based on the question prompts could assist. Teachers should make sure that students have a breadth of knowledge about art from different times and cultures, both historical and contemporary to assist their students to respond in a knowledgeable fashion to Section II questions. Students should then be able to make informed interpretations of Section II plates.

## SECTION II

### Question 14

*Look at Plates 4 – 11.*

*Give an account of different attitudes to the visual arts in TWO OR MORE PLATES.*

*In your answer, refer to:*

- *values and beliefs*
- *cultural influences*
- *time and place.*

### General comments

The question was challenging in that all three prompts, ie values and beliefs, cultural influences and time and place relied on at least some knowledge of exterior criteria which the student had either to have as learned knowledge or was able to glean from the visual clues. This was unlike Question 13 or 15 where students could focus more on the visual qualities of the plates. Students attempting this question also needed to have an understanding or offer an interpretation of what values and beliefs, cultural influence and time and place might mean in relation to the visual arts. The most popular plates were paintings. The Max Dupain photograph was also a popular choice. The term ‘different attitudes’ opened an arena for discussion or explanation by the more able students but seemed unclear or confusing for less able students who totally ignored the term and went straight to the prompts.

### Excellent and above average responses

Excellent and above average responses provided a strong synthesised argument presented in a rich, dense writing style or provided a sophisticated response to the plates. Other responses were filled with facts and well substantiated. The introductions to these essays clearly determined the extent of the discussion and the direction that the essay would take. The better responses supported all their interpretations with visual evidence from the plates and were able to describe works using art terms, eg ‘angry scumbling’, ‘Pollock-like expressionistic brushstrokes’ or ‘high keyed colours and tones’. They were also able to use evocative descriptive words, eg ‘creamy clouds’, ‘extraordinary perspective’, ‘banana yellow’, ‘rustic decay’ and ‘rich narrative’.

The excellent responses contextualised artworks in their historical period and justified this placement by referring to similar artists or artworks, eg Monet. They clearly identified cultural influences driven by dominant values and beliefs, eg Catholicism, the aristocracy, modernism, consumerism and postmodernism. The better candidates also used quotes to add depth to the essay or as supporting evidence of an argument. In some cases, even though students lacked cultural or historical knowledge about some of the plates, they carefully avoided any judgemental or clichéd comments. Some responses used a more lateral interpretation, yet were still able to present subtle interpretations that utilised their examples well.

## **Average responses**

The average responses were more 'pedestrian' in their approach. They could establish links between plates in an obvious or general manner and introduce some external criteria. They alluded to gender, commercialism or religion but their arguments lacked depth. These students used the citations to help their discussion but only in a general way. Sometimes the concept of time and place was mentioned by recycling the citation or relying on the works country of origin to form ideas. Despite the meanings of the artworks being the focus of this question, there was a strong tendency in average responses to access works through description of the plates only and to construct their arguments about attitudes entirely from this interior criterion.

## **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses did not attempt to answer the question or the prompts and made a poor selection from the plates which further disadvantaged the candidate. Many of these candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of the terms used in the question and merely rephrased it without developing an account. These essays tended to be totally descriptive of the visual qualities of the works, with little or no historical or cultural contextualisation. Repetition of the citation or descriptions without any development and myopic rather than multi-faceted discussion of possible interpretations was a common quality of weaker responses.

## **Further advice**

Students need to understand the demands of the question and enhance their writing by choosing plates for which their Visual Arts studies have provided them some background knowledge. To understand this type of question, students should not study artworks in isolation but rather include external criteria in their study.

Some students are still unfortunately using Section I plates in Section II responses. Although the new format of the colour plates has meant this practice is decreasing, students should be made aware of the physical layout of the paper by handling, using and practicing with past HSC papers.

## SECTION II

### Question 15

*Look at Plates 4 – 11.*

*Critically analyse how TWO OR MORE plates visually communicate ideas.*

*In your answer, refer to:*

- *subject matter*
- *expressive qualities*
- *signs and symbols.*

### General comments

This question was the most frequently answered in Section II. The structure of the question was very clear, allowing candidates to use the structure in their response in a logical and methodical manner, using the bullet points as an essay plan. Many responses attempted to relate the plates selected to other appropriate ‘known’ examples to support their position and demonstrate a wider art knowledge.

Many candidates are now more willing to make their own judgements and take and support a position using art-specific language and concepts.

The question seemed to be well understood, allowing students to approach their response in a straightforward manner. Some excellent responses approached the question in a more sophisticated manner, with a depth and breadth of art knowledge embedded in fluent and articulate responses.

The most significant difficulty is still the incorrect selection of Section I plates to answer Section II questions. This is despite the frequency of clear instructions about the range of plates for this section.

### Excellent and above average responses

Responses at this level addressed and understood all parts of the question. These responses were often more than a systematic or methodical response, going beyond analysis giving a layered response and a range of possible meanings well-supported with reference to specifics in the works themselves. Works were placed accurately in the context of art history and the cultures which produced them. Relevant connections were made to other artists/styles/traditions.

The candidates confidently took a position and expressed and supported their ideas fluently and articulately using a differentiated, art-specific and evocative vocabulary. Impressive responses demonstrated conceptual understandings of a complex and demanding nature and often clearly defined the terms of the question, eg ‘signs and symbols’ with clarity and insight.

Responses often revealed a choice of plates that had a relationship to each other allowing the student to make comparisons between works and to take well argued positions, eg using the Cassatt and the Connor as examples not only contrasting in visual qualities, but each representative of works produced in changing times artistically and culturally, and symbolic of these changes.

These responses made intelligent use of the information given in the citation, eg in relation to historical or cultural context and the expressive qualities of particular media and how the artist had manipulated media to communicate meaning. Citation information also was used in these responses to place the candidate as an audience in front of the works, for example, responsive to the scale and space in the Toya installation.

Excellent responses often showcased the candidates interpretive and analytic skills (for example, the Toya and Black works). Judgements in these responses were informed and reflective.

Above average responses were well structured, methodical and conventional in their analyses than the excellent responses. Such responses often successfully made use of the question prompts as a basis for structuring their essay and a means of maintaining focus on the core of the question.

### **Average responses**

A number of responses relied more heavily on description of the plates as the basis of their analysis. Works were often analysed quite separately from each other with comparisons or relationships between chosen works rarely used to make interpretations or add to the fluency of argument.

While the majority of responses addressed most aspects of the question, not all aspects were always fully developed. In many responses the expressive qualities of the works were given greater attention than the signs and symbols suggesting that this aspect was not as well understood. Works were less frequently or accurately placed within an art historical, historical or cultural contexts so interpretations and analysis were often more general and more conventional and obvious in their interpretation. References to other artists works, styles or traditions were less frequent and often not fully supported or explained or were inappropriate. Some responses superimposed clichéd cultural formulas such as feminist issues (in the Cassatt) or environmental issues (in Connor and Toya) onto the works. Some responses became more like General Studies responses to the issues raised by the works.

There was some use of art specific language though in an uneven and less convincing manner than the excellent or above average range. Interpretations of ideas being communicated and meanings of signs and symbols within works were more speculative and subjective, less firmly grounded in a breadth and depth of art knowledge. Responses relied heavily on creating a ‘narrative’ for the image.

Responses were often structured to a formal analysis format with introductions and conclusions which simply restated the question.

### **Less than average responses**

Many responses at this level often began with a copy of the question written out, followed by a copy of the citation for the first work to be chosen.

Responses were heavily reliant on describing the plates selected and any interpretations were often highly subjective, stereotypical or speculative, and rarely supported by reference to the world of art.

Works selected were often dealt with quite separately with no attempt to make useful comparisons.

A significant percentage of responses referred to at least one incorrect plate (ie a plate from Section I).

These responses often revealed little understanding of the terms of the question and all aspects of the question were not addressed.

Opinions about the works were rarely supported by internal or external references. Cultural, historical positioning of the Indian work was speculative in the extreme. Less than average responses were often very brief.

### **Further advice**

Candidates need to be thoroughly briefed on choosing plates from Section II only. Use of past papers to see layout and recognise sections would be useful in this regard.

Candidates should be aware of the usefulness of the citation accompanying the plates as a source for placing within art historical/cultural context.

Candidates should be encouraged to contextualise artworks in terms of art historical/stylistic/cultural and in traditions of art practice. They should also reference other relevant works.

Students who have difficulty in structuring a response should be taught to recognise that the question itself offers a structure to use in the bulleted points.

Selected plates which allow for links to be made between works is a useful strategy for a coherent and conclusive response.

Use of annotated diagrams or cutting out and pasting in the plate are generally poorly used strategies which should only be used if they enhance or explicate the response in a manner that could not be achieved in writing.

Careful reading of the citation should prevent candidates analysing architectural works (eg Portland Building) as photographs or other similar errors.

Candidates should support statements with reference to the works themselves and further appropriate examples.

Candidates need to be fully informed about the meaning of terminology of Section II, eg that signs and symbols point to meaning; that expressive qualities refer to use of media as well as mood evoked.

Candidates should be encouraged to make connections to the 'known' wherever possible.

Use art specific language and return to the language of the question is also recommended.

### **3 UNIT (ADDITIONAL)**

#### **STUDYING IMAGES AND OBJECTS**

350 candidates attempted the 3 Unit Written examination paper this year. The general quality of the responses was pleasingly high, with the majority of candidates appearing to be well prepared and knowledgeable within their chosen area of study. While most candidates chose to discuss artists and artworks drawn from Western traditions and Modernism, there is increasingly a tendency to look also at artists from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as North America.

It is pleasing to note that many of the highly ranked responses showed an awareness of the writings of art historians and art critics and were able to quote from these discriminatingly in order to support their arguments. Popular sources included Walter Benjamin and Clement Greenberg, with some candidates also quoting from feminist critics such as Lucy Lippard, or sources such as Foucault and Roger Fry. These excellent responses were able to establish subtle links between artists and examples selected, thus producing layered responses of great sophistication.

Many candidates showed an informed awareness of influential exhibitions from the year, such as 'Read My Lips' at the National Art Gallery and the Marina Abramowicz exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art. They were able to use their unmediated experiences of the works thus seen together with critical writings about these artists and contextual knowledge to construct insightful and original responses which persuasively addressed all aspects of the question.

Fewer students this year attempted to apply pre-learnt 'case studies' to the demands of the question. Where this was done, candidates experienced difficulty in meeting all the criteria of the question. Similarly, where candidates attempted to apply knowledge from the Recommended Areas of Study to the 3 Unit questions, they were less likely to be able to successfully address all aspects of the question.

## **SECTION I – ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 1**

*Representing a relationship to the land had been a defining interest in Australian art.*

*Investigate this statement, with reference to a range of artists and their works.*

### **General Comments**

This was a popular question that attracted well researched responses referencing the Recommended Areas of study, historical and contemporary examples of 18th, 19th and 20th century landscape painting as well as contemporary examples of sculpture and architecture. There was a focus on Colonial artists, the Heidelberg school, Preston, Williams, Martin, contemporary indigenous artists, and Gascoigne, Murcutt and Cox. Responses addressed how relationships to the land had been depicted through a range of works, but generally, why landscape was a defining interest was either not investigated or was acknowledged only through description of examples rather than an analytical interpretation of the works in social, political or cultural contexts.

### **Excellent and Above Average Responses**

Excellent and above average responses drew upon a wide knowledge of Australian art to select appropriate and varied examples of works for discussion and analysis. These were used to illustrate a defining interest in representing a relationship to the land. There was an understanding of the different qualities of relationship in a broader sense than just a chronological history and responses interpreted this change in our relationship with the land by using relevant social and historical contextual information. A political and cultural awareness pertaining to differing European and Aboriginal understandings of the land was evident in the excellent responses. Approaches were coherent and sophisticated and took the form of comparative, historical or in-depth specialisations of works by three to four artists working in diverse forms such as architecture, sculpture, site specific works and photography.

### **Average Responses**

Average responses relied upon a chronological approach in describing a broad range of examples and often resorted to an analysis of the structure of the artwork rather than an understanding of encoded messages and metaphors for a relationship to the landscape evident in the works. A defining interest was only addressed on a superficial level. There was a reliance on discussion of painters from one particular movement such as the Heidelberg school and few contemporary examples apart from Gascoigne were cited.

### **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses did not address all aspects of the question and tended to be merely descriptive with a background knowledge of artists and examples of works presented in a narrative form.

## Further advice

Candidates should be referencing a wide range of resources to develop a holistic view of the focus area and art making practices in Australia, rather than an in depth chronological study of 19th and 20th century painting relating solely to the recommended areas of study.

## SECTION I — ART IN AUSTRALIA

### Question 2

*Give a critical account of aesthetic and cultural issues in contemporary indigenous art practice.*

*You could consider:*

- *ownership and identity*
- *collaborative traditions*
- *representation and symbolism.*

### General comments

This question enabled candidates to express a range of informed and passionate personal viewpoints demonstrating a sound knowledge base related to the complexities of indigenous and contemporary practices. The majority of responses addressed two out of three of the prompts and revealed an appreciation of indigenous art.

### Excellent and above average responses

Excellent and above average responses were sophisticated and coherent and engaged in lively discussion of the complex issues invited by the question. A range of political, social and cultural issues including land rights, citizenship, power, equality, human rights, identity, copyright, commercial rights and consumerism were explored and indicated a strong cultural awareness of the context of indigenous art. Relevant and appropriate urban, regional and rural examples were described, analysed and interpreted using sophisticated art terminology and vocabulary, and issues raised by each group practice were discussed and evaluated in a clear and convincing manner. Traditional and postmodern practices were explored and strong connections and links were made between these and other forms of indigenous expression, and the land.

### Average responses

There were few average responses. These addressed the question through a conventionally descriptive analysis of two or three urban indigenous artists and examples using limited art language. There was evidence of a 'text book' knowledge rather than an informed point of view and analysis.

## **Further advice**

Resources such as galleries, journalistic criticism and reviews, Internet and web sites should be referenced to extend knowledge and understanding of contemporary art practices.

## **SECTION I — ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 3**

*Australian art today has become more diverse and innovative in its response to international trends.*

*Assess this statement with reference to specific artists and/or artworks and/or exhibitions.*

### **General comments**

There was a broad interpretation of this question with some responses citing Australian art today as an example from Colonial times to the 20th century, including Postmodernism. International trends invited a variety of interpretations also; these included artistic trends and practices such as Postmodernism and socio-political trends, including identity and culture, and feminism.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses paid homage to all parts of the question and presented sophisticated logical arguments acknowledging Australian art today and international trends within appropriate contexts. Language was strong and complex and was specific to the examples selected. Contemporary Australian artmaking was explained and evaluated in the light of Modernism, postmodernism, appropriation and installation, and performance art. Many responses referenced Stelarc, John Davis, Julie Rrap, Zahalka, Tillers, Arkley and Norrie. Trends discussed included conceptual art, feminism, the technological age and reinterpreting modern society. Candidates extended their arguments by referring to art critics as well as making critical judgements of major Sydney and Canberra exhibitions including 'Read My Lips', 'The Body' and MCA collections such as 'The Brady Bunch'.

