



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1996 HSC

EXAMINATION
REPORT

Visual Arts

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Published by
Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

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ISBN 0 7310 9937 0

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1996 Higher School Certificate Examination

Visual Arts

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1996 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

Visual Arts

Visual Arts attracted the eleventh largest candidature in the 1996 Higher School Certificate Examinations — approximately 14% of all HSC students.

8751 students presented for the 2/3 Unit (Common) Visual Arts examination. 3734 students presented for the 3 Unit (Additional) examination. The majority of these students (3355) submitted a second artwork, in the other 3 Unit options 330 students undertook the second written examination and 41 students submitted integrated Visual/Verbal Studies.

64% of the 2/3 Unit candidature were female and 36% male. 67% of the 3 Unit candidature were female and 33% male.

Reflecting the same percentage as the total candidature in the 1996 HSC examinations, 68% of students studying Visual Arts attended metropolitan schools and 32% non-metropolitan schools.

SUBMITTED ARTWORKS [2/3 UNIT (COMMON) AND 3 UNIT (ADDITIONAL)]

The most successful artworks demonstrated students' sophisticated understanding of the Visual Arts. These works were complete and well resolved. They revealed a sustained engagement with the artmaking process and dedication to the making of an artwork or series of artworks. The works reflected students' abilities to innovate with selected forms and media — media used was highly expressive as appropriate to the work — and students demonstrated their abilities by not overworking or complicating their works unnecessarily. These works revealed students' knowledge and understandings of, and skills in, interpreting and applying artistic conventions and traditions within the context of their intentions. They were highly accomplished in sustaining visual interest and reflected students' understandings of how artworks may take time to be viewed and function on many layers of meaning, with subtle or highly interpreted subject matter ranging from unusual views of the everyday or apparently commonplace, to thoughtful interpretations of people, affected by geography and cultural conditions or personal experience, to highly abstract painterly works where the predominant subject matter was paint itself.

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 may prejudice marks awarded to submitted artworks.

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. Careful attention should be given to the size, weight, and duration of works.

In 1995 and 1996 '*A Guide To Ranking Submitted Artworks in the 1996 HSC*' was used to assist in establishing the marking scales and provided the basis for the writing of comments for works selected in each mark range in each of the media categories. This guide is included on page 4 of this document.

A more complete representation of the HSC Visual Arts Marking Scales, including markers comments, will be prepared in 1996 on CD-ROM (as has occurred over the last two years). This resource may be purchased through the Board of Studies, Customer Service Unit, Phone 9367 8159.

Note:

For the 1997 HSC Visual Arts Examination information for Visual Arts is contained in the Creative Arts Subject Manual No 7 (1995 and thereafter) and the 1997 HSC Prescribed Texts, Topics, Project, and Works document for all courses. For the 1998 HSC Visual Arts Examination information for Visual Arts is contained in the Creative Arts KLA Handbook. Teachers and students should note that this handbook provides further information on the one cubic metre volume restriction for sculptural and other 3D works which should be closely considered by students electing to submit works in these categories.

These documents have been sent to schools and are available through the Board of Studies Publications Branch — Fax: 9262 6270.

In 1996 students submitted artworks in the forms of images and objects as indicated in the table below.

	Total percentage of 2/3 Unit students	Total percentage of 3 Unit students undertaking artmaking options
Painting	40	38
Drawing	22	24
Sculpture	17	19
Photography	5	7
Collection of Works	4	3
Graphics	3	2
Ceramics	2	2
Design	2	2
Wearables and Jewellery	2	2
Computer-generated works	<1	<1
Film and Video	<1	<1
Textiles and Fibre	<1	<1

Table 1: 1996 percentage of students submitting artworks in 2/3 Unit and 3 Unit

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RANK RANGE	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50
COMMENTS/ OBSERVATION	NAIVE LITTLE VISUAL INTEREST DISENGAGED		SOPHISTICATED/COMPLEX STRONG VISUAL INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE ART WORLD HIGHLY ENGAGED		
OVERALL JUDGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> works have an appearance of not engaging in any artistic problem-solving and may appear to be merely done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> few artistic problems grappled with works may appear repetitive, formulaic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may attempt some synthesis of subject matters and forms, however, works may appear unresolved works may appear formulaic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> works reflect more knowledgeable choices about what can be done more accomplished in terms of how subject matter and forms are synthesised in the work work is a confident demonstration of what is known and can be done practically works have a stronger interpretative quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> art conventions are personally interpreted in the works produced in an authoritative way sophisticated in terms of how ideas are represented with a strong synthesis of the selection of subject matter and expressive use of forms/media informed choices have been made in the work works sustain interest at a number of levels works appear resolved, complete innovative
EVIDENCE OF PROCESS IN ARTWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> artworks reflect a very limited engagement with and understanding of the artmaking process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> superficial engagement with artmaking process works may appear to be a first attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may attempt some synthesis of subject matters and forms, however, works may appear unresolved works may appear formulaic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a sustained involvement in the artmaking process is evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustained and highly accomplished involvement in the artmaking process is evident
ENGAGEMENT WITH SUBJECT MATTER/ CONCEPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject matter/ concepts naive, obvious, often clichéd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject matter/ concepts may be clichéd, awkward limited understanding of how ideas may be represented visually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may deal with quite complex subject matter but has difficulty in representing this subject matter may be less complex and ideas may seem overworked subject matter may continue to be clichéd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject matter may be complex, subtle, less clichéd and interpreted in a more knowledgeable way ideas are represented more confidently and convincingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject matter may be complex, subtle and works on a number of levels highly interpretive visual statements
ENGAGEMENT WITH FORMS/ MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very little attention given to the properties of form/media little knowledge of what the forms of media can do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some attention may be given to exploring the properties of form/media in the work use of forms/media may suggest a first experience of using them technically little knowledge, inexperienced, incomplete may include overworking or naive choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may attempt to utilise the properties of forms/media the work may provide the opportunity for finding out about what the forms/media can do artworks may appear patchy — better and less well worked areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accomplished use of forms/media confident and convincing use of forms/media exploits expressive potential technically more sophisticated, more experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highly accomplished use of forms/ media sophisticated understanding of the expressive potential of forms/media demonstrated in the work

Table 2: A Guide to ranking Submitted Artworks in the 1996 HSC

Submitted Artworks — Forms of Images and Objects

Entries are presented alphabetically.