### **Average responses**

There were few average responses. These were informative descriptions of works with a narrow focus on Australian art and minimal knowledge and understanding of international trends or examples of artmaking. There was little evidence of a critical response.

## **Further advice**

Students electing to answer questions in this focus area should be able to relate Australian art to international developments and have a wide knowledge of contemporary artmaking practices through accessing exhibitions and recent artmaking, exhibition catalogues, reviews and periodicals.

## **SECTION I — ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 4**

*Look at Plates 1–4.*

*Examine the conventions and distinctive character of domestic architecture in Australia.*

*Refer to ONE OR MORE plates and any other examples you have studied.*

### **General comments**

In this question there was a tendency to narrate the story of Australian architecture rather than focus on ‘conventions and distinctive character’ through an appropriate selection of one or more plates and other examples. Responses gave descriptions of the different styles of Australian architecture without constructing an informed discussion of how, where, when and why these characteristics developed. There was a focus on the architecture of Seidler and Murcutt.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses were able to use selected plates and other examples in a confident and sustained investigation of the question. Candidates went beyond climate to site materials, environmental considerations, design practices, and the use of light as distinctive elements of domestic architecture and as a means of interpreting the question. Landscape was recognised and understood as a conceptual component in contemporary architectural practice. There were references to historical and contemporary examples which evidenced an understanding of changing styles and conventions as a response to time. The appropriation of international styles was introduced and critically evaluated in the context of conventions and the emergence of a distinctive character in Australian architecture.

### **Average responses**

In average responses the conventions of domestic architecture were examined in a general way without using specific examples to support views. There was a reliance on the plates for speculative explanations as well as a general knowledge of Sydney suburbs to generate opinions of domestic architecture. It was obvious that candidates had a knowledge of Australian architecture but in many cases they were unable to apply it to all requirements of the question.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses listed some of the architectural features in the plates. Evidence for explanations was anecdotal and at times colloquially expressed.

## SECTION II — ART AND CULTURE

### Question 5

*Rather than being universal and eternal, the meaning and value of art varies according to cultural context.*

*Evaluate this statement, with reference to a range of examples from a culture or culture outside Australia.*

### General comments

This question attracted the largest candidature of the 3 Unit paper, resulting in a number of very sophisticated responses which revealed an impressive breadth and depth of knowledge. The majority of responses investigated Modernist and postmodernist artists and art practices in order to establish and prove their chosen position. Some candidates were able to adapt their study of the 2/3 unit recommended area of study relating to Heroic and Tragic Themes to the demands of this question, while others attempted to do so with less success. Teachers and students should be aware of page 55 in the reprinted *Visual Arts Syllabus Years 11 and 12* (1997) which states that it is not intended that the 2/3 Unit Recommended Areas of Study will be re-examined in their same form in the 3 Unit examination. Rather, study at 3 Unit level should extend and deepen students' understanding of the focus area/s selected for further study.

Many candidates chose artists from Western traditions and Modernism to address notions such as the concept of the 'Masterpiece' or the universalism implied in the narrative of Modernism, however a wide range of disparate and interesting artists from many cultures and historical periods were discussed with varying degrees of appropriateness.

There appears to be an emerging interest in contemporary Asian and Oceanic artmaking practices. Works from these cultures were known in great depth and discussed with a sensitive awareness of their cultural context and a sophisticated understanding of their meaning and significance.

### Excellent and above average responses

Excellent responses addressed all aspects of the question in developing a persuasive argument which clearly evaluated the statement, and also successfully differentiated between 'universal' and 'eternal' and 'meaning' and 'value'. These candidates selected appropriate examples which offered a rich field of interpretation, developing responses which were perceptive and eloquent and demonstrating a confident use of art terminology.

These excellent responses were able to use both internal and external criteria in an aware and fluent manner, often quoting from critical and historical writers, philosophers and artists' manifestos to support their views. Most responses unsurprisingly took the position that the meaning and value of art is to a large extent dependent upon its context.

Many excellent responses contrasted Modernist with postmodernist art practices, comparing the universalism embodied in the reductive purity of 'high' Modernism, eg International Style architecture, de Stijl, Constructivism or Abstract Expressionism, with the pluralist discourses of postmodernism.

Above average responses identified examined and addressed each component of the question defining terms such as universal and eternal. Candidates within this range often challenged the statement, identifying recurring issues and themes in art, represented by such works as Goya's 'Third May 1808' and Picasso's 'Guernica' and examining these within a cultural framework. These candidates were selective in their choice of artists and examples and placed works within their cultural contexts. Above average and excellent responses offered a multi-faceted reading of the question displaying a competent ability to interpret layers of meaning.

### **Average responses**

Average responses also used well-chosen examples which were discussed in response to the demands of the question, however in a more limited manner. Some of these responses addressed only part of the question, demonstrating an understanding of the term 'cultural context' but were unable to differentiate 'universal' from 'eternal' or explain what these terms might mean in relation to the selected works. These responses were often very descriptive and used little other than internal criteria.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses were characterised by incomplete essays or those in which there was a very limited or inappropriate selection of examples, which were merely described rather than interpreted in response to the question.

## **SECTION II — ART AND CULTURE**

### **Question 6**

*Look at Plates 5–8.*

*Explain how artworks dealing with work and leisure reflect different cultural attitudes.*

*Refer to ONE OR MORE plates and other examples from a region or regions outside Australia.*

### **General comments**

In general, average responses dominated this question. Candidates were unable to express an understanding of cultural context and plates referenced were described without supporting knowledge and little understanding of attitudes to work and leisure. ‘Cultural attitudes’ was largely ignored as an important facet of the question and as a way to structure an informed response.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Above average responses discussed examples which reflected some understanding of convention and code and how these were signs of the values and attitudes towards work and leisure. They gave a firm account of the societal and cultural impact upon these themes as well as distinguishing between leisure and work. The plates and other appropriate examples were discussed with reference to political, social and economical attitudes.

### **Average responses**

Average responses did not address the whole question but made obvious interpretations of the plates and researched examples focusing on the human condition rather than work and leisure. Responses relied heavily on description and a social commentary. There were limited attempts to analyse the cultural conventions and attitudes expressed in the treatment of the subject matter of the plates and other selected examples.

### **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses reflected little understanding of what was meant by cultural attitudes. Plates were not discussed within a cultural context and were treated in a purely descriptive fashion. Other examples were not cited.

## SECTION II — ART AND CULTURE

### Question 7

*'The representation of nature in the visual arts has been a vehicle for the expression of different beliefs and attitudes.'*

*Explore this statement, using historical and contemporary examples from a culture or cultures outside Australia.*

### General comments

In general, average and below average responses dominate this question. In most cases, 'nature' was assumed to be synonymous with 'landscape'. More sophisticated responses looked at metaphorical aspects of the representation of landscape in Western and Eastern art, exploring notions such as the Sublime, Taoist and Buddhist beliefs; or modernist approaches to the spiritual such as Kandinsky's.

Many candidates experienced difficulty in investigating the notion of art as a vehicle for the expression of beliefs and attitudes. Frequently inappropriate examples were used, with a reliance on 19th century and early Modernist works. Fairly conventional knowledge was not well applied to the question. Many candidates were unable to discuss a contemporary example, thus weakening their discussion. These average and below average students did not distinguish between 'beliefs' and 'attitudes'.

## **SECTION II — ART IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Question 8**

*Analyse how cultural traditions and artistic innovations are combined in the work of artists, designers, architects and/or craftspeople.*

*Refer to the work of TWO OR MORE artists from a culture or cultures outside Australia.*

### **General comments**

Generally this question was not well answered in comparison to others in the 3 Unit paper. Many candidates inadequately defined the terms ‘cultural tradition’ and ‘artistic innovation’ and were thus unable to address all the demands of the question.

### **Excellent and above average comments**

Excellent responses adopted a highly sophisticated and layered approach to the notion of cultural traditions. These included religious beliefs, artistic conventions and social themes such as gender and politics. The language used indicates an ability to discriminate between ideas of tradition and innovation. Candidates made use of appropriate examples from postmodernist such as Carlo Maria Mariani, Xu Bing, Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago to innovators such as Jackson Pollack and Marcel Duchamp. The artistic practices explored in these responses included appropriation, satire, parody, unconventional media and site specificity.

### **Average responses**

Average responses often showed a sound knowledge of chosen examples, although a limited degree of depth of analysis. Some candidates were inconsistent in their interpretation of cultural traditions which were variously defined as national identity, street culture and international architectural canons. Many of these accounts were speculative and general, failing to investigate the relevant qualities of the works, and limiting themselves to descriptive explanations.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses presented a literal and superficial approach based on the ways in which artworks can reflect cultural beliefs through motifs and symbols, without applying this discussion to the focus of the question.

## **SECTION III — ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 9**

*Look at Plates 9–12.*

*Explain the ways in which meaning and significance are encoded in artworks through the use of signs, symbols and materials.*

*Refer to TWO OR MORE plates and other examples you have studied.*

### **General comments**

While attracting a range of responses, some of which brought informed and sophisticated judgements to bear on the terms ‘meaning and significance’ and ‘signs, symbols and materials’, many candidates found difficulty in applying their knowledge to ‘TWO OR MORE plates’.

Teachers and students should be aware that when the use of plates is required in 3 Unit questions such as this, the intention is not that answers resembling 2/3 Unit Section II ‘unseens’ are the result. Students may opt to discuss the required plate quite briefly, and then focus in much greater depth on their own selected artworks.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent responses investigated the relationship between meaning/significance and signs, symbols and materials. These responses also emphasised the role of cultural context in decoding images, and examined issues relating to recontextualisation. Artists discussed by a number of candidates were Kruger, Sherman, and Holzer, reflecting the influence of the ‘Read My Lips’ exhibition, and Chinese artist Xu Bing.

Above average responses selected appropriate responses and demonstrated a convincing knowledge. Some average and below average responses were unable to differentiate between ‘signs’ and ‘symbols’. Below average responses did not include reference to other examples that had been studied. Plates were discussed in a merely descriptive and frequently speculative manner. In a number of cases the wrong plates were used. The most popular plates were the Aboriginal work and the Merode altarpiece. More successful interpretations of Plate 10 were able to make a sophisticated analysis of the use of acrylic as symbolic of cultural change; and revealed a depth of knowledge of indigenous art. These responses also recognised the contrast within the work between traditional and contemporary symbolism. In general, the Merode Altarpiece was not well discussed. Many candidates appeared to lack knowledge of the symbolism of the International Gothic period or indeed of Christian Art.

## SECTION III — ART AND MEDIA

### Question 10

*Give an account of how artists, designers or craftspeople have used the found object and collage to comment, satirise, parody and question.*

*Refer to a range of examples you have studied.*

### Excellent and above average responses

The many excellent responses to this question reflected candidates' depth of art knowledge and their astute understanding of the question. Their sophisticated use of language demonstrated their comprehension of the key words and underlying intentions. They were able to distinguish between parody, satire, comment and questioning, selecting Modernist and postmodernist examples which illustrated how artists have employed such devices. These excellent responses sustained a level of enquiry regarding artistic traditions, conventions and practices as well as society and social issues. They explored a range of appropriate examples to examine a variety of approaches to collage and the found object.

Popular artists and movements included:

- Dada, as exemplified by Duchamp, Schwitters, Hoch and Ernst
- Cubism and the invention of collage
- Pop Art examples such as Hamilton's 'Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?'
- The 'combine' works of Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns.

Several candidates discussed the work of Rosalie Gascoigne and her use of found objects in relation to the questioning of the nature of art and traditional art materials. These candidates provided a resolved account of artworks in support of their thesis, indicating a coherent critical evaluation. A number of candidates were able to discuss the significance of historical and contemporary art critics and the impact of other artists.

### Average responses

Average candidates were generally able to discuss appropriate examples; however, in many cases the interpretation of the many cases the interpretation of the term 'found object' was too broad, and was sometimes confused with 'appropriation'. These candidates wrote accounts that contained interesting and pertinent information but had difficulty in moving beyond the visual analysis to more interpretive discussions of the artists' intentions.

### Less than average responses

Below average responses were characterised by confusion about the distinction between 'collage' and 'found object' and the different intentions with which they might be employed by artists.

## SECTION III — ART AND MEDIA

### Question 11

*Analyse the different working practices of TWO OR MORE artists you have studied.*

*Use a range of examples.*

*You could consider:*

- *Manipulation of images*
- *Materials and processes*
- *Representation of ideas.*

### General comments

This was one of the four most popular questions. The majority of candidates chose to analyse the working practices of Modernist and postmodernist artists, and many responses suggest that a thematic approach to teaching and learning has been used. Popular themes included:

- women artists who interrogate representations of gender, eg Kruger, Holzer, Sherman, Varvaressos and Moffatt;
- investigations of ‘high art’ versus ‘low art’, eg Koons, Sherman, Warhol;
- an analysis of artworks which parody and/or appropriate image format or popular culture;
- artists who break conventional boundaries, including investigations into conceptual, performance and installation artists such as Christo, Orlan and Stelarc;
- artists who embrace 20th century electronic and industrial technology such as Nam June Paik, Robyn Stacey, Christo and Bill Viola;
- the Modernist avant-garde, including Picasso and Duchamp.

### Excellent and above average responses

Most candidates were able to contextualise their discussion of these themes in order to confidently address all aspects of the question. Excellent responses explored the concept of working practices with references to conceptual as well as physical aspects of creating an artwork. Culturally embedded reasons for particular art practices were explored by some candidates, eg Kiefer’s concern with German culture and identity. Many candidates adopted a comprehensive and developmental approach whereby the working practices of artists such as Klippel were analysed across a range of examples. Artworks were discussed with authority and confidence. These excellent responses demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of how the term ‘art practice’ may be defined.

### Average responses

Average responses presented a more limited awareness of the concept of a ‘working practice’, often relying upon analysis of the examples. Artworks were generally well explained, however, the factors that influence artists to work in a particular manner were less well understood.

### **Less than average responses**

Below average responses gave more descriptive accounts of two artists' works. Often these essays failed to address the bulleted 'prompts' or the direction to use a 'range of examples'. Speculative interpretations were interwoven with conventional opinions regarding the selected examples.