Ceramics

Submissions in Ceramics continued the trend away from functional and traditional ceramics. Works moved towards sculptural pieces in which students expressed the potential of clay to create abstract, expressive forms and exploit the plasticity of the media. Properties that were explored included the use of open-bodied, highly grogged clays and unglazed surfaces, the use of coloured slips to create dry decorative surfaces, combinations of wheel-thrown and hand-built sections in works, contrasting wet and dry areas of glazing and the use of different firing techniques on the one work.

Careful planning, design and resolution of ceramic work(s) and the integrity of construction is crucial to success in this form. Some forms had ill-considered areas which detracted from the quality of the work as a whole. Similarly, construction weaknesses will result in structural cracks at joins, especially where a combination of forming techniques is used. It is suggested that the slow drying of such forms greatly reduces the stresses on joins and the incidence and severity of cracking.

Ceramic forms submitted were mainly coil-built, drawing from traditional ceramic forms and concepts, and innovative personal and expressive sculptural forms.

Slab-built ceramic submissions were few. A high level of technical expertise is required to create flat-sided, straight-edged forms. It is suggested that slabs should be rolled and allowed to dry to leather-hard before cutting and assembling. The use of a template would assist in slab-works made in a series. Joining should be done by scoring edges and applying a thick slurry before bringing the pieces together. Slow drying in a half-sealed plastic bag will help to eliminate warp and cracking.

Slip-cast submissions were few. Some were simply done from commercial moulds, while more highly regarded works were made from original forms created by the student, or by assembling cast pieces taken from moulds of found objects.

A small number of wheel-thrown works were submitted. These were generally above average in their technical proficiency and demonstrated a sustained accomplishment in all aspects of the ceramic process.

Sawdust-fired, primitive pottery was more evident this year. Works generally displayed proficient construction and exploration of form. More highly regarded works made use of slips and explored surface.

It was pleasing to note that no unfired work was submitted.

Excellent and more successful ceramic works demonstrated students' confident exploration of the plastic and tactile qualities of the ceramic medium, using clay and glaze/oxide/slips to construct innovative forms and accentuate surfaces. Students displayed a strong understanding of how the ceramic medium can be used to express concepts and beliefs. Works were constructed competently and were unified and consistent when presented as a series. They were well finished, with attention to detail in aspects such as evenness of rims

and lips at openings, with attention being given to internal surfaces. Decoration and form were integrated to produce a unified expression that was aesthetically pleasing. Better works also re-interpreted ceramic traditions rather than simply re-producing them. An integration of concept, along with construction, surface decoration and firing techniques characterised these works, which sustained interest at many levels.

Average submissions were less resolved in the integration and exploration of form and decoration. A lack of mastery of construction techniques as well as and the exploitation of surface and decoration was evident. Concepts were not as successfully resolved in clay and often relied on obvious mixed media additions to a clay body which did not sit well on the work. Series of works tended to be repetitive, with little or no change, rather than an exploration of possible variations on a theme. Works displayed students' struggle with the medium and an inconsistent approach to form and construction or form and decoration. Some areas of works were weaker, detracting from their general aesthetic quality.

Less than average submissions displayed poor understanding of the aesthetics of form or awareness of the expressive potential of the medium. Works in this range displayed little evidence of technical skill, were heavy and poorly constructed, with cracking evident, and indicated a poor control of external contour. A generally poor finish of construction was evident, with uneven rims and openings and sharp edges. Surface was relatively unexplored. Glazing was often simple with no manipulation of decorative materials. Some works used acrylic paint rather than glaze in an unsympathetic way, or clumsy mixed media additions to conceal less successful areas of the form. Works in this range suggested a minimal involvement or an initial experience in the use of ceramic materials. Concepts and imagery were clichéd, did not attempt to explore a subject and resulted in works that were superficial and unresolved.

Subject rules indicate that the total submission should neither exceed 34.4 kilograms nor exceed on cubic metre when packed. It is essential that students remain within these guidelines so that their submissions are not penalised. It is advisable that works chosen for submission are the best resolved in terms of form, decoration and concept, and that they relate to each other as a whole. It would be advantageous for students to be exposed to a variety of ceramic texts and journals, in order to develop an appreciation of significant cultures and individual achievements, as well as emerging trends in ceramics, and to encourage innovation and experimentation in form, decoration and concept.

Collection of Works

Collection of Works continued to be a popular category with students who wished to complete more than one artwork. This category also accommodates those students who wish to complete works in a variety of media and styles. It should be noted that the category does *not* accommodate who wish to submit mixed media works only, or to work in *one* medium. This should be taken into account by students and their teachers when considering this category. Many works were submitted in this category that were clearly *not* collections, according the criteria in the Prescribed Texts, Topics, Projects and Works document (1996).