## **SECTION III — ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 12**

*Look at Plates 13–16.*

*Examine the impact of mass media and the consumer society on twentieth-century artworks.*

*Refer to TWO OR MORE plates and other examples you have studied.*

### **General comments**

This question attracted confident and knowledgeable responses that referenced the plates, Pop artists — Warhol, Hamilton, Wesselman — and feminist issues and artists Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman in the discussion of mass media and consumerism and their connections to art practice. The plates were addressed with an analytical approach rather than description and were placed, along with other examples, in a social and cultural context.

### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses made sophisticated cultural and social connections between the works discussed, revealed a strong evidence of art knowledge and investigated the impact of mass media and consumerism with personal interpretations. The commodification of the art object, the influence of the capitalist system in the art world and the contexts of modernity and postmodernity were addressed when referring to the plates and other appropriate examples. Questions of the validity of the gallery setting were raised through Holzer, notions of consumerism examined through Guangyi, the philosophy of Cubism discussed through Gris, and issues of commercialism and the power of advertising evaluated through Fluey. There was a high level of understanding of language used in coherent and highly synthesised discussions which referenced art historians and art critics in examining the question.

### **Average responses**

Average responses explained the social and cultural contexts of selected works with limited links to and understanding of mass media, consumerism and the art world. When referring to the plates, works were often described rather than analysed and interpreted and were not placed in a cultural context. Some links were made between the plates and other artists working in the same media and with similar concerns, such as Holzer with Kruger and Kris with Picasso and Duchamp. Art language was less sophisticated and not used systematically.

### **Less than average responses**

Less than average responses made judgements and explanations based on opinion evidencing little art knowledge or understanding of cultural connections and the implications of the question. These responses were totally reliant on the plates for their content which took the form of a 2 Unit Section II response.

## **SECTION IV — ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 13**

*Examine how contemporary designers resolve design problems and deal with issues important to design today.*

*Refer to a range of significant examples.*

### **General comments**

There were very few responses to this question, most of which showed evidence of thorough preparation. Most candidates investigated ways in which architecture has dealt with ecological issues, particularly Glenn Murcutt and Phillip Cox.

### **Excellent and above average comments**

Excellent responses addressed all aspects of the question, offering a diverse range of designers and examples, recognising different design processes. Their examples were appropriate and well understood, and placed within a design context. The selected designs were interpreted in a sophisticated manner.

### **Average comments**

Average responses tended to be descriptive of examples, without an investigation into design processes or a knowledge of the design context.

### **Further advice**

A range of designers should be investigated in the study of this focus area. Ideally this would include designers working in a range of fields such as architecture and urban design; typography and graphic design; product and industrial design.

Candidates should also be aware of the distinction between ‘historical’ and ‘contemporary’ and be able to define these in relation to their selected design works. Some average responses attempted a discussion of Frank Lloyd Wright as a contemporary designer.

## **SECTION IV — ART AND MEDIA**

### **Question 14**

*Investigate the nature of the relationship between technology and design in the 20th century.*

*Refer to a range of design forms and/or movements.*

### **Excellent and above average responses**

A small number of well prepared candidates attempted this question. Excellent responses investigated links between technology and design and explained these in a 20th century context. Works discussed ranged from Bauhaus designs to the functionalism of International Style architecture as exemplified by Van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and Harry Seidler, to Marc Newsomes's Lockheed Lounge.

### **Average responses**

Average responses made statements about technology without sufficient explanation. The relationships between technology and design were stated without definition or elaboration. Selected examples were discussed in a less sophisticated and multi-layered manner.

## **SECTION IV — ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 15**

*Look at Plates 17–20.*

*Give an account of the interaction between art and design in different historical and/or contemporary contexts.*

*Refer to ONE OR MORE plates and a range of significant examples.*

### **General comments**

There were very few responses to this question, with plates 18 and 19 as popular selections. In discussing these plates candidates reflected some contextual knowledge and understanding of the architectural styles of Art Nouveau and the Bauhaus.

### **Above average responses**

Above average responses reflected a firm understanding of both historical and contemporary examples of art and design traditions and practices. Clear analogies were drawn between art movements of the mid 20th century and innovations in design with the subtleties of aesthetic qualities of art and the functional qualities of design addressed. The Bauhaus as a movement was appropriately cited to explain the relationship between art and design with references to Mondrian and Le Corbusier. These responses, however, were not able to synthesise and articulate this interaction between art and design on a more sophisticated level.

### **Average responses**

Average responses revealed inconsistencies in contextual knowledge and relied on personal opinions rather than evidence with some attempts to reference the plates and other examples. The question was addressed in a limited way without understanding all requirements.

## **SECTION IV — ART AND DESIGN**

### **Question 16**

*Design today increasingly evokes nostalgia, heritage and the past in order to invent traditions for the present.*

*Argue a case for or against this statement, with references to TWO OR MORE examples of architecture and/or design.*

### **General comments**

A very small but well prepared candidature attempted this question with most candidates selecting Australian designers, principally architects Murcutt, Cox, Seidler, Foster and Valla to advance their arguments. The question evoked some passionate debate about the development of East Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and Walsh Bay while other responses referenced functional design.

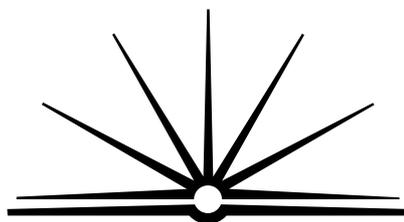
### **Excellent and above average responses**

Excellent and above average responses presented convincing and synthesised arguments for the retention of tradition and heritage within redevelopments in Sydney's CBD. They analysed specific examples and artists to debate the statement, with some presenting arguments for and against heritage redevelopment. Examples were placed within historical and cultural contexts such as the Bauhaus, Modernism, Minimalism, Colonial Australian, Early Sydney and rural traditions. Candidates were able to discuss the design features of the 1950s and 1960s as influences on the contemporary reinterpretation of the past.

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BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

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**1998** HSC

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**EXAMINATION  
REPORT**

**Visual Arts  
Submitted Works**

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## **VISUAL ARTS — SUBMITTED WORKS**

The candidature of Visual Arts at the Higher School Certificate has continued to grow in size every year. In 1997 there were 8751 students. In 1998 there were 8778 students who presented for the 2/3 Unit (Common) Visual Arts examination. 3621 students presented for the 3 Unit (Additional) examination of which 3222 submitted a second artwork. In the other 3 Unit options, 350 students undertook the second written examination and 49 students submitted Integrated Visual/Verbal Studies.

### **Submitted Artworks 2/3 Unit (Common)**

Submitted Works were marked in 1998 using the scales set up in each of the Media Areas. The scales were formed based on the qualities of the works submitted for this marking period and reflected the trends and changes evident in comparison with the works submitted in 1997. The Marking Guide was also updated during the scaling period to reflect the current candidature and was then used during marking in conjunction with the scales. Scales in each Media Area were cross-correlated at the 26–30, 31–35 and 46–50 mark ranges to ensure equity for all students. Please refer to the ‘Strengths and Trends in Scales’ on page 4.

The emergent Media Areas in 1998 in terms of increased numbers of candidates are Collection of Works, Computer Generated Graphics, Ceramics, Photography, Graphics, Wearables, and Textiles and Fibre. The largest areas remain Painting and Drawing.

Markers commented on the excellent quality of the Submitted Works in 1998 in terms of depth and breadth. The commitment and skills of students are evident as well as quality teaching and learning with evidence of the successful, dynamic and active partnership of students and teachers to produce many works exemplifying the values of the art field as well as those of an exemplary Art education.

There is also evidence that students have embraced technological and material advances in innovative and reflective ways. This was especially evident in Photography, Film/Video and Computer Generated Graphics where the better submissions were characterised by the successful synthesis of new technologies with art conventions, values and attitudes to produce sophisticated works which were both highly skilled and interpretive.

There has been an increase in the presentation by candidates of a series of works rather than a single work. This is noticeable in Media Areas where in the past the presentation of a single work has been more than acceptable. In Painting and Sculpture, many students are producing a body of work in which the processes of painting are made manifest in accomplished and fully resolved works. Coherence is sustained through the use of underlying, often multi-layered and complex concepts. Generally, the numbers of works in a series has increased, possibly as candidates respond to contemporary postmodern art practices.

Postmodern trends towards regionalism, fragmentation and nostalgia are also reflected in works presented in 1998. Candidates submitted works that exemplify cultural values other than the dominant European/Australian culture, where the boundaries that contain the conventions of particular Media Areas are blurred and traditional subject matters and skills have been reasserted. Modernist concerns with reductionism and the abstract have given way to an emphasis on the figural in many submissions.

There has been a decrease in the number of submitted works that contravene the Subject Rules. 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 marked in corporate or itinerant marking. Failure to comply with these rules will result in lower marks awarded to submitted artworks; see 'Marking Guide 1998 Only', on pages 8–9.

Students are reminded that excessive framing devices do not advantage submissions. Glass is prohibited in framing. Flat works are best presented in simple cardboard mounts and without frames. Do not submit works with projecting hooks or other hanging devices as these can cause damage. Careful attention should be given to size, weight, duration of works and exclusion of dangerous materials from works.

## **Strengths and Trends in Scales**

### **1 Painting**

- An emphasis on the figure as subject, with relatively few non-figurative submissions
- Reliance on traditional genres and painting conventions
- Fewer works utilise postmodern devices, reference contemporary art practices, or reconceptualise notions about paintings
- Works at the top end of the scale are subtle and layered, demonstrating strong understandings of contemporary approaches to representation
- Many candidates are working in series or presenting multi-panelled pieces. These works demonstrate a strong reflective quality and a sense of decision-making which is controlled and sophisticated in relation to sequencing and selection
- Subject matter includes genres of the human form, landscape and still life. Many mid-range works deal with fantasy imagery, eg witches, ghouls and fairies
- Many works incorporate a range of media on heavily worked surfaces

### **2 Drawing**

- Strong evidence of an understanding of the expressive qualities and potential of the drawing medium
- Evidence of willingness to experiment with a range of media and tools
- Large numbers of submissions used pencil, charcoal and/or pastel
- Many students submitted works in series
- The use of the figure as subject matter is evident throughout the scale
- Subject matter other than the figure is represented by landscapes, cityscapes and animals, illustrating a range of achievement levels in the interpretation of this subject matter
- Works at the higher end of the scale reflect an awareness of historical art and contemporary images and styles

### 3 Sculpture

- Works on the sculpture scale relate well to those on other scales, including Design, eg totems on 31–35 with conventional gouache designs. Both works evidence a fairly ‘safe’ exploration of media
- Works at the higher end of the scale communicate a strong concept with a full awareness of the possibilities of the selected media, considering aspects such as manipulation of surface, and the use of colour to evoke a response

### 4 Photography

- Scale reflects increasing diversity of submissions as well as the changing trends in Photography from year to year
- Candidature is availing itself of the range of materials and methods available, from the latest fibre speed papers, to the brands of toners that tender a richer result and greater consistency in terms of colour saturation
- Scale reflects an understanding of photographic traditions, from portraiture to genre, still life and landscape works as well as more conceptual approaches and the difficult aesthetic and technical considerations of underwater photography
- In the upper range, works demonstrate a level of technical expertise as well as astute aesthetic judgement and a sophisticated understanding of the elements of lighting and composition
- Many works in the mid to high ranges of the scale reflected contemporary art practices and influences
- Works in most parts of the scale (above 20) showed careful editing skills and consideration of selection within the series submitted
- Diverse and adventurous approaches continue to be represented on the scale, as well as the new use of ‘old’ traditions, eg cyanotypes
- Colour is generally handled with sensitivity and care

### 5 Graphics

- The scale reflects high levels of experimentation with techniques, as well as the increasing trend towards combining printmaking processes and integrating other media
- Works at the upper end of the scale successfully integrate a range of techniques or demonstrate mastery of a specific printmaking method
- Average submissions also indicate a comprehensive investigation of technique; however, they are less well controlled and less resolved
- Many works use mediated imagery as a source of inspiration. At the higher end of the scale these images are developed, reinterpreted and recontextualised with subtlety and sophistication

## **6 Ceramics**

- Above average and excellent works reflect an exploration and refinement of forms, with well integrated decoration
- Candidates have investigated glaze bodies/oxides and some have explored the application of non-traditional media such as acrylics
- A strong sculptural element is evident with an emphasis on surface
- Average works show evidence of experimentation and growing confidence with the media; often demonstrating a reliance on colour and pattern rather than refinement and resolution of forms
- Below average works reflect a naive handling of the media and poor control of forms, with poorly constructed works appearing to be a first experience of the media
- Some works explore the aesthetics of clay, while others explore a range of subject matter and concepts

## **7 Design**

- Scale reflects the increase in flat works and increasing numbers of computer generated works
- Applied and functional design projects continue to be popular, as is the traditional gouache design
- Fewer 3D works and models, eg architectural designs than in the past

## **8 Textiles**

- A strong sense of colour is evident
- Emphasis on painted surfaces with few machine or hand-stitched works
- Few works extend surfaces and exploit the reef technique. Works are generally flat with highly decorative and contained surfaces that do not consider the use of spaces and voids
- Works are limited to rectangular formats with no free-form shapes or compositions
- Few works explore the aesthetic qualities of fabrics
- In average and above average works the human figure, objects and concepts are explored. This year the average and below average works rely on clichéd images of sea life, birds, landscape and nature

## **9 Wearables**

- Colour is prominent in the majority of works on the scale
- A wide variety of fabrics, fibres and threads have been utilised
- Works are presented in ensemble form with at least two pieces (and often more)
- Felting, beading, appliqué and objects integrated with varying degrees of success were popular this year

- The sculptural possibilities of wearables are acknowledged on the scale as are works that use found and non-traditional objects
- There are no works that explore machine stitching as an expressive tool, however, there is an increase in the application of hand stitching to embellish surfaces
- Works in the average and below average ranges rely on indiscriminate use of unsympathetic media, including painted surfaces and glued on fabric appliqué

## **10 Computer-generated graphics**

- More sophisticated and familiar application of tools/graphic design software/programs across the range of works. Programs that predominate are Photoshop, Corel, Morph and Quark Express
- There is a subtle shift from a fascination with the media and ‘what the computer can do’ to how the media can be used to explore and develop a student-centred concept into an artwork
- An emerging trend was a strong interest in exploiting the potential of scanning as a technical strategy and as the primary tool to transform everyday objects, people and environments
- A number of submissions integrated computer generated images with a variety of media such as wood, plastics, to create the final work
- Themes/ideas such as destruction, destiny, love, hate, isolation, identity, the body, the future and popular culture and the virtual were represented