This year many students related their artmaking to the Recommended Areas of Study. These areas — gender and identity; the culture of cities; the concept of woman as a sign; and the function, the meaning and purpose of copy and repetition in modernist and contemporary art practices — were easily identifiable subject matter in many students' submissions. These references were handled in a competent and sophisticated manner by the better students and

provided some necessary direction for the less able ones. Students' immediate and personal environments (including family, friends, pets and special places) were also popular choices for subject matter and were generally handled in an accomplished way.

Many works included 3D elements and this year *fewer* works were submitted that contained a video component. Electrical works were generally not submitted in this category, whilst multi-layering techniques on paper and collage were very popular. Photography remains a consistently popular choice as part of a larger collection.

In the excellent and above average range, works were sophisticated in terms of how students' ideas and knowledge of expressive forms were synthesised into well-resolved and finished pieces. Works were produced that were conceptually strong and revealed a continuing engagement with the students' chosen media and subject matter. They possessed superior problem-solving abilities and the submissions worked as unified, coherent collections as well as individually. The works could be read on a number of levels and this was facilitated by original and innovative use and combinations of media with thoughtful subject matter.

In the Average submission range, students appeared to struggle with their media rather than to show real mastery over it. There was a general level of competence, but the collections were often uneven eg. one very strong work and one or two formulaic or overworked pieces. Both students and teachers should be aware of the pitfalls of submitting everything, rather than the most resolved works, ie. works that indicate what the student understands about the artmaking process. In these collections there was less risk-taking and no extension of the media used. Personal interpretation was also limited; although there was some attempt at complex decision-making, it did not add to the works, but appeared to confuse the work.

In the less than average range, the submissions appeared unresolved and consisted of only limited image development that did not go beyond the superficial, the cliched and the conventional. No real sustained involvement with the artmaking process was evident, while works were naive and revealed little evidence of what could have been done with the media and/or subject matter. The coherence of these collections was not, it appeared, of prime importance to the students and the works were limited in both concept, subject matter and technique.

In this media area students are advised to have a firm idea about what they want to communicate to the viewer with their works, consequently, the editing and/or selection process is of prime importance. Students should be aware that a title is an important vehicle of communication and, therefore, they should not waste words in obscure and meaningless ways that have no connection to the work presented. Close attention should also be paid to the size, weight and duration limitations as set out by the Board of Studies; some collections contained pieces that were oversized which disadvantaged those submitting them. Intimacy or the value of modest scale was an important element of some of the better collections, *big* does not necessarily mean *better*. Informed selection, combined with a strong conceptual framework and mastery over a variety of forms is the key to success in this area.

Computer-generated Works

This new media area attracted a small number of submissions in its first year. Generally, those who had selected this form produced works of an Above Average standard and demonstrated a sound knowledge of the expressive possibilities of their software tools and of the differing genres and styles of the medium. There were few students who used the package tools merely to produce a showcase of gimmicky special effects or who simply relied on image-banks or poorly integrated collections of scanned images. Rather, computer-generated works, in most submissions, was selected as an appropriate form in which to represent the students' ideas and intentions.

The most successful submissions showed an awareness of the unique properties of the form. A range of different approaches using a variety of packages and tools, often in combination, were used by students. These were used in sophisticated and synthesised ways, extending images to create innovative, visually powerful, evocative or witty pieces. Thoughtful selections of the type of printer and the paper or other surfaces used in the printing of the image, as well as the scale and format of the presentation enhanced the representation, of the student's ideas.

Many submissions successfully utilised simple accessible technology, while other used printing technology available at an output agency. In some cases, large glossy prints were presented, but the seductive quality of high resolution prints was successful only when used to convey substantial and appropriate concept. A significant percentage of the submissions used scanned imagery, and, in the most resolved and coherent examples, these images were carefully selected, juxtaposed and manipulated in a manner that exploited the expressive possibilities of the form and particular tools. While most of the works were two dimensional still images, a number of moving digital images were presented on video.

Students explored a variety of subject matter that often dealt with issues and concerns based on their experience, ranging from the overtly political to quite poignant observations of social tensions within their environment. By utilising cleverly juxtaposed and integrated images, some submissions reflected on the computer's role in contemporary society or used irony and parody to comment on popular culture and the visual arts. Other submissions took advantage of the illusionist qualities of the form to create convincing new environments which, in the best submissions, were not derivative or cliched but personally inventive and imaginative. Some submissions played on the visual qualities of the medium itself and, in conjunction with an experimental approach to materials as well as package tools, produced works that, in their painterly qualities, almost defied the technological slickness of the medium. When scanned images were used, initial selections were intrinsically strong photographic images integrated into a coherent, resolved and finished image using techniques such as subtle layering, and manipulation. In these works, the features of the software were applied with much consideration and the student's own style dominated the tools and effects. The narrative in these works was conceptually well constructed and then enhanced by an interesting and varied sequence and pace. In 4D works, students involved the viewer by using a variety of viewpoints, angles and depth.

Works in the average range generally attempted to represent a concept or idea that students had investigated, but were limited in terms of a less developed representation of a concept, or in terms of a less accomplished use of the medium. While some good choices and decisions had been made, these works would have benefited from further evaluation and development.

Images were often drawn from popular culture sources but were used somewhat uncritically. In some cases, an over-reliance on the tools and effects of an application was at the expense of concept, making works repetitive. More careful selection of tools and editing of images would have benefited many students in this range.

Less successful submissions were characterised by a lack of understanding of the role of the computer as an artmaking tool within the artmaking process. These students appeared to use the computer simply as a solution in itself. Their submissions generally lacked a unified or developed concept and often relied on a repetitive and unmediated reproduction of pre-packaged images and effects.