## **11 Film and video**

- Works utilising digital editing technique/processes
- Text for most works is still a difficult form. This reveals itself in two ways — either engaging, meaningful text is tossed against the visuals or less than developed ideas are simply inter-cut onto the visuals and used as an integral part of the visuals
- Credits and acknowledgements that are effective and polished title and end credits
- Video-paint/posterisation/negative special effects are diminishing as candidates engage with more sophisticated techniques of production
- The confident integration of all elements of production

## Marking Guide 1998 Only

RANK RANGE	ATTRIBUTES	OVERALL JUDGEMENT
50	RESOLVED SOPHISTICATED INTERPRETIVE COMPLEX SUBTLE ACCOMPLISHED APPROPRIATE INFORMED HIGHLY SKILLED INNOVATIVE REFLECTIVE FOCUSED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>art conventions, values and attitudes are interpreted in an authoritative way.</li> <li>sophisticated and subtle representation of concepts with a strong, innovative and confident synthesis of subject matter, form(s) and media.</li> <li>conceptual basis strong with consideration of an intended audience.</li> <li>evidence of critical reflection, selection and evaluation.</li> <li>works complex, multi-layered, resolved, accomplished to sustain interest at a high conceptual level.</li> <li>considerable and informed knowledge of the art field, historical and/or contemporary.</li> <li>innovative in terms of conception, process and completion.</li> </ul>
41		
40		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>art conventions, values and attitudes are interpreted in an appropriate way.</li> <li>less sophisticated and subtle in terms of the way concepts are represented with inconsistent/uneven attempts at the synthesis of subject matter.</li> <li>some critical reflection evident in choices the student has made.</li> <li>some consideration of an intended audience.</li> </ul>
31		
30	CONVENTIONAL INCONSISTENT LIMITED LESS COMPLEX OBVIOUS PARTLY RESOLVED CLICHED OVERWORKED SKILLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>art conventions, values and attitudes are inconsistently and sometimes inappropriately used.</li> <li>less attempt at the synthesis of subject matter, form(s) and media.</li> <li>limited critical reflection evident, with works which are not conceptually coherent, unresolved or overworked.</li> <li>limited and superficial knowledge of the art field.</li> <li>little consideration of an intended audience.</li> </ul>
21		
20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>naive or little knowledge of art conventions, values and attitudes.</li> <li>limited attempt at synthesis of subject matter, forms and media.</li> <li>little critical reflection so that works are simple, unresolved, unskilled with an uninformed conceptual basis.</li> <li>naive in terms of conception, process and completion.</li> <li>no consideration of an intended audience.</li> </ul>
11	NAIVE SIMPLE SUPERFICIAL CONFUSED	
10	INCOHERENT UNRESOLVED INCOMPLETE UNINFORMED UNSKILLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no knowledge of art conventions, values and attitudes.</li> <li>no attempt at the synthesis of subject matter, form(s) and media.</li> <li>no critical reflection evident in the works which are unresolved, incomplete with no conceptual basis.</li> <li>works reflect no knowledge of the art field.</li> </ul>
1		

## Some Indicators to Aid Judgement

ENGAGEMENT WITH ART MAKING PRACTICES	ENGAGEMENT WITH SUBJECT MATTER	ENGAGEMENT WITH ART VALUES AND ATTITUDES	DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATION OF A CONCEPTUAL BASIS	ENGAGEMENT WITH FORMS/MEDIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustained and highly accomplished involvement in the art making process is evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subject matter complex, subtle, working on multiple levels.</li> <li>subject matter based on the sophisticated analysis and interpretation of ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>artworks evidenced by a sophisticated knowledge of the values and attitudes of the art field.</li> <li>highly interpretive use of these values and attitudes in the production of compelling visual statements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>artworks which are based on a coherent and complex underlying concept in the form of ideas, attitudes, feelings, images.</li> <li>communication of concept in an innovative and transformative manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustained, sophisticated and highly accomplished engagement in art making demonstrated in an understanding of the expressive potential of selected forms.</li> <li>expressive use of materials to produce meaning and visual impact.</li> <li>sophisticated, subtle and informed choice and use of signs, symbols and images as a vehicle for meaning in the artwork.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustained involvement in the art making process with works developed inconsistently or partly unresolved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subject matter complex and multi-layered but handled in a less sophisticated and interpretive manner.</li> <li>subject matter based on a more conventional analysis of ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some engagement with the values and attitudes of the art field but in a more conventionally understood and less interpretive manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conceptual basis which is strong but may be more conventional.</li> <li>communication of concept appropriate and informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a sustained involvement in art making with a particular form(s).</li> <li>skilled and appropriate use of materials and exploration of their expressive potential.</li> <li>coherent use of signs, symbols and images which are more conventional and less sophisticated.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence of involvement in the art making process, however works may appear partly resolved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subject matter conventional or cliched, less interpretive; may be overworked.</li> <li>subject matter immediate or transparent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a less sustained and less knowledgeable engagement with the values and attitudes of the art field and how they may be represented visually.</li> <li>less resolved visual statements which may be uneven.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a conceptual basis which is less complex and only partly resolved.</li> <li>conceptual basis which is superficial, unresolved or incoherent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited involvement with particular form(s).</li> <li>inconsistent use of materials not fully utilising their expressive potential.</li> <li>use of cliched signs, symbols and images in an obvious way.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superficial engagement with the art making process. Works may appear unresolved, obvious or overworked.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subject matter handled in a naive and awkward manner.</li> <li>subject matter obvious, overworked, and/or confused.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a limited understanding of the values and attitudes of the art field and how these may be represented visually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conceptual basis which is superficial, unresolved or incoherent.</li> <li>difficulties in communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some involvement with form(s) but at an uninformed level.</li> <li>unskilled use of materials denying their expressive potential.</li> <li>superficial and uninformed use of signs, symbols and images which are cliched and naive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited understanding and little evidence with the art making process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subject matter which is simple and/or incoherent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no knowledge or engagement with the values and attitudes of the art field.</li> <li>poorly conceived visual statements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no evidence of a conceptual basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little or no attention to or knowledge of form(s)/media.</li> </ul>

## Forms of Images and Objects

### 1 Ceramics

#### General Comments

Submissions in Ceramics reflected a growing interest in the exploration of expressive, sculptural hand-built forms. Candidates exploited the plastic qualities of clay and allied surface treatments producing sinuous, rounded forms that were treated with coloured slips, oxides and glazes to create evocative surfaces. The scale and construction of works showed a marked development compared to others in recent years, made possible by the selection of open-bodied, grogged clay on larger, more sculptural forms.

There was a decline in the submission of functional forms, which were represented by wheel thrown vessels and hand built interpretation of traditional forms such as tea pots. There were few slip cast works submitted; a number of these works were handled before they were leather hard and therefore their purity of form was compromised by finger marks. There were a number of submissions relying on the use of commercially produced 'greenware' painted with designs, often poorly placed, which deny an engagement with the ceramic medium and any evidence of process beyond the decoration of a surface. It should be noted that such works may be more advantageously placed in the design form. Submissions were often inconsistent in terms of the form, subject matter, construction or decoration with less resolved work being included to raise the number of works in the submission. Selection of the most resolved pieces is advised, as less resolved works detract from aesthetic impact of the submitted work.

Surface treatments reflected a growing level of understanding of the expressive use of ceramics materials. Coloured slips, oxides and underglazes were used in a painterly way in layers, reflecting controls of multiple firings. These surface treatments were applied before bisque firing and manipulated by techniques such as sgraffito and combing to reveal the clay body underneath. An interest in matt glazes and in dry decorative surfaces was prevalent and slip, oxides (with wax resist) and underglazes were deliberately left unglazed. There was evidence of a sophisticated and highly skilled use of non-traditional decorative techniques such as acrylic paint.

It was pleasing to note the use of appropriate and sympathetic materials in a number of submissions; however, bases or materials used to support pieces should be considered carefully in order to enhance rather than detract from the aesthetics of the work.

Subject matter ranged from an investigation of the work of other ceramicists and cultures to works that explored traditional vessel forms while incorporating personal sculptural interpretations. Many candidates created works that combined imagery and concepts from art history, specific cultures and comments about society and used the ceramic medium to create personal interpretations of the stylistic features and issues they had discovered.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average works were characterised by an exploration of form, surface and decorative treatments. There was evidence of an underlying conceptual basis reflected in an accomplished manipulation of the clay medium and an exploitation of its expressive potential. Submissions were presented in a consistent series with a strong relationship between form and decorative imagery and surfaces as well as consideration of an interplay between forms. Forms were well finished with a highly accomplished control of contour, and bases and rims were evenly thin and shaped. Placement of designs and surface treatments complemented the forms and evidenced a high level of critical reflection, understanding and skill.

Works revealed an understanding and control of slip, glaze and oxide surfaces, reflecting thorough and informed testing and experimentation. Some works explored a number of decoration and firing techniques within one piece, revealing a sustained engagement with the medium. Concepts were further enhanced and reinforced by the appropriate selection of clay types and decorative materials.

## **Average Works**

Average works were inconsistent in their quality and in the relationship between forms. They were characterised by poorly integrated sculptural additions and displayed a limited exploration of form. While forms were resolved they lacked refinement and appeared as a series of learning experiences that were technically driven and were treated frontally from one viewpoint, rather than being considered in the round. While emerging technical competence was evident, there were visible faults in construction, the control of contour and the finishing of bases, rims and internal surfaces. A number of works were very heavy both visually and physically and lacked exploration of the full potential of the clay medium. At times decoration was poorly placed and did not integrate with the whole form.

## **Below Average Works**

Below average works were characterised by a naive and limited engagement with the media and little evidence of process. Many were crude in concept and construction and in some cases simply modelled or carved blocks of clay were submitted. Technical flaws such as extensive cracking, exposed joins at coils, uneven glazing and a poor control of form and finish characterised works at this level.

Submissions often lacked coherence as a series, with little relationship between pieces, and appeared as early explorations of form that were either literal, unadventurous or ill-considered as three dimensional objects. A design basis was lacking with little evidence of inquiry into the practices of artists and cultures. Works were naive interpretations of conventional ceramic forms, being repeated with minimum variation or personal interpretation.

Subject matter was often clichéd and poorly integrated into the work. At times it was naive and displayed limited observation of the subject. Found objects were poorly integrated and used unsympathetically, usually to obscure technical limitations rather than reinforce a concept.

## **Further Advice**

It should be noted that the weight and size restrictions in the subject limitations refer to the total submission when packed, not individual pieces. There were instances of flagrant disregard of this rule.

The current guidelines do not stipulate a specific minimum or maximum number of pieces. It should be noted that selective submission of the strongest work is advised as all pieces submitted are considered in the marking process. A strong and consistent series of works is desired.

## **2 Collection of Works**

### **General Comments**

Collection of Works continues to be a popular category for candidates who do not wish to limit their art making to one media. Candidates are approaching this category in a very varied manner. Many submissions were linked thematically or conceptually or were presented as installation. An equal amount of works were presented as separate pieces in different media, eg a painting, a set of drawings and a set of photographs, with the majority being linked by a unifying theme. Photography and sculpture remain a popular choice as part of a collection, while some candidates included videos, graphics or computer generated images in their collections.

There was a noticeable decrease in the use of social, political or environmental issues as subject matter. The trend towards figurative subject matter continued and was often interpreted in a highly personal way, exploring issues of cultural heritage, aspects of the self or family and friends. Many works suggested the influence of 'The Body' exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW leading to an exploration of skin, corporeal themes and medico-scientific exploration of the body. An increasing number of students are turning to very simple or ordinary objects for inspiration, eg eggs, household utensils and leaves. Rather than trying to 'save the world' through their artwork, these students responded to the immediate and explored the subtleties of form, colour, texture and mood to produce highly sensitive and personal works. Many of these submissions were richly complex and succeeded in showing 'more' while using 'less'.

### **Excellent and Above Average Works**

In the excellent and above average range students demonstrated a sophisticated handling of the chosen media areas. These submissions revealed the students' enjoyment and passion for the subject matter, theme and media and demonstrated a compelling aesthetic sensibility. They invited interpretations on different levels or required the viewer to search for and consider the messages conveyed. They were often brave and risk-taking works both in concept and technical explorations. Some works were produced to be interacted with in some way, which enhanced their appeal.

Excellent and above average students also tackled the issue of what to select for submission by being discriminating in culling their collections back to only the most outstanding pieces. There appeared to have been a planned decision made at the very beginning to submit a collection of works rather than a haphazard piecing together of works at the end.

## **Average Works**

Submissions in the average range often chose 'safe' selections with a limited exploration of media and process or subject matter. Ideas were explored at a literal or obvious level. Many submissions had areas of very good quality but were let down by weaker works in the collection. These weaker works detracted from the overall impact of the work. There was a tendency to submit everything a student had done, even if some works were only early media explorations or poorly resolved works.

## **Below Average Works**

Below average works were often unrelated exercises put together to make a collection and showed very limited exploration of media or awkward attempts at manipulation of techniques and materials. These students resorted to clichéd and obvious subject matter and showed little evidence of critical reflection.

## **Further Advice**

Students are advised that they must remain within size, weight and duration limits as set out by the Board of Studies. Some collections contained large numbers of pieces that were impossible to display and clearly exceeded the guidelines. It is advisable to include a plan of how the submission is to be displayed, but as the markers cannot denote excessive time to the marking of individual works it is not advisable to provide an overly complex or time-consuming display plan. Some works also included lengthy journals that did nothing to enhance the overall impact of the work and could not be taken into consideration as part of the marking process.

## **3. Computer-Generated Graphics**

### **General Comments**

There have been an increasing number of submissions revealing a greater understanding and knowledge of how to exploit the potential of digital media. These have been translated and transformed from a diverse range of ideas, concepts and subject matter into sophisticated and imaginative 2D, 3D and 4D artworks. In general there has also been an increase in the number of film and video based computer generated submissions. Notably an emergent trend was the investigation of the potential of scanning and how the scanner can be used as a creative tool to manipulate original images and drawings and real objects. There was also a noticeable trend towards exploration of the abstract qualities of digitisation through the application of texture generators and custom filters such as 'Eye Candy' to scanned drawings, photographs (original and appropriated), collages and images.

Many submissions in this area are often conceived and submitted as a flat 2D series of works. Although this practice remains strong there was an increase in the number of submissions that integrated computer generated images with a variety of traditional media including wood, plastics, acetate, poster prints, light boxes to create innovative two and three dimensional works.