Students are advised to become familiar with contemporary artworks produced in this medium. A study of current critical writing and debate about the computer in the visual arts may also deepen students' understanding and extend the ways in which they seek to represent ideas.

Sensitive, simple framing is advised. Laminating is not advised as it can obscure the subtlety of colour and surface effects. It is also recommended, as part of the student's development of the work in the Visual Arts Process Diary, that sources of images are acknowledged. The process used and the details of the hardware and the software should also be noted.

Drawing

Submissions in this category were of a high standard. There was a noticeable increase and interest in figurative works, with the more successful students using the human form as a symbolic device or as a device for conveying mood or emotion. Pleasingly, there was a corresponding return to directly observed subject matter. Many works showed a preference for naturalistic representation over the abstract or conceptual. Chosen images were manipulated, fragmented or arranged in unusual configurations to lift the subject matter out of the mundane.

Emergent subject matter was based on concepts suggested by the city or metropolitan life, cultural diversity, life experiences, family, friends, peer groups and cultural/sporting heroes. The more able students approached these in an accomplished and sophisticated manner, often building complex layers of meaning and form. These largely displaced the subjects of still life, landscape and the environment.

Although illustration has also declined in popularity, students are increasingly submitting cartoons and comic strips. The more successful of these this year were characterised by slick, fully-realised techniques, well-developed and original narratives. Rather than use direct copies of source material, these students made the development of their own style evident. A decrease in clichéd images and subject matter such as fetuses, skulls, cars and anorexia was noted, but these themes are rapidly being supplanted by fantasy images and themes derived from computer games.

The number of works presented as large scrolls continued to increase. Those in which the student chose images, concepts and approaches suitable for the larger format and maintained consistency on this scale were the most successful. It is pleasing to note that many students understand the notion of drawing as 'mark-making'. This was shown by strong and innovative compositions which often utilised what, in drawing terms, are unconventional

materials and techniques such as photocopies, found objects and photographs. There was also a return, however, to the traditional media of charcoal, graphite and pencils, with the more able students using them in a skilful and risk-taking way.

A genuine passion for the chosen subject matter and a sensitive engagement with the drawing process itself characterised the more successful submissions. These works were often intentionally restrained, functioned at many different conceptual levels or invited various readings and interpretations. There was an obvious confidence in handling the chosen medium or a successful incorporation of several media or techniques. These students approached their themes in a highly personal manner and imbued conventional subjects with qualities that enabled them to transcend the ordinary. There was evidence of skilful use of rendering, modelling, perspective and a commitment to fresh and unusual viewpoints.

Drawings which were not fully resolved and appeared formulaic were average — less successful submissions. Although these works were imbued with a sense of their potential and these students demonstrated a willingness to explore, they were not able to extend their theme or their technical skills to achieve this potential. These works often attempted to create the illusion of reality in a mechanical fashion, for example through the use of overhead projectors, without allowing for expressive or personal qualities to emerge. Some students presented a series of inconsistent drawings that could have been improved by the use of review and evaluation to edit out those works which were of lesser quality.

The least successful submissions often appeared to be exercises in colouring-in or tracing. The concepts and choice of subject matter were often naive and the meanings were vague or difficult to decipher.

Students are advised to number multiple works if they wish them to be displayed in a certain order. They should also give their artwork a title, which will convey information about the work. Students should experiment and practise their skills before embarking on the final work. They are advised to work on a scale with which they feel confident and one that will enhance the potential of the chosen subject and medium — large works do not automatically translate into more marks.

There was an improvement in the presentation of drawings such as simple window-mounts cut in coloured mats. Very few were presented under glass or with elaborate framing.

Film/Video

Film and video submissions included a diverse range of subject matter from fantasy themes, narratives, art house, rock video and animations but, predominantly, artworks submitted reflected the influence of popular culture or students' experiences in studying art. There was a decline in traditional methods of film making especially in animation, with students now using more computer graphics to develop their work and convey their message. The majority utilised special and post-production techniques to enhance their artworks, some videos, however, are still using these methods to the point where the artwork becomes difficult to view and appears unresolved.

Excellent and above average film and video works demonstrated students' meticulous planning and research. These works were characterised by carefully thought out storyboarding, innovative camera angles and editing, and appropriate selection of special

effects, sound tracks were technically competent and reflected the intentions and content of the film/video. Along with the mastery of technique, works in this range successfully conveyed sophisticated and complex concepts. These artworks were generally succinct and well paced and, when computer-generated imagery was used, it was of an exceptional standard.

Average submissions tended to show some planning by students through storyboards and a reasonable understanding of the medium. Although concepts were generally coherent and satisfactory, some aspects were confused and unresolved. Many students resorted to over-used of post-production techniques to the detriment of their artworks or became over ambitious with their concept and could not integrate it with their technical ability.

Less than average submissions reflected little or no planning or research by students. Basic elements of film-making such as camera angles, editing, lighting and focusing were poorly understood. Concepts and ideas were naive or extremely simplistic and the film/videos could not maintain viewer interest. Within this range many students resorted to inappropriate and technically inferior soundtracks which tended to detract from their artworks. They also extended their videos to fit the six minutes' duration without consideration of pacing and viewer interest.

Students are reminded that they should thoroughly plan and research their videos and films. All aspects of film-making such as storyboarding, camera angles, editing, pacing, lighting, special effects, sound and post-production should be considered in depth. Acknowledgment of all appropriate credits should be given with the student's HSC number but **not name**. Computer graphics videos should indicate software used. Students should know that six minutes is the maximum time-length for works submitted in this category — videos that have a shorter time can still be successful artworks.