Importantly, a continuing trend across the range of work submitted was a shift away from a fascination with the media and ‘what the computer can do’ to how the potential of the media can be used to explore and develop a concept into an artwork. Hence, the use of the media becomes intrinsic to the realisation of the student’s ideas.

The comic strip format and the cartoon character are persistent trends in this area, however, many submissions borrow styles, ideas and techniques directly from pulp/pop culture (DC comics, action figures etc) resulting in artworks that reveal the student’s restricted and limited engagement with this genre.

Flat manipulations of still images relied on ‘Photoshop’, ‘Corel’ and ‘Illustrator’ (most candidates use a combination of these) rather than investigating a 3D software such as ‘Bryce KPT’ and ‘Poser KPT’ packages.

While few candidates attempted to construct works engaging multimedia strategies and interactive presentations, an increasing number of submissions exhibited a diverse range of presentation formats rather than a traditional linear or sequential series presentation.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average works combined an innovative approach to the use of materials, conceptually sophisticated ideas and considered application of technical strategies as well as presentation that enhanced the works.

Many of these works also revealed an insightful and/or playful approach to a diverse range of subject matter, ideas and concepts. Evidence of the successful use of layering images with text demonstrated skilled and subtle use of Photoshop selections, feathering and filters. When presented as a series these works were very consistent, highly resolved, individual images that worked together to enhance the overall visual message.

Works at this level are characterised by the successful synthesis of technical means with art convention. They demonstrated quality teaching and learning.

## **Average Works**

Works in the average range tended to remain in a ‘safe zone’ in terms of both the use of technology and ideas. Some of these works were reminiscent of advertising imagery and often revealed little about the student or the intent. Images tended to work on one level but not across a range of emotions, skills and ideas.

Candidates often used current events and global issues in a clichéd and predictable manner. The candidates showed some control of the software while demonstrating little manipulation of the images.

Filters (special effects) were often used as features of the work, and were overused on occasion without adding meaning to the work. Often the most dramatic filters were used: mosaics, fine edges, distort, twirl, emboss, lens flare and apply lighting. These filters provided little meaning or consistency in the artwork, often making the artwork look confused and unresolved.

These works often used appropriated art and popular imagery in a predictable way, eg Munch's 'Scream', Botticelli's 'Venus' and Dali's 'Resurrection'.

## **Below Average Works**

Below average works were often one-dimensional in concept and technically inconsistent. These works also displayed naivety in structure with poor concepts and skills combining for inadequate submissions. The candidate's work displayed a lack of understanding of the media area that often reflected a clumsy approach to art making. Photographs were often appropriated from publications and then placed with little understanding of composition.

Many of these works showed little or no consideration for presentation. When presented in a series there was often an inconsistency in the smaller print size. If the paper size was consistent and the image was printed smaller it often demonstrated that the student did not understand how the works relate to each other.

Artworks in this category were often printed on low quality output devices. Some works were printed using dot-matrix printers and low quality bubble-jets. This affected the quality of tone and richness of colour and overall potential of the works.

Some works were direct scans of collages and drawings with no obvious manipulation or enhancement by a computer. This also indicated little understanding for the potential of the medium.

## **Further Advice**

Teachers would be wise to encourage students in this area to start with a strong concept and visual idea. Emphasis should also be given to the importance of proof reading. Large numbers of works contained spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, detracting from the overall impression of the work.

Artworks that are processed on the computer but have design briefs may be advantaged if submitted in the Design category.

Teachers and students need to be aware of problems when using landscape and figure-emulating software. Software such as Bryce, Poser, 3D modelling and similar packages are worthwhile additions to some artworks, but when presented as is, they do not fulfil the aims of the syllabus. When using these programs it may be worthwhile exporting the file into Photoshop to further expand or manipulate the image.

Filters such as twirl, distort, mosaic, emboss etc are often over used. Better results can be gained when combining these with other filters. The majority of scans are low resolution. It is important to scan images at 100 dpi or greater, depending on computer system and storage ability.

Some scans would also benefit from scaling at the scanning stage, with all scanners having this facility. Small images that have been stretched far larger than the original scan size create problematic pixelation, which is detrimental to the clarity of the printed image. Scanning at either a higher resolution or by scaling will keep the scan sharp.

Teachers should also be aware of the different compression types that are associated with graphic files. Jpeg format is compression that deteriorates the image with each save. It is better when constructing the artwork to save as tiff or psd file until the work is complete. If you require compression, then save as jpeg. Zip drives may be considered a further option to the saving and storage of imagery.

Some artworks showed evidence of adhesive stains, which occurred when certain glues had been applied to the back of the paper. The glue reacted with the paper and stained the image. When window mounting, adhesive tape should be used to simply adhere the images to the mount. Spray adhesives cause the greatest problems and are generally volatile. At present most digital imagery can be unstable when in contact with adverse conditions.

## **4 Design**

### **General Comments**

Interest in this category has remained steady, with Design attracting a similar number of submissions to 1997. In comparison with recent years there was evidence of an improvement overall in standard in Design, with few submissions ranking in the below average category. Corresponding to this improvement was an increase in the number of candidates submitting work with an appropriate Visual Arts design brief. This is a most encouraging trend.

Computer generated imagery has become increasingly popular, and was represented in the range from below average through to excellent submissions. Innovative and clever explorations of design using the computer as a tool were highly successful, with below average submissions relying on an uninformed use of limited program functions in an attempt to enhance poor design.

A positive trend was the wide ranging, thoughtful use of media and the extremely varied selection of forms within the possible scope of design and designed objects. Examples range from modernist furniture through to interactive therapy blocks. The majority of submissions were two dimensional designs, with posters and book illustration proving the most popular.

Series of works were numerous. Candidates who were successful in this area created engaging works that held the viewer's interest through their exploration of the expressive potential of each work within the series. In less successful submissions candidates developed a design, adapting it with little variation throughout the work.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent submissions demonstrated a thorough understanding and application of the formal qualities of design. These works were highly accomplished, often innovative with extensive research, planning and prior experimentation evident in the quality of the final design. Candidates in this category had a clear understanding of the function of design and tailored their submission in an informed way that considered their target audience and market. Wit and humour were often strong elements in these works. A great diversity of design forms was apparent in above average and excellent works. While few architectural designs were submitted, the most successful demonstrated an awareness and understanding of the traditions of architecture and the integral role of the site.

Above average works featured a sustained involvement in the art making process and knowledgeable and appropriate use of materials. Many candidates in this range submitted applied designs. It was pleasing to see the number of candidates who considered the production process by submitting the original design along with the commercially produced application of it; for example, a series of related homeware objects, book illustrations, CD inserts etc.

## **Average Works**

Average works restricted visual solutions to established design conventions in a limited and predictable manner. Students made choices that evidenced a basic understanding of the selection and integration of materials, often resulting in clichéd or inconsistent designs. A reasonable understanding of layout, use of text and formal qualities were apparent in many works. While works in this category were reasonably competent, they lacked ambition in concept and theme and were without visual punch. A number of candidates borrowed cartoons and images from popular culture without understanding the full possibilities of appropriation and with only minor improvisations and adaptations to the image.

## **Below Average Works**

Works in the below average category appeared to be a first experience, and were often repeated in naive experiments with only slight variation to produce a very limited solution, eg one design presented in four colour ways. Unskilled manipulation of a reasonable range of media in two and three dimensions was characteristic of this category. Gold texta and biro were insensitively used and disproportionately represented in works in this range.

## **Further Advice**

Students are strongly advised to consider their design brief in the development of submissions in the Design category. Successful students worked to a succinct design brief rather than to a lengthy and wordy description of their intentions that moved beyond the role of a brief into an explanation of the work. These explanations were disregarded in the marking process as they are not permitted to form part of a submission in Visual Arts.

Students are encouraged to research all areas of their chosen design field including historical and contemporary practices, conventions, structural restrictions and presentation. Consideration of these influential factors in the design process was evident in the more successful works.

As mentioned in the 1997 comments, students' research could be extended by the use of resources such as the kit, *Design in the Visual Arts*, a support document for Visual Arts and the Visual Arts Content Endorsed Course in Design.

Candidates should view this area as an opportunity to display their knowledge of design conventions and to demonstrate their ability to create fresh, innovative interpretations by challenging and reinterpreting these conventions rather than being constrained by them.

## 5 Drawing

### General Comments

Figurative work, portraiture and comic genres still predominate as subjects in Drawing. Very few candidates were willing to explore abstract or gestural drawing as an expressive device in its own right.

In a large number of works, subjects ranged from family and friends to more challenging investigations of intimate ideas, beliefs and feelings. The majority of works referenced the student's own world with a declining interest in clichéd and overworked themes.

The evidence of influence from the Recommended Areas of Study was noticeable, particularly that of the heroic and tragic. This theme was interpreted mainly using heroes from popular culture, or tragedies such as war, car accidents and endangered species.

A strengthening trend was that of life drawing. Candidates represented the figure confidently and knowledgeably, exploring a variety of gestural marks and media.

Probably the most enduring trend was the portrait, popular across the whole scale. These ranged from merely copying photographs, to more successful works that interpreted the subject matter in a more individual and personal matter. When these works employed wit and humour, unusual viewpoints and multiple perspectives they were more engaging.

Landscape, a perennial subject, was surprisingly under-represented this year. More works were inspired by the culture and ethnic diversity of our society. A further trend is a tendency for students to use drawing as an investigative, diaristic tool to record notions of time as well as space. These works reference ideas and attitudes similar to John Wolseley and other Australian artists engaged in recording journeys through landscape/interiors/still life. There is also a tendency towards a series of artworks over the single work.

It is pleasing to note the majority of candidates who, entering the category of Drawing, displayed a knowledge and familiarity with the process of mark making. The standard of drawing overall was very high.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Drawings that were in the excellent and above average range were characterised by strong concepts and skilful handling of composition and media.

These works revealed a sustained, accomplished effort, often with a well researched, intelligent understanding of chosen art practices and knowledge of artists and their work.

Excellent artworks demonstrated an awareness of the expressive qualities of various lines and mark making, creating tensions and balance as well as discord and harmony throughout the works. These works revealed a complex understanding of the conventions of art making. Composition, perspective, chiaroscuro were competently resolved. Some candidates in this range distorted and manipulated these conventions.

Works in this category were adventurous and innovative in their choice of subject matter, going well beyond the stereotypical and 'photographic'. They explored unusual viewpoints and were selective in their organisation.

Images were often taken from the personal world of the student, imagined or actual, where a fresh, often highly individual approach was evident.

This range demonstrated expressive and intricate exploration of media. Confident use of materials produced sensitive and dramatic works that retained a feeling of spontaneity and crispness.

The use of colour appeared to be more frequent this year. Many artworks in this category achieved a synthesis of colour that was strong, fresh and exciting. Some works used colour as an expressive element in its own right.

Artworks in this category were not only technically skilful but also conceptually complex and well resolved.

## **Average Works**

Average artworks were less adventurous, with fewer risks taken. These candidates were not always successful, or were conservative at either mastering their chosen media or expressing their selected theme convincingly. This led to inconsistencies within the artworks. Artworks were competent, but safe, not challenging and extending the boundaries of the media, technique and subject matter.

In the average category candidates often gained control of a technique, but exhibited problems in terms of composition and drafting. Average works often used collage to disguise or 'cover-up', rather than add a rich layer to the possibilities of the artwork. In some artworks, tonality was hesitant and passages were often characterised by smudged, dirty areas. While text was generally well integrated and avoided clichés, some drawings were less successful because of the difficulty of integrating a variety of media and the frequently unsympathetic combination of colour and texture.

Themes tended to be more obvious, literal and less conceptual. These works often reflected a lack of confidence and sophistication. For example, portraits tended to be frontal in composition with limited engagement with the possibilities of the richness of portraiture.

Many artworks dealt with subject matter that was mediated from magazines and photographs. The most successful candidates used mediated images in a personalised manner. Human figures, superheroes, fantasy situations, friends and family tended to be the more popular themes.

Generally, artworks in the average category demonstrated a commitment to the visual arts process and much referencing of artworks. These references, however, reflected little interpretation.

Series of works in the average category sometimes relied upon quantity rather than quality, reflecting a lack of discrimination and sophistication in the final selection of artworks for submission.

### **Below Average Works**

In Drawing there were fewer candidates whose works were less than average. The works in this range were stereotypical and unsophisticated in their approach to both the chosen media and the subject matter. There was little evidence to suggest that the candidate had an understanding of studying art or visual arts practices.

Works were often incomplete or unresolved. Candidates had not considered the potential and possibilities of the drawing materials used. In many cases graphite pencil, of one grade, prevailed. There was a heavy reliance on outline and this added to the impression of the work being incomplete.

The artworks lacked a sense of tenacity and thoroughness. They failed to sustain interest and thus any idea or emotion that was being expressed lacked impact. Less than average works seemed to neglect any critical evaluation from the candidate. As a result, the weaker works were often 'one-offs' and lacked sustained development. Works would have been more successful through exploration of perspective, balance, proportion, rendering, colour and composition. Text was used and often poorly integrated with images, thus weakening the whole concept.

Less than average artworks had a tendency to be simplistic in terms of the themes and issues that were explored. Candidates tended to struggle in their communication of the intent and purpose of the art work. Compositions were often symmetrical and frontal. A lack of understanding of integration and treatment of background space was frequently exhibited in their works.

When the figure was attempted, more difficult features such as hands, feet and faces were completely avoided and/or omitted altogether. Popular culture, with little interpretation, and personal symbolism that tended to be clichéd were frequently used.

The less than average works did not fully explore the potential of either the media or concept. These works appeared to be first attempts and not sustained efforts.

### **Further Advice**

It is recommended that when making their initial choice students are best advised to choose a form in which they are experienced, then explore their chosen theme, medium and techniques. When choosing a concept or theme, it should be approached from a personal perspective, rather

than represented in a conventional way. The choice of concept or theme should allow for a sustained investigation. Concept and medium should be carefully related within individual works and across a series of works.

When using media such as oil crayon, chalk pastel or coloured pencils, it is important not to overblend so that the effect becomes muddled or turgid. When using graphite pencil the use of more than one grade will create a fuller tonal range. Care should be taken when applying collaged elements so that they are well integrated into the medium and well balanced in the composition. It is important to consider the composition within single works and across a series of works. Within the compositions, the 'ground' needs to be considered as surface and space, so that the subject matter may be better related to the overall layout.

Teachers and students should consider whether the chosen scale of the drawing is appropriate to the subject matter.

When text (words or statements) is an element in the drawing, it should be integrated aesthetically within the composition. If the meaning of the text is important to the concept or narrative of the work a translation should be provided if the text is in a foreign language.

A series of drawings should be carefully edited. Unresolved or unsuccessful works or parts of works should be excluded from the set. It is not necessary to submit an excessive number of artworks.

## **6 Film and Video**

### **General Comments**

Film and Video continues to provide an original and novel medium through which candidates explore specific themes and ideas. A total of 91 film and video submissions were produced this year, with another 20 specifically computer-generated (CGI) works transferred to video tape.

One of the most apparent trends in the emerging field of film and video is the extensive editing and manipulation of original and appropriated footage using digital/computer-based editing packages, such as Adobe Premiere and Avid Cinema. While the majority of submissions still rely upon traditional editing suites, the current interest in post-production through digital techniques is expanding the potential repertoire of polished, integrated outcomes.

Fortunately trends toward unreflective paintbox/video keying effects (eg negative, solarisation, abstract colourisation) are diminishing as candidates find more appropriate methods for post-production. Candidates are producing more complex and impressive combinations of sound and vision through judicious choices of shots and creative, innovative editing techniques.

Credits and acknowledgements are still frequently omitted, candidates thus missing an opportunity to further enhance the polished nature of a submission. Some candidates produced extremely slick and original titles that were very deliberately incorporated as an integral visual part of the final work.

There is a persistent, residual trend in which candidates are seduced and rather overwhelmed by the glitzy effects and ultra-realism of the digitally-generated image. Unfortunately some

candidates sacrifice meaningful, innovative content in a headlong rush to output the latest effect or software plug-in. Candidates who incorporate digital imagery should recognise the need to follow the established conventions of film production, particularly in terms of the physical construction of a film.

A small number of time-based submissions were produced entirely through 3D animation packages, such as 3D Studio MAX, Lightwave and Extreme 3D. This nascent field of film and video offers a very engaging and potentially very impressive format for exploring ideas that may be awkward or simply not feasible through traditional character/live-action/stop-motion techniques. It is important that candidates consciously and meaningfully refer to relevant conventions of film and video (whether lighting, set design, scripting, matching action, cinematography) in the initial development and subsequent production using these 3D animation packages.

The incorporation of text — whether single words, short statements or lengthy descriptions — is still a challenging, emerging component of film and video. The transparent, obvious treatment of text to merely solidify the underlying intentions of a submission should be avoided. Rather, text should be used as a powerful suggestive device and to embellish the work.

Film and video submissions explored a diverse range of genres and exhibited deliberate stylistic choices both in terms of content, approach, editing and sound mixing/construction. Genres included established filmic forms (such as drama, thriller, film noir), derivatives of prevalent television programming/packaging (soap opera, vox populi, infotainment, documentary, music video, advertising), and various animation techniques (stop-motion, pixelisation, 3D and 2D digital animation). Subject matter included diverse references to the Recommended Areas of Study, particularly popular culture, personal experiences, family life, and the candidate's local/school environment. Submissions frequently adopted a very quirky, idiosyncratic interpretation of subject matter.

Some candidates produced elaborate covers/sleeves. Such covers were appropriately embellished with innovative designs that complement the actual content/themes of the film/video submission.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

The most successful works in film and video provide clearly defined boundaries through the content candidates select and the manner in which the final material is conceived, edited and scored. Imaginative and engaging visuals are well constructed through very competent camera work, tight direction and the sophisticated integration of complex methodologies (parody, irony, satire). Original soundtracks are frequently produced by the candidate themselves or in conjunction with other students who are experienced in audio production. Sound is treated as a very necessary aspect of the total concept and design of the submission.

Candidates reveal a very competent and well developed knowledge and appreciation of conventions and codes of film and video. Such conventions are interpreted with individuality, frequently exhibiting a degree of risk-taking in the construction of innovative scripting, cinematography and editing. Appropriated material is used in a sophisticated manner, not to provide the visual/audio content, but to intimately enhance and supplement the candidate's own footage.

Visually and aesthetically rich, successful works constructed dramatic and intelligent material through tight editing, continuity, humour, satire and wit. Opening sequences captivate the attention of the viewer; interest is maintained and established by constant consideration of issues of pacing and timing.

Excellent works demonstrated an understanding of the study and practice of art making using the time-based forms and were exemplars of quality teaching and learning.

### **Average Works**

Average submissions tend to mimic rather clichéd forms, without a truly insightful understanding of the nature and stylistic qualities of the medium. The integration of conceptual material is handled with varying degrees of success. Parody and irony are sometimes apparent in these works but such attempts lack clear resolution. There is evidence of competent storyboarding and/or persistent structural/narrative intention which is beginning to realise the potential of film and video as an instrument for storytelling. Candidates synthesise form and subject matter through fairly competent camera work and direction.

Visual material was interpreted more transparently, often using well-established symbols and stylised imagery to convey specific ideas, such as cemetery scenes to connote death, despair and thoughts of suicide. Camera shots tended to be conventional, often repetitive, and somewhat hesitant in execution. Poor or searching focus and jerky movement characterise some aspects of these mid-range submissions. Candidates make effective use of locations (outdoors, indoors, on stage) and handle the differing conditions of lighting with varying finesse. Final, edited shots are selected from a range of successful and inferior footage. Although works progress logically and usually quite coherently, candidates can make peculiar choices in the duration of individual edits (whether too fast to be easily perceived or overly long and stilted), the types of shots that constitute a scene, and the linking footage that enables one scene to progress to another.

Sound is explored and appreciated as a component of production and regularly intermixes a range of different music choices, although a certain insensitivity remains in the application of potentially complex sound mixes. These submissions usually require a more intimate appreciation of blending sound material from sequence to sequence.

### **Below Average Works**

The least successful submissions appear incomplete, minimally edited, without resolution and constrained by a limited understanding of the technical and aesthetic concerns of film and video production. Such works include poorly shot material (whether technique, composition, lighting or acting) that ideally should be re-shot or avoided entirely. Limitations are evident in the candidate's skill and technique of scripting/storyboarding, cinematography and editing. Under and over-exposed visuals, shaky, passive camera work, glitches in editing and muffled/distorted microphone recordings characterise the less than successful productions. A reliance on special effects post-production is used not as a tool for enhancing the thematic and conceptual integrity of the submission but to mask poor footage.

Soundtracks seem to be an afterthought, often using sound merely as a background or descriptive device. There is little intention to incorporate sound beyond the obvious, music-clip sample that is dumped or re-recorded straight from commercial music CDs (such as a techno/rap drum/guitar rhythm).

## **Further Advice**

Students are encouraged to consider the following recommendations in the development of time-based productions:

- include the best selection of footage that is available or re-shoot footage
- consider that less is more in the final edit. The most successful works are frequently comfortably under time, averaging four to five minutes
- edit ruthlessly, make judicious choices, and make every shot count
- plan sequences thoroughly using scripting and storyboarding
- offer a punch-line or some form of narrative closure that is appropriate to the content of the work
- bypass, wherever possible, any automatic settings of technical equipment. Disable auto-focus on cameras and ignore presets on software effects. Become intimate with the equipment so that the hardware does not control the final outcomes.

Perhaps the most under-utilised aspect of this category is character-based scripting that incorporates diverse, live dialogue and character interaction. While technical limitations (such as inefficient, poor quality, consumer microphones) or aesthetic/integrity concerns (limited acting talent) may initially deter candidates from courageously engaging with narrative and character development through on-screen dialogue, there is enormous potential for submissions in this arena.

It is highly recommended that candidates check that both sound and vision are accurately recorded on the tape that is submitted for marking and conclude the work with relevant credits and acknowledgements. All borrowed, appropriated, copyright material should always be referenced in the end credits. Record the final master near the beginning of the tape. Use a high-quality tape and avoid preparing material in any long-play format.

## **7 Graphics**

### **General Comments**

Submissions in Graphics continue to be of a high standard. There was an exploration of a broad range of printmaking techniques as well as diverse subject matter and concepts. A large number of monotypes, collographs, turps-released transfers, acetate and paper drypoints were presented. Lino blocks were also very numerous and were often hand-coloured, caustic etched or very large.

A continuing trend was the submission of works on a large and impressive scale that reflected total mastery and confidence of execution combined with a passion and enjoyment of the process.

However, students should remember that size does not determine the final mark — there were also many equally impressive works of an intimate scale evidenced through small and delicate end-grain engravings and etchings.

Exploration of the figure continues to be a dominant trend, often utilising mediated imagery. A growing area of interest was non-western themes with students exploring their cultural identity. Other popular subjects were the self, the family, mass media and the environment. There was a decline in abstract imagery but where it was used it was presented in a sensitive and confident manner. The use of technically varied inserts is increasing. This visual device appeared in the form of woven or stitched overlays within the compositions. The integration of photographic imagery was also explored.

There was a very strong trend to combine several, often very diverse, techniques into a body of work. Some interesting combinations included collographs with chine colle, dry points with collographs, hand coloured lino prints with chine colle, drypoints with monotypes, monotypes, silkscreen with collage, monoprints with lino prints or hand coloured drypoints with solar plate etching.

### **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Works of an excellent quality often took the risk of breaking away from standard or clichéd interpretations of themes and showed an informed knowledge of artists and printmaking conventions. These students made a careful choice of inks, papers and image placement. Highly creative submissions displayed innovative approaches to the print surface, eg 3D works, prints on layers of lightweight papers or prints on transparent surfaces. The level of expertise of some candidates of this range was evident in their use of shaped lino blocks that are technically very difficult to control.

Above average works explored concepts that were frequently multi-layered and worked on more than one level, thus presenting the viewer with a range of possible interpretations and avenues of appreciation. Within this range the use of text was innovative, controlled and highly appropriate to the intent of the work. It was used in both visual and textual contexts rather than merely operating as a labelling device. Contemporary art practice often informed the decision to explore text for its conceptual strengths. There was clear evidence of prior experimentation and a sustained involvement in the process.

### **Average Works**

Average submissions in Graphics were generally technically sound but used conventional themes, processes and techniques. Some students showed an inconsistency in their series. Although there was some attempt at experimentation among the average submissions, they did not demonstrate a sense of refinement or resolve. Sometimes the treatment seemed ‘ad hoc’, as if the candidate was attempting a process for the first time.

## **Below Average Works**

It was pleasing to note that there were relatively few submissions of less than average quality. Those that were seemed rushed in their execution, poorly drafted and often presented only one image. Where multiple images were presented they did not relate as a series. Printing techniques appeared to be roughly approached first attempts of introductory work samples. Presentation dominated or conflicted with the work itself.

## **Further Advice**

Students are advised to attempt a sustained, coherent body of work. Works should encompass the personal concerns of the candidates, as this carries the emotional impetus to be more creative and innovative in their approach to selection of processes, medium and content. It is important to consider presentation of images in terms of diagrams or photographs of intended layout, correct labelling and appropriate mounting. It is helpful if titles bear relationship to the work, allowing an avenue for access into the meaning of the work. Considered culling should be conducted to select the best representative sample rather than striving for quantity.

## **8 Jewellery**

### **General Comments**

Submissions in Jewellery continued to decline with only nine submissions this year. These works represented a high standard of technical achievement and conceptual strength and were successful in visual impact.

Candidates gave form to their ideas using varied media such as brass, copper, semi-precious stones, wood, a range of wires and found objects, particularly mechanical parts. Silver was a popular medium and was transformed through techniques such as soldering and casting. Other metals exploited the effects and possibilities of heat treatments and manipulations to create colour and surface variations and patterns. There was a decline in the use of plastics and perspex with the exception of some commercially prepared heat reactive mediums.

A distinct theme of the non-natural world provided inspiration for pieces with the use of machinery parts, clock components and interpretations of domestic constructions such as the clothes line and the front gate. Fluid, organic forms with kinetic qualities, possibly inspired by nature, were used in some designs. The integrity of the material was revealed in submissions with their inherent qualities fully understood and exploited.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average works challenged traditional notions of jewellery design and broadened the conventional limits of function. A unique factor was the design of 'body' pieces to adorn the back and the skull, as well as the use of interchangeable and transformable pieces that challenged design parameters by allowing the wearer to create a multitude of alternatives for the ways in which pieces could be worn. There was a strong consideration given to the sculptural quality of works, with sensitive combinations of wood, wire, found objects, silver and other metals and beads. The practicalities and aesthetics of size, weight, balance, comfort and wearability were well considered and resolved. Great skill and balance were evident in construction techniques, surface treatments and finish, with particular attention given to clasps, hinges and joins. Materials were well understood and their expressive possibilities investigated and exploited. It was apparent that contemporary jewellery practices had been referenced in these works.

## **Average Works**

Average works lacked consistency and reflected some inappropriate combinations of media with little relevance to the concept and intention of the work. Some experimentation was evident, however, works relied on the mastering and repetition of one technique with little investigation of the possibilities of the medium and its expressive qualities. There was less emphasis on finish and joining techniques and the scale of jewellery pieces in relation to the body was not always appropriate or well considered.

## **Further Advice**

All jewellery submissions should be accessible to markers and not secured in boxes. Photographs are advantageous in establishing how pieces are intended to be worn. Consideration should be given to ensuring that all jewellery is finished and safe to be worn.

## **9 Painting**

### **General Comments**

Painting continues to be the most popular form of submitted artworks. Within this form, there is a diverse range of responses and approaches in making artworks using painting media. A significant trend towards figuration, noted in previous years, continues and many works tended to reflect a return to more literal forms of representation and narrative. Another trend noted this year was the significant increase in the submission of multi-panel works or series of paintings that formed a body of work. The majority of candidates, however, chose to submit a single panel on canvas, panel or paper.

Candidates submitted works across a broad range of painting genres and styles using these to

represent their ideas from a range of different perspectives or frameworks of value. Fewer works explored issues in contemporary art practice and, while some works in the excellent range were very risk-taking and experimental, there was a noted return to more traditional conventions. There was a significant shift away from appropriation and pastiche, with students often alluding in a more subtle manner to artworks and artists. The better candidates made use of reference to artists, styles or traditions but assimilated these references in their own art making in an integrated and conceptually layered manner. Unlike previous years, there were fewer works exploring humour, wit, satire, parody and irony. Some sophisticated works played with witty juxtapositions of imagery that exemplified contemporary debates about mass media imagery. There was a decreased interest in text and, in less resolved works, it was often used as a tool to overstate an idea or replace facility with the expressive qualities of the painting medium.

Students often preferred to explore their known or experienced world as a basis for their ideas about personal identity and the representation of personality and character in the form of portraiture. An understanding of the traditional styles and conventions of portraiture as well as the inclusion of metaphors, signs and symbols enabled the better candidates to communicate their ideas with nuance and subtlety.