Graphics

In this category an emerging trend was an enthusiastic embracing of new technologies in printmaking, such as computer-generated, scanned or manipulated images applied to etching plates or screenprints, solar plate, etchings, and a range of forms of photographic screen printing. While images produced using these techniques often appeared seductively sophisticated, in many cases students relied on the immediacy of the images rather than on sustained explorations of subject matter or further refinements of the technique. Many works this year indicated students' with varying degrees of success in experimenting with mixed media. There was a significant increase in works produced as silk screen prints.

In etching many of the most successful works integrated a variety of techniques, such as aquatint, sugar lift, soft ground, hard ground, photo-etching and cire collée. Techniques and printing methods were used to produce a resolved work and were appropriate to the image and the selected subject matter. Works were highly sophisticated in both concept and execution and informed by a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the potential of the medium. Students showed a confidence in their works which were often experimental or expressive, combining adventurous innovation with sound mastery of technique.

In screen printing, photo stencils predominated, with few students exploring direct stencil methods. The most successful submissions demonstrated a thorough mastery of printing in

works exploring interesting and original ideas, often making subtle references to the works of other artists. Photographic images were combined and overlaid in powerful compositions.

In *block printing* students experimented with both wood-block and lino-block printing, producing adventurous works which fully explored the possibilities inherent in cutting and printing a block. Many very successful works were developed, using single colour prints from standard size lino block — a medium readily accessible to most Visual Arts students which was pushed to its full potential. Students developed sophisticated imagery, in many cases from their local environment, demonstrating strong drawing skills, and developed sympathetically into the print medium. They explored a variety of inks and papers; often the most simple treatment of compelling images were the most successful.

There were fewer *collographs* and *monotypes* than in previous years. In these submissions the more successful works explored the qualities of surface textures, colours and forms in subtle and sensitive ways.

Some outstanding submissions showed students combining a number of graphic techniques in the one resolved work, demonstrating sound mastery of all, and combining, for example, gestural and expressive marks with photographs or the fine cutting of a block.

Average submissions in Graphics were those in which students explored and demonstrated technical control of their chosen print medium. They displayed some understanding of the technical possibility of their chosen form but, in many cases, had difficulty in overcoming problems such as poor registration or unevenly applied ink. Works had a clear concept of subject matter but, in many cases, were either overtly derivative or a little naive. Occasionally poor choices such as insensitive hand-colouring or additional collage marred a competent submission.

In less than average works students' exploration of the chosen print medium was very limited — submissions were often inconsistent in quality, with some poor choices being made, for example, in heavy hand-colouring or clumsy mixed media additions. These students appeared to have very limited experience in their selected printing medium, and very little understanding of its possibilities. Works included badly registered screenprints with areas of bleeding ink; plastic drypoint etching plates poorly printed; or lino blocks cut in a clumsy manner. Subject matter was frequently derivative or very naive and attempts to integrate other materials such as collage were frequently unsuccessful.

Submissions in Graphics do not require blocks or plates to be included with such submissions as evidence of process. Students may develop and manipulate their images and prints or submit multiples. Poor quality water-based inks in many cases negatively affected the finished quality of some works, as did inappropriate or overwhelming mounting or framing.

In the category of Graphics it is imperative that students' submissions include printmaking. A work which is graphic in style but does not explore any printmaking methods, techniques, or processes, for example, pencil or ink drawings, cartoons or illustrations, should be placed in Drawing or Design.

Painting

Painting continued to be a strong and popular category for submitted artworks. This year it was felt that there was an improvement in the quality of submitted paintings in comparison with those in recent years, as well as some interesting shifts and re-interpretations of what it means to produce paintings. Students are increasingly aware that a painting can mean more than a flat, planar, coloured-in surface.

The removal of the category Mixed Media appears to have benefited painting. It has advanced the understanding of work on a surface with the diversification of the material and physical possibilities of painting. Wax and encaustic were popular as were shellac and bitumen. A more considered application of collage was evident.

The submission of works including smaller works in series was also favoured. Some submissions needed to be arranged and viewed in series whilst others were hinged or otherwise joined. In the better works the connecting device did not overpower the painted work. The inclusion of several paintings was to the advantage of the submission, rather than showing everything the student had produced. As in past years, students are reminded that the number of works and the scale of the painting should be carefully selected. Students' learning, their knowledge and understanding of the selected medium should be demonstrated and promoted, not compromised by the submission. Multiple works or large works were successful as good paintings, not because there were many of them and the paintings were big.

Students are reminded of the importance and assistance of research and practice in life drawing and drawing from the figure when exploring figurative subject matter. Sustained investigations of the selected subject matter, in particular figurative works, were an advantage to the more successful paintings.

Popular issues and topics included gender and identity, in particular explorations of male and female stereotypes, especially as generated by the print and electronic media. Identity also featured in explorations about ethnicity, multiculturalism, cultural difference and youth sub-cultures. It seems *The X Files* and similar films were influential, with many paintings representing extra-terrestrial creatures, space travel and other science fiction themes, imagery and styles. Medieval imagery — or Hollywood's version of it — was also popular, often in conjunction with futuristic scenes of good and evil or heroes and heroines.

The better works made innovative use of the selected subject matter, with strong understanding of and experiments in the practices of painting. Text and the inclusion of words is increasingly popular as subject matter, with students making sophisticated paintings that further demonstrate awareness of the work of Barbara Kruger, Colin McCahon, Rosalie Gascoigne, Robert Indiana and Jasper Johns, among others. The use of text was most successful when thoughtfully included. At times, words themselves were the subject matter of the painting.