There was a strong return to 'painting for painting's sake' with candidates exploring the plastic properties and surface qualities of the paint medium itself as a primary interest in their works. In some works, the quality and the expressive force of the mark making was a key interest in the work, ranging from lush, fluid and gestural brushwork, idiosyncratic calligraphic marks to complex textural surfaces integrating a range of media. Unlike previous years, some students chose to investigate formalist interests such as colour theory or composition, evidenced by works that used hard edge, optical illusions, tonal modulation and defined shapes. Excellent abstract work showed an awareness of contemporary art practice and were sophisticated, resolved and experimental.

The Recommended Areas of Study for 1998, specifically ideas about spirituality of the heroic and tragic, did not emerge as significant themes. There was evidence that exhibitions such as the Archibald Prize and Orientalism have influenced students' choices about subject matter and representation.

The human figure emerged as the strongest interest in subject matter with less works in the genres of landscape, still-life and abstraction. Recurring themes included family groups, portraits, friends, autobiographical material, human drama, sport, life cycles, nudes, rites of passage, emotional and psychological issues, ecological and conservation issues, earth spirits and poetic references. Some works looked at clichéd interpretations of current issues or identities, eg Pauline Hanson, Princess Diana, President Clinton, or presented hackneyed interpretations of images such as the tree of life, screaming faces, pregnancy, witches, fairies, goblins, dungeons and dragons or imagery appropriated from the work of Munch.

This year candidates were far more conscious of the size and scale of their works. Many candidates considered the ways size and scale communicated their ideas most effectively to their intended audience with works varying in size from the very intimate to the very grand. Large works on paper in the form of scrolls continued to be submitted this year. They were often of a high standard. When a body of work was submitted in the form of a series, the better works indicated thoughtful reflection and evaluation on the part of the candidate through careful selection and sequencing.

There was also an increase in the submission of shaped canvases with relief components and additions. Also emergent in works this year was interest in multi-layered surfaces and the use of gesso, glue, perspex, impasto, plaster and papier mâché. The use of shellac and bitumen appears to have declined but there was an increased interest in the qualities of metallic foils and paints used in conjunction with traditional painted mediums. A number of works combined significant areas of collage with paint.

Sometimes these additions or surface treatments were not sympathetic or appropriate to the ideas being represented in a more arbitrary fashion. The better works that included found objects or sculptural elements used them metaphorically or expressively rather than simply for effect and were able to integrate them into the works in a synthesised manner. There was also a noted return to traditional techniques in painting, eg scumbling, sgraffito, sfumato, glazing, impasto. The candidature generally reflected a renewed interest in the inherent qualities and properties of paint with resolved works indicating a resolution of study and experience with the medium.

### **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average works reflected the culmination of the candidates' exploration of the study of painting in the form of single works, series and multi-panelled works as well as scrolls and works on paper. They were coherently resolved and highly accomplished, demonstrating a sophisticated knowledge of the properties and possibilities of this form.

Candidates in the excellent range successfully explored concepts and ideas and the submitted works reflect a highly developed understanding of contemporary practice and the field of painting. The candidates' selection and interpretation of subject matter indicated that they were able to represent a point of view about issues from the world and the world of art. The choice of imagery, references to other artistic traditions or issues, the synthesis of subject matter with style, media and technique all indicated the conceptual strength of the works. Quite sophisticated works were multi-layered in both concept and technique and involved the viewer at a number of levels.

It was evident in the choices and application of particular painting media and techniques in the works in this range that the candidates had considerable experience and a sustained engagement with the processes of painting. Excellent candidates showed a mastery of techniques and an understanding of their choice of painting styles that enabled them to communicate their subject matter in a confident and resolved manner.

Students who submitted series of works that were excellent showed understanding at a complex level of the selection and rejection process. There was clear evidence in the better works of careful, informed choices often displaying restraint and reflection.

### **Average Works**

Average works displayed a competent use of media and showed an emergent sense of resolution and confidence without fully exploring boundaries either conceptually or in practice.

More conventional approaches to subject matter and their use of media and techniques were a feature of works in this category. Common themes included adolescent issues, life cycles and popular culture. Many works acted as personal comments on the nature of the candidates' everyday existence. Links with artists, artworks and contemporary practice are direct rather than interpretive.

Generally, works exhibited a more narrow conceptual range combined with an overworking of media. They reflected a level of competence rather than confidence in their choice and manipulation of media yet showed the emergence of an understanding of the arrangement of properties and possibilities of this media form. The synthesis of subject matter with the handling of media and techniques was not as seamless or resolved as work in the excellent category.

Careful selection and choice in the submission of series were not as evident in this category, with the selection and rejection process less refined.

### **Below Average Works**

Works in this category were often formulaic and displayed superficial or naive knowledge of subject matter. Some works in this category were unfinished with unclear or incoherent concepts and clichéd subject matter and use of symbols. Titles selected did little to assist interpretation as the candidates in this range often did not consider the relationship of the audience and the work. Often the imagery and the composition were clumsy and awkward revealing little critical reflection or development of the concept.

The works in this range did not reflect a sustained study with painting as the use of paint media lacked basic technique and was often without control. There was little evidence of problem solving or engagement with process with the students being controlled by the media and technique rather than students controlling them. Paint was often used directly from the bottle with limited attempts to mix, blend, dry brush and overlay. Impasto for the sake of visual interest or collage to solve drawing problems was a feature. Many of these works were simple experiments in technique rather than an exploration of concept.

Series of works were often uneven and not connected to each other in subject matter and works generally lacked critical reflection, selection and evaluation.

### **Further Advice**

Students should be encouraged to explore their world, experiment with media and feel confident with it before they attempt their submission. Their final work should be the culmination of their continued exploration.

Candidates should be encouraged to develop ways of recording their ideas, developing personal imagery and their own interpretations of subject matter rather than simply relying on devices such as directly copying imagery or using photocopies as a solution to drawing problems. Direct appropriations without an understanding of their use in contemporary art making practice result in works that can appear formulaic or clichéd.

Often submissions were affected by poor selections. Many students submitted scrolls that were too ambitious to be resolved and completed artworks. When candidates submit multiple works there should be a careful selection process involved. Many series and multi-panelled works were of inconsistent quality.

Ensure that additions to works are carefully secured and are appropriate to and enhance the communication of the concept. Teachers and students are advised to select a title for submitted works that is not obscure but that enhances the meaning of the work. Diaries that were called for by markers were of an excellent standard and they helped to substantiate the submitted work. This reinforces the importance of maintaining a cumulative record of the art making process. Artworks need to be measured and weighed in accordance with subject rules. Some works could not be displayed to their best advantage, due to inappropriate size. Big is not always better. There was a pleasing reduction in the number of works that were framed with elaborate or expensive frames.

## **10 Photography**

### **General Comments**

The photography submissions in 1998 differed in many aspects to previous years, reflecting the great diversity of this medium. It was refreshing to see a notable rise in the standard of works across the marking scale in terms of greater awareness of the necessity for a thematic link when presenting a series of work.

The diverse range of themes and subject matter was substantiated by a number of emerging trends. A return to the more historic or traditional darkroom approaches such as the use of cyanotype, argyrotype, gum bichromate and fine art (fibre) papers was offset by the application of new materials made available for a variety of purposes; namely 'Fotospeed' and 'warmtone' papers, 'Colorvir' toners as well as the combination of image transfer, internegs, overlays and digital manipulation.

Established traditions such as landscape, portrait and genre were in evidence as well as the increasingly popular exploration of contemporary art practices such as appropriation. Conceptual photography that explored issues of identity, in addition to other themes such as the deconstruction of the human figure, gender and the media, all demonstrated a healthy critical dialogue that was often matched by an astute awareness of the essential aesthetics of the medium, namely good use of the viewfinder, careful editing and competence in terms of lighting and exposure. Outstanding works combined multiple levels of communication with an adventurous or a meticulous use of the medium. Some works utilised the techniques of masking and image overlay to substantiate a highly personal vision.

Students continued to excite viewers with dynamic compositions of subject matter from documentary and narrative themes to sensitive and contemplative studio and still life settings that were characterised by both excellence and achievability.

There were fortunately fewer works that were overweight or dangerous but it should be noted that works that contain materials such as barbed wire, blood or sharp edges are unacceptable and such materials may be deemed dangerous and do not necessarily enhance the impact of the submissions.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Works in this category displayed a solid understanding of the principles of composition and/or the innovative use of the viewfinder to explore both traditional and non traditional themes and subject matter.

Many conceptual series were supported by the competent use of new technologies and products with these submissions presenting a resolved body of images that displayed both visual impact and technical integrity.

Experimental practices were also in evidence, including the innovative combination of image transfer from colour negatives to 'Polaroid' works with emulsions layered on cotton-based paper as well as the sensitising of water colour papers. Rich results were also in evidence when using techniques such as cross processing in colour photography.

The successful blending of 'Colorvir' toners with dynamic figure compositions also reflected a merging of sound photographic practices with technical competence. Innovative use of the more historical darkroom traditions such as cyanotype and the stable toning of black and white prints in sepia, copper and selenium complemented some sensitive interpretations that incorporated the use of text and image projection.

The incisive use of wit and satire was also evident with some excellent 'straight' photography that managed to capture the follies and preoccupations of human nature with a keen eye and excellent tonal rendition. Indeed, the 'lessons' of Cartier-Bresson were not forgotten with some poignant and evocative genre images that displayed risk taking with open compositions, diversity of scale and 'existential' angles of view.

Excellent works were characterised by the successful synthesis of art ideas and technical means demonstrating quality teaching and learning.

## **Average Works**

The more average submissions displayed a sound use of a variety of camera and darkroom practices, from tone drop with lith and high contrast films to the use of newer products such as 'Colorvir' and fine art papers. Candidates attempted both traditional and conceptual themes and it was apparent that in this range there was a greater ability to sustain a theme than in previous years. Unfortunately, series work tended to be less resolved either through an inability to edit the weaker images or in the area of darkroom practice whereby works were insensitively swamped with over bright 'Colorvir' or lost to faults and inconsistencies in exposure and composition.

Colour images were sometimes clumsy or inconsistent with strong prints weighed down by repeated images that displayed weaker colour balance or a confused intellectual intent.

Images of the human figure and the nude ranged from a vision that defied traditional approaches to the subject to clichéd, awkward studio work that did not manage to light the subject to good effect.

Quite a number of landscapes and still life series reflected proficient yet conservative approaches and such works often tended to display merely one angle of view resulting in a rather bland set

of images. Scale was often not used effectively and perhaps candidates could observe that size does not necessarily preclude quality.

Many sculptural and mixed media works tended to lack synthesis, often appearing inconsistent and awkward or unresolved.

## **Below Average Works**

The smaller range of submissions in this category usually attempted a type of thematic approach but were unable to sustain it either through poor technical manipulation or a confused or unresolved concept or both. Images were often repetitive and simplistic ideas based on fantasies from hot rods to fairies to teddy bears. Other themes included unsympathetic images of infant brothers and sisters that were offset by 'muddy' prints and the use of the one roll point and shoot technique that displayed a limited imagination and engagement.

## **Further Advice**

Candidates could do well to remind themselves of the principles of good photographic practices from exposure to composition before embarking on the possible use of 'gimmicks' as a result of newer products. Such new materials do not hide a poor image or thoughtless conceptual editing. Larger scale works do not necessarily enhance a theme and repeating an image with only slight variation in technical application can at times prove more confusing than enlightening.

The combination of a sound concept with a competent technique whether it is in a traditional or non-traditional area of the medium is the cornerstone for the building of a work that is sustainable and resolved. Whether colour or black and white is utilised there is usually room for innovation and/or experimentation. However the planning, process and execution of the latter may advantage the student if it is well documented in the visual process diary.

Works with sharp, overweight and dangerous components or cumbersome frames or appendages are identified and may incur a penalty if they fall into breaches of the subject rules. Further, students should not back works with hooks or screws as this may inadvertently damage their own work during packing and transport, even before it has arrived at the marking centre. Unrealistic hanging instructions should also be reconsidered before a work is submitted.

## **11 Sculpture**

### **General Comments**

Sculpture continues to be characterised by the diversity of sculptural forms and approaches presented. The wide range of ideas, concepts, subject matter, media and techniques typifies this media area. The candidature favoured the figurative, both human and animal. There is still an interest in abstraction, however, there were fewer non-objective, purely abstract explorations.

There were not as many conceptual pieces submitted this year and students are reminded that conceptual works are a valid and contemporary approach to the investigation and documentation of sculpture.

The majority of works reflected a literal approach to the investigation and expression of ideas. There was less obvious appropriation and direct referencing of artists and artworks with a greater reliance of the student's response to their immediate environment.

The majority of works showed that students were favouring larger forms in preference to the more intimate and intricate forms.

There was an extensive use of the found object with metal and mechanical objects dominating. Other popular, though frequently unsuccessful, media were wire mesh, plaster bandage, tissue and shellac. It was refreshing to see the utilisation of readily available and inexpensive materials in original and exciting ways.

Students are continuing to explore the expressive potential of colour with the more successful works using colour to enhance surface and form rather than to disguise weaknesses. Weaker works relied on colour to distract attention from structural or conceptual problems.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average works display technical proficiency and aesthetic judgement that are clearly the result of an ongoing involvement with the art making process and a great deal of experimentation. They also displayed a willingness to take risks and push boundaries. The choice of materials was generally sophisticated and appropriate utilising them for their integral formal qualities (texture, colour, etc) in a sensitive and mature fashion. This created works with surfaces that were individually refined and yet unified. Subject matter was well-developed and conceptually strong with considered reference to issues, conventions and symbols from their personal experience and from their art study. These works engaged the viewer for a sustained period due to the layers of possible meaning that went beyond the obvious and to the freshness of their approach. A careful consideration of all aspects was evident with the aesthetic considerations being more critical than technical ability in the success of these works.

## **Average Works**

Average works tended to have a conceptually strong basis but lacked sensitivity and they often failed to extend the concept beyond the obvious. This can also be applied to the depth of understanding about the expressive potential of the media chosen. Materials were often not well considered and selected. They tended towards unsympathetic handling — found objects being overworked or poorly integrated. There was a limited understanding of formal sculptural qualities such as mass and space relationships.

## **Below Average Works**

Works in this category were typified by obvious, clichéd and naive subject matter with limited conceptual foundation. A rudimentary appreciation of artistic conventions was obvious. The innate beauty of materials was often ignored and the chosen materials were often inappropriate to the forms they wished to construct often resulting in a clumsy finish. Works were frequently incomplete and there was little evidence of observation and exploration. They demonstrated less development of aesthetic or conceptual issues.

## **Further Advice**

Students are encouraged to consider presenting clear and precise directions/instructions for setting up and viewing their work. Diagrams and photographs are useful for this purpose. Titles also should clearly and succinctly reflect the student's intentions.

Plinths and boxes need to be considered as an integral part of the work, rather than simply used as aids to display. The role of the base in sculpture needs to be explored during the development process rather than simply as an end in itself. The same applies to the use of boxes as a means of containing or unifying a work — the box as a frame can be a powerful symbol when used intelligently and sensitively.

If electronics such as lighting are incorporated into a work, the student needs to consider them as visual symbols and they should be an integral part of the concept. Sound should be used to enhance or unify the visual experience rather than as an addendum or gimmick. Christmas tree lights and whale sounds do not necessarily expand a work's appeal.

Students should be discouraged from submitting a formulaic, market type work that is easily recognised as derivative. Consistency in a series of works needs to be ensured with careful selection taking place prior to submission.

While it is pleasing to see fewer works that disregard the Board of Studies guidelines, students are reminded of the limitations on size, weight, length and the use of dangerous materials.

## **12 Textiles and Fibre**

### **General Comments**

Textile and fibre submissions ranged from substantial single pieces to series of works, linked by theme or technique that explored and combined a variety of fabrics to enliven surfaces and make statements.

Traditional techniques were used in conventional and innovative ways to transform surfaces. Appliqué was the most popular technique and there was an increase in submissions of weaving and block printed lengths of fabric. There was a wider use of stitching into hand-made papers and photo-release techniques on fabric and paper, and a decline in submissions in gutta and traditional batik techniques and in the use of the sewing machine as an expressive drawing tool.

Generally submissions in textiles and fibre were conservative and did not fully explore the wider possibilities of the form, limiting the definition to include fabric only. Few candidates crafted or printed their own fabrics or explored the wider interpretations of this form through the combination and treatment of non-traditional media and techniques.

Submissions were generally flatworks and surfaces were rarely extended beyond low relief with little consideration given to exploiting 3D qualities of volume, space and voids. Designs were limited to square or rectangular formats with few works exploring organic and free form shapes.

Candidates responded to their world by interpreting religious, personal and cultural experiences as well as landscape themes and marine motifs. Some candidates sourced the world of art for their inspiration and others explored environmental and social issues, both local and global. Figurative themes were common, although in the less successful works, problems with constructing the human form were evident.

### **Excellent and Above Average Works**

The excellent and above average works understood the inherent, seductive, tactile and textural qualities of selected fabrics and fully exploited their symbolic, visual and emotive aspects. These works were synthesised, conceptually strong and confident in the expression of ideas that were sophisticated and often multi-layered. Subjects explored included the female form, body image and the role of women in society, cultural practices, religion as well as the inherent decorative and textural qualities of fabric and colour.

Submissions revealed fully explored and understood aesthetic considerations. Designs were strong and large works overcame difficult compositional problems with dynamic gridded and fragmented formats.

Works in this range employed a number of techniques including highly successful integrations of handpainting, beading, expressive machine stitching and drawing as well as text to reinforce concepts. Images, fabrics and decorative techniques were layered and juxtaposed to create subtle and complex surfaces that evoked meaning and suggested deeper intentions. Binding, framing and exciting methods of presenting works as hanging pieces reflected innovative and considered approaches to this form. Hand coloured and manipulated papers, gold leaf and stitching, shellac and bitumen were used in ways that challenged the conventional forms of textiles and fibre. Block printed lengths of fabric with subtle colour choices and overlays of linear patterning to create intricate images demonstrated accomplished techniques in registration and design and a refined sense of colour.

### **Average Works**

Average works included batik and gutta, appliqué, printed fabric and weavings and were characterised by a competent level of technical ability and finish without evidence of the refinement of techniques or further experimentation with combination of media. Series were inconsistent in the representation of subject matter, use of materials and communication of concept, which was often less resolved or in some cases opaque and difficult to interpret. Subject

matter was literal with depictions of bird life, the sea, landscape and the figure. Gutta works attempted to treat the surface in a painterly fashion and incorporated strong colour choices and some effective linear patterning. There were references to some contemporary artworks. Attempts to present one large unified work were often unsuccessful. These submissions appeared as a collection of separate works on one surface with little relationship between individual motifs and designs. It should be noted that large scale works are not necessarily more successful and candidates should carefully consider how they present their ideas.

## **Below Average Works**

Below average works were unresolved, appeared unfinished and conveyed simple, clichéd and transparent concepts. Subject matter was treated in naive and literal ways. There was a formulaic approach to techniques, which were mechanically repeated to fill space or to decorate surfaces. There was a limited exploitation of the surface in works with an arbitrary placement of motifs and little understanding of colour. Techniques of appliqué and hand stitching were not exploited and inappropriate choices of fabrics and other media were evident.

## **Further Advice**

Photographs and instructions for viewing works may be submitted.

Students should carefully consider the inclusion of large structures and pieces of wood for display of works. These do not necessarily advantage the work, are cumbersome and in some cases dangerous.

## **13 Wearables**

### **General Comments**

Wearable submissions this year reflected a variety of approaches, interpretations and perspectives from garments adorned with conventional methods of surface decoration to more innovative, sculptural and conceptual works where the human form is used as a site for art.

The ensemble or body of work such as a series of bags or headpieces was evident as a trend, as opposed to the submission of a single garment form. Most ensembles comprised a large number of accessories that were generally unified by a theme or concept.

Many wearables explored the possibilities that brassieres and bodices present as forms of expression and there was a noticeable decline in the number of capes submitted.

Persistent themes included references to medieval and gothic styles and interpretations of religion, culture and society. Motifs from the natural world were popular and issues of masculine and feminine roles and sexuality as well as festival and Mardi Gras ensembles were addressed.

A distinct awareness of the world of food was emergent and packing and consumerism were explored.

Submissions explored the potential of a wide range of media and found objects were significant as vehicles for expression and decoration with some innovative uses and treatments of inexpensive and accessible materials.

There was a decrease in the number of wearables comprising photographs sandwiched between plastic. The use of the sewing machine was evident in a range of submissions, however, there was a noticeable decline in the application of free machine stitching as an expressive technique and drawing tool. Hand stitching, embroidery and appliqué were popular techniques used in confident and highly controlled ways. Surfaces were rich in variety, layers and decoration.

Some wearable submissions extended 2D surfaces with relief techniques, especially relying on found objects, however, fewer works fully exploited 3D possibilities. Excellent and above average works successfully met the challenge of transforming 3D constructions into wearable forms. The relationship of the wearable to the body and construction techniques varied markedly from the technically sophisticated, durable artworks that regarded the form of the body and challenged the conventional notion of the wearable to clumsy, poorly engineered constructions that were unable to be worn safely.

## **Excellent and Above Average Works**

The excellent and above average submissions were characterised by a high degree of sophistication and understanding of the possibilities of construction techniques and the decoration of the surface. There was particular attention to detail, finish and resolution; clear evidence of a sustained process of experimentation, exploration and development. Confidence in the use and integration of media and the conceptual intent of the work as well as a willingness to take risks were apparent. Works reflected an understanding of the inherent qualities of materials and fully exploited their expressive and symbolic potential to emphasise meaning and enhance form. There was a highly resolved use of colour with selection being a discriminating factor. Intense investigations of one medium such as wool felting, and the accomplished integration of a number of forms such as appliqué, painting and drawing as well as combinations of silk threads, beads, braids and fabrics created evocative surfaces that were sensuous in quality. Works were synthesised and coherent and conveyed personal expressions, myths, environmental concerns and social statements. These works invited multiple readings and interpretations and were often characterised by irony, wit, paradox, humour and confrontation. Text was sometimes an integral component of these artworks, sensitively integrated and used to reinforce concepts.

A thorough understanding of design and process was evident in these works. Discriminating design decisions enhanced visual impact and unified the submission. Many excellent and above average works evidenced an awareness of contemporary art practices in general and specifically of wearable and fibre forms. Referencing art history contexts as inspiration was also apparent.

## **Average Works**

In average works a substantial body of work was often presented and construction was generally sound, however, the finish and resolution of works and surface treatments was not always consistent or sustained and evidenced limited critical reflection.

Obvious solutions were evident in the selection of media, techniques and surface treatments. These were not fully explored and were sometimes inappropriate in relation to the intention of the wearable. Found objects, popular in works in this range, could have been selected with more discrimination and integrated with greater diversity, skill and understanding.

Themes of landscape, the natural elements, medieval times, myth and legend, marine subjects and consumerism were conspicuous. The interpretation and translation of these subjects, however, often tended to be literal, superficial and sometimes clichéd. Works that attempted complex or challenging concepts were unable to sustain, engage or communicate these with the audience effectively. Ensembles or series of works were less consistent and lacked a synthesis in concept, technique and media usually with one work more resolved.

## **Below Average Works**

Below average submissions often ignored or were unable to meet the underlying intent that the work should accommodate the human form. These works were often stiff, heavy, clumsy and crude. When wire was used to model or support 3D forms it tended to be unstable and poorly integrated. Unskilled construction and limited technique were evident in these works as were inappropriate and insensitive combinations of media such as acrylic paint that did not adhere to plastic surfaces and poor choices of drawing media for use on fabric. These choices clearly reflected little if any understanding, experimentation and engagement with the media and appeared as first attempts that were unresolved and unfinished. Works in an ensemble had little relationship to each other and were obvious, obscure and naive in concept. Subject matter of the environment, nature and landscape was treated in a clichéd and literal manner or as a mechanical exercise in pattern making. Scant knowledge of composition was obvious with a seemingly arbitrary placement of objects and motifs utilised as 'space fillers' rather than part of the considered design. There was a lack of restraint exercised in the use of inappropriate PVA glues, glue guns and commercial trimmings such as plastic leaves and sequins.

## **Further Advice**

Photographs are essential to the marking process. They provide visual information for the markers and show how the candidate intended the wearable to be worn. Diagrams and written instructions as to how the wearable should be viewed can also assist with some complex submissions.

The wearability of submissions remains an issue. Consideration must be given to how the artwork complements the body and the practicalities of displaying the work for marking. Consideration must be given to the safety of all submissions. Wire armatures and sharp metal projections are dangerous. Attention to the finish of works should consider safety aspects.

Works must not be submitted on mannequins.

## **14 Integrated Studies**

### **General Comments**

Fewer than 50 candidates chose Integrated Studies as a 3 Unit option this year. The range of submissions varied from sophisticated works that employed poetic language and metaphor to explore relationships between art making and art studying to works that had little or no text, and minimal conceptual exploration or aesthetic direction. A predominance of painterly surfaces and subjective perspectives was noted across all submissions in this category. Typical forms of presentation included boxes, books, scrolls, sculptural installations, flatwork and collections.

Landscape traditions and representations of the body were the most common areas of subject matter. The re-use or recycling of Recommended Areas of Study was also noteworthy with investigations of modernism and modernity as the most popular topic. In some cases this represented a deeper investigation of ideas, in others it was little more than convenient duplication of material.

### **Excellent and Above Average Works**

Excellent and above average responses were characterised by a sense of metaphor that informed the language and the images in a sophisticated manner, enriching rather than describing the content. These works often employed playfulness, parody and pastiche. A clear sense of an authorial voice, most often a personal voice, was communicated. A sound and appropriate research basis alongside innovative ways of presenting information was evident behind this sense of 'voice'. Innovative forms of presentation noted were play scripts, diaries and meditations. The viewer/reader was drawn into a weaving of perspectives, becoming a participant in constructing meaning from a conversation between visual and verbal texts.

Excellent and above average works demonstrated a sophisticated resolution of visual imagery as well as a synthesis of images and text. These works demonstrated an excellent degree of resolution within the chosen forms and an understanding of the expressive potential of the materials used. Their knowledge of how ideas can be represented through images, and explored through signs and symbols, was richly layered and capable of sustaining different levels of interpretation.

In involving the viewer/reader in a construction of meaning through image and text these works demonstrated the power of this form of artistic production and a sophisticated awareness of contemporary artworks that require 'reading' at a number of levels.

The works at this level demonstrated a high level of engagement with both the study and practices of art and quality teaching and learning.

### **Average Works**

Average responses presented conservative, theme-based approaches and a narrow selection of artists. Themes were chosen from a limited range of well known approaches to landscape and the figure.

The choice of images and text in these works illustrated but did not enhance, illuminate or become the inquiry. The work lacked a sense of necessity or intentionality in the choice of Integrated Study as an option. The lack of awareness of audience was most evident in the lack of consideration of ways in which the viewer/reader might approach the work. The various parts of these works stood as separate and discrete entities that referred to the same subject matter; or one form, usually the visual, was privileged and the verbal was subordinated to a function of explanation or commentary.

A tendency towards description rather than criticism and a concern for biography rather than exploration of important issues in modern and contemporary art was also noted. Research relied on standard classroom texts that were accepted uncritically as authoritative sources of factual information rather than part of the process of inquiry.

The forms employed for images were predominantly drawing and painting. Average works exhibited varying degrees of resolution within the chosen form. The inconsistencies noted in integrating the parts of the study with each other were also present within the images themselves. Most commonly works at this level exhibited a developing sense of the expressive potential of materials and conventional approaches to the structure and arrangement of images. Their sense of how artworks can represent ideas showed some knowledge of conventions of representation but still tended towards literal representations of subject matter and a conventional use of signs and symbols.

### **Below Average Works**

These were project style works with naive image making and simple description. The images were often poorly executed copies of artworks that demonstrated very little experience of the form or materials chosen. Image making was usually illustrative with little sense of how the image could explore approaches to ideas.

It was difficult to discern a position or an intention in these works; interpretation was almost completely absent, no research basis was evident and concepts were largely incoherent or absent.

### **Further Advice**

Students intending to submit work in this option are required to include a transcript with the work. This must not exceed 1000 words and must be written or typed in an easily readable form.

Teachers are advised to encourage students to work towards a viewpoint that is characterised by depth, complexity and intentionality. The reasons for adopting this option should be clearly thought out by the student.

Students should be assisted in establishing a wide range of sources for their enquiry, all of which should be acknowledged using standard bibliographic citation.

Students should consider the ways in which the viewer/reader encounters their work. Among the successful submissions this year some works provided specific instructions, other works anticipated a variety of approaches and allowed this to be a feature of the experience, other works dictated an approach through their arrangement.

The Integrated Study offers a unique opportunity for students to create works where the meaning of text and image/object resound within and between each other. Students should be encouraged to consider this interaction as an important element of the study. The option seemed to attract students working on subjective inquiries into their own art making. These students should be encouraged to explore ways of weaving a personal voice through their text rather than revealing their position in a final paragraph. These types of studies lacked coherence and were uncomfortably reminiscent of preparation for Type C responses for the written examination.

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