Throughout the course students should be encouraged to experiment and practise with paint often, regularly and over a period of time. The submitted painting should be produced within a body of work and not as a sole attempt to paint. Equally, students need to spend time looking at paintings in exhibitions, artbooks, magazines, journals and in the print and electronic media. Immersion in and familiarity with the contemporary realm of painting increases the range of possibilities and solutions in painting available to the student.

Brett Whiteley continues to be a popular inspiration for students, with *Alchemy* and Whiteley's rendition of Hokusai's *Wave* featuring prominently. Whiteley is, unfortunately, becoming a clichéd framework and reference point for student self-portraits. Students are encouraged to seek out other artists and examples of their work that may be as, or more, appropriate for, and appealing to, their current expressive problems, issues and concerns. Van Gogh also continues to be a key source, especially *Starry Night* which continues to influence students, especially in managing stars, space landscapes and the night sky. Interestingly however, the number of appropriated works appears to be declining, with students returning to other sources of subject matter and interest.

Works with a political or social message continue. Influenced by artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and employing some graphic devices, a number of students produced works with themes of pollution, war and peace, nuclear testing, sexual assault and racial disputes. A thorough understanding of the issue as subject matter and a wide range of possibilities in interpreting particular characters, events, codes and histories, along with text, was characteristic of the better works.

The most successful works represented a range of attitudes to, and beliefs about painting and the representation of subject matter. These works showed sustained involvement in the practice of painting — encounters with painting problems, experiments, devices, conventions, innovations and solution. In these works the problems were ambitious and the solutions successful. Paintings were pushed, extended, reviewed, constructed, reconstructed, while surfaces were challenged or affirmed. Often humorous, wry, ironic, satirical and witty, the better paintings were triumphant adventures in paint. Form and subject matter were resolved and considered equally important to the expressive intent and accomplishments of the painting.

Notable and highly appreciated works showed an excellent consideration of the chosen materials and subject matter. At times restrained and disciplined, at others taking risks with imagery, viewpoint and representation, these works were adventurous, dynamic and innovative. Subject matter ranged from personal life and experiences to the environment and to familiarity with the visual arts. Knowledge of the selected subject matter through research and other forms of exploratory investigation supported and benefited the expressive choices of students. Layers of meaning, sub-texts, and subtleties were also exploited in the better works, rather than collapsing into literal and, at times, clichéd picture-making.

Average works were often technically or conceptually promising, but did not fulfil their potential. Adopting a less sophisticated and less sustained stance, these works were uneven and inconsistent and often appeared unfinished or unresolved. In general such works were safer, but not necessarily conventional. Many quite conventional and academic works were successful accounts of how to paint, represented areas of interest in the world and did well. These works tended to rely upon clichés and formulae. Students should be encouraged to consider the work as a whole and not just the subject or the background. Narrative and story-telling devices should not overwhelm the reality of the fact that the work is a painting, that wet, sticky, viscous stuff is manipulated and struggled with on a flat planar surface. Equally, the expressive effects of the paint — how it can be layered, splashed, thickened, thinned, applied, mixed and fixed — should not dominate or render the description or suggestion of subject matter irrelevant. An awareness of and sensitivity to painting and local and contemporary Visual Arts contexts is crucial.

The less successful paintings were frequently unfinished images or employed quick applications of collage to solve visual problems. Awkward compositions, using superficial and stereotypical forms of representation, dominated. These works, often heavily reliant on photocopying and photographs, did not resolve or integrate imagery while inappropriate and incoherent choices of media, materials and arrangement featured in them. Presenting a poor understanding of paint with little supportive experimentation or investigation, they seemed to be the first and only painting produced by the student and did not use the knowledge and understanding that comes from a study of the Visual Arts over a period of two years.

Photography

Submissions in this category were impressive in their high standard. Students showed a confident technical proficiency and their understanding of the expressive possibilities of the medium was evident in submissions that explored a diverse range of approaches. There were fewer students who achieved less-than-average marks and submissions were less reliant on clichéd interpretations of subject matter. Many offered more imaginative, individual and knowledgeable representations of ideas that, in the best examples, pushed the limits and parameters of photography.

In many submissions it was evident that students were conversant not only with historical traditions and genres in photography but also with contemporary photographic trends or innovations. In some more sophisticated submissions, there was a self-conscious dialogue acknowledging traditions and trends in photographic practice which was reflective, challenging and, at times, witty. There were a number of works that used text within the work in a way that was appropriately integrated into their submission. There were also a number of works that explored subject matter that reflected the students' response to a specific geographical, cultural or social environment using strong, direct black-and-white images that were in the best traditions of pictorialism and photojournalism.

Submissions in Photography were characterised by diversity. Students worked in a range of sizes from the intimate miniature to the literally life-sized and used processes ranging from simple, but well-executed, camera work and printing; studio set-ups emphasising lighting or using projections; re-photographing and layering of images using collage or sandwiching, or digital or copying technologies; colour photography or toning; or more immediate processes such as liquid light, photograms or Polaroid transfers. The majority of works, including the highly-successful submissions, used techniques and processing that are both achievable and affordable.

Works of an excellent quality challenged the viewer on a number of levels, breaking boundaries and working with this medium in informed, and highly expressive ways. These works were characterised by a completeness and coherence that was the result of a strong understanding of the ways in which both the photographic medium and particular photographic processes and styles could most effectively communicate the students' intentions. Careful, thoughtful choices made at every step of the development produced works that were highly refined and resolved, both conceptually and technically. Students showed that they had a knowledge of the technical processes and of the range of expressive possibilities offered by different materials and processes. Subject matter was interestingly framed and lit, while consideration was given to types of film and paper, as well as the size

and manipulation of imagery. Images were printed cleanly and proficiently and the sequencing and presentation was not only selective but also appropriate.

In the most successful works, the interpretation of the subject matter was subtle, intelligent and informed, and the diverse range of subjects included intimate, quirky self portraits; cool, formalist still life studies; engaging photo essays; brooding surreal images and biting social commentary. Whilst many enduring trends in subject matter, such as landscapes, portraits and still life continued in the successful submissions, the influence of contemporary photography, post-modern art and the mass media, was also evident, providing students with opportunities to subvert, question and parody. Importantly, the successful submissions showed that images had been carefully selected and that each image in a series contributed to the general concept in a coherent, fresh and non-repetitive manner.

Works in the average range showed competent understanding of the techniques and expressive possibilities of photography. Many students attempted approaches that were either more experimental or interpretive and, generally, were able to utilise the expressive potential of the photographic medium. These submissions, however, failed to produce a synthesised or resolved work as they often lacked consistency in their engagement with the medium and its technical processes, or were more superficial and obvious in their representation of ideas. In many cases, attention to the initial shot in terms of lighting and composition as well as persistence in the darkroom to extend the tonal range or correct simple mistakes would have improved the quality of the submissions.

Less successful submissions showed a limited engagement with the subject matter, sometimes it appeared that no more than one roll of film had been taken at one time for the entire submission. Students would be well advised to evaluate their work and select images carefully and re-take images on the basis of that evaluation. Submissions lacked conceptual coherence, with some comprising three or four random snapshots while others were naive or cliched in their representation of an idea that showed little empathy with the subject. Technical problems such as fogging, chemical stains and under-development also demonstrated a lack of skill in the darkroom and a lack of knowledge about the processes, all of which could be corrected with a more sustained engagement with the media.

Students undertaking Photography would be advised to become thoroughly familiar with the techniques and expressive properties of the medium through their own experimentation as well as through the study of photography as an art form. Planning and evaluating the work, reworking it where necessary and making careful selections for the final submissions were all processes evident in the best submissions. Students would be advised to avoid framing that is heavy, cumbersome and insensitive as it often detracts from the work. Excessive, detailed and complicated instructions should be avoided for the presentation of artworks and rationales and background information giving explanation or justification should not be included. Students would be advised to reconsider the value of spotting or re-touching images, as many attempts were poorly executed and did not improve the works.

Sculpture

On the whole the standard of sculpture was strong this year. The interest in the application of surface and the use of coloured media continued. There was a continuing interest in the student's world and personal experience rather than other world issues. There were less 'gory' works than in previous years. Many witty works were presented that suggested a

continuing enjoyment of the exploration of subject matter and media. Humour was evident in average and excellent works ranging from straightforward comedy in the lower range to sophisticated visual games that engaged the viewer on many levels in the upper range. Animals in a range of contexts were very popular as signs or symbols. There was a strong revival of more traditional techniques such as welding, carved wood and clay work. There was, however, no correlation between large-scale work and high quality. Works were still predominantly figurative, although many explored non-figurative conceptual themes.

Excellent and above average works showed that students had developed a sound understanding of both the potential and limitations of their chosen media. The finished product was clearly preceded by sustained experimentation. The works were either well-constructed in the traditional sense or were purely conceptual, multi-layered and resolved. Found objects were dealt with in witty ways, often with ironic sub-text. The expressive potential of the objects was fully explored. Students showed that easily available, often inexpensive material can result in excellent works if used in a knowing and sensitive way. Painted surfaces, photographic images and patterning were combined to produce artworks in unusual and innovative ways. Installations and suspensions encouraged the viewer to become part of the artwork in order to explore its intricacies fully. The exploration of contemporary art practices and artworks was also evident.

Some average students frequently grappled with challenging themes and their works had strong concepts but were poorly constructed in often inappropriate media. Other works were well constructed technically with less resolved concepts. There was some evidence of sustained involvement in the artmaking process with a more selective and structured approach as well as evidence of focus in the work. The selective use of text enhanced the work, although some works relied on it to communicate ideas because of a lack of confidence in the forms themselves. There were, however, inconsistencies in the use of bases, frames and presentation.

Less than average works were incomplete, showing little evidence of prior exploration of selected media or themes and using clichéd subject matter. Collage was used to mask inconsistencies in concept and construction and there was extensive use of found objects but little evidence of manipulation.

Teachers and students are advised to adhere to the Subject Rules set out in the Prescribed Texts, Topics, Projects and Works Document; works should be stable, self-supporting and not excessively fragile. There is still evidence of oversize, overweight and use of dangerous materials. Students should provide instructions, diagrams or photographs for works that need a specific arrangement, but should not include statements of intent. Titles that are clear and unambiguous assist markers. Works with electrical additions must comply with the Board Rules. Lights should be an integrated element of the sculpture and not simply provide enhancement for viewing.

Textiles and Fibre

The artworks reflected a range of student interests and included a range of media and techniques such as appliqué, tapestry and embroidery, batik and gutta, and printed fabric. Excellent and above average works were highly personal in subject matter and expression. Sea life and the environment, interior scenes, fantasy and mythology, appropriated images, tribal representations and cultural statements were popular subjects. These artworks explored

selected media beyond the expected and traditional boundaries while less than average artworks reflected a limited experience with fibre techniques and materials.

There was an increase in the number of works which sought to exploit the potential of found, organic and non-traditional fibres and fabrics in combining to produce tactile, visually exciting and technically challenging compositions. The decorative possibilities of transforming the surface continued to be explored, with an increase in the number of works which relied heavily on sculptural elements. These works were successfully constructed and manipulated and reflected contemporary textile directions.

AppliquÉ continued to be a popular form with an increase in submissions. Layering, small personal collections and hand-made paper compositions reflected an emerging trend. There was continued emphasis on the use of the sewing machine as an expressive drawing tool and for the embellishment of surfaces, excellent and above average artworks continued to explore its creative possibilities. Fabrics, photographs, papers and organic materials were selected and integrated with sensitivity and skill to create rich textural surfaces that invited further investigation. Size varied from miniature to large scale and many works were presented in a series. Artworks were consistent in their treatment of subject, media and technique and reflected carefully considered processes. The local environment, personal and conceptual subject matter, and a strong sense and understanding of the use of colour and pictorial organisation were often evident in this range of works. Satire, humour, wit and a sense of fun were also apparent in many works.

Average works reflected some experimentation with a range of materials and attempted to communicate a concept but lacked integration of subject matter with use of appropriate materials and techniques. Often on technique was used extensively, with little evidence of development or deviation or understanding of the possibilities of the media. At times there were inappropriate judgements about the size and scale of works.

Less than average works reflected a limited understanding of the qualities of the selected media and *appliquÉ* techniques. Combinations of fabric and objects were often ill-considered, with little evidence of experimentation and knowledge of how objects can be integrated into a work and how surfaces can be manipulated. There was an indiscriminate use of and reliance upon glue, glitter and sequined objects. Subject matter was naive and clichéd, stereotypical images of birds, animals and sea life predominating.

There were few submissions in *Tapestry and Embroidery* this year. Excellent and above average artworks reflected student interests and concerns with their world, nature and the environment. These works combined fabrics, text, beads and fibres in a sensitive and subtle manner. There was evidence of investigation of a number of techniques and an understanding of the possibilities of the media. In some works presentation enhanced the artwork. In average artworks subject matter was more literal and was explore on a more basic level. The selection of media and techniques, although less adventurous, was sound.

There were few submissions in *Batik and Gutta* this year. Gutta was often applied with little knowledge of the effects that can be achieved and Gutta works relied on clichéd subjects such as mythology and fantasy. The possibilities of using and mixing intense colours and making intricate patterns were not fully explored.

There were few submissions in *Printed Fabric* this year. Excellent and above-average works included lengths of block-printed fabric using multiple colours and overprinting with motifs.

There was evidence of a clear understanding of printing techniques and use of media which resulted in the printed lengths maintaining the soft, inherent qualities of the fabric. Colour and fabric design conventions had been investigated carefully. Less than average artworks, however, were stiff as a result of inappropriate choices of paint and techniques of printing. Registration was unsuccessful.

There was no submission in *Weaving* in 1996.

Wearables and Jewellery

Wearables submissions reflected a range of media, a wide variety of issues and themes, and different levels of technical awareness. Artworks showed a range of understandings about the function of a wearable. Forms of wearables included traditional styles of garment and ensembles, series of accessories such as hats; and works which challenged conventions and treated the human form as a sculptural element and a site for adornment. Surfaces were extensively explored and issues, themes and concerns were communicated using a variety of innovative and sophisticated techniques. Decoration of surfaces included painting, beading, screen and riso printing, block printing, hand embroidery, free machine stitching, dyeing and the integration of found, recycled and unconventional materials and objects. Media included hand-made paper, leather, feathers, cottons, silk, satins, plastics, television wire, computer components, copper shim, tin food cans and dried vegetable and fruit matter.

There was a commitment to the exploration of how found and recycled objects such as plastics, electrical components, lighting and metals could be utilised and integrated to create a wearable. The use of these objects led to innovative and exciting methods of construction of the wearable as well as challenging views of what constitutes a wearable. Successful submissions made appropriate and informed choices regarding the media used and construction techniques. These included stitching, welding, tying, binding and attaching objects to a surface.

The environment, fairy tales, Van Gogh, medieval costumes, responses to a particular artist's work, carnivals, community celebrations and designed objects for Mardi Gras continued to be popular subjects. Personal issues relating to gender, identity and social comment regarding current trends and events, including the world of technology, were often treated with humour, wit and sensitivity. These artworks reflected the student's interest in making a statement in a form which adorns or is seen on the human body.

In excellent and above average artworks all aspects of the wearable were considered and an acute awareness of a wearable as an aesthetic object was apparent. The communicative nature of the wearable was considered and concepts were fully explored, often on a number of levels. Subject matter investigated was thought-provoking, satirical and humorous. Expressive, personal interpretations of ideas were confidently integrated into a sculptural form in a sophisticated manner. The human form and its possibilities for adornment were extensively investigated and understood. Artworks extended boundaries and used materials in unique and unexpected ways. There was evidence of informed, thorough and highly skilled investigations of the possibilities of traditional and unconventional materials and techniques to create rich textural surfaces. Confidence and knowledge were apparent in materials and techniques and students showed a strong awareness of colour, texture and composition in their works.

Average works were often well constructed but lacked sophistication and/or resolution of concept. Inconsistencies were evident in the exploration of media and the construction of the wearable. Multiple pieces lacked consistency and visual resolution — often one piece was more extensively worked and considered than the others. Subject matter was sometimes clichéd and the full potential of materials used was not always fully explored. There were attempts to synthesise the concept and the form of the wearable but these were not always successful.

Less than average works lacked coherence of concept, choice and combinations of media, and were more limited in their construction. There was little consideration for the human form. Wearables were heavy, stiff and cumbersome and made excessive use of bulky and heavy objects, sequins and collage which were unsuccessfully attached to the surface. Paint was thickly applied and objects were glued on rather than integrated into the surface of the wearable. There was very little manipulation or use of objects and materials in a creative sense and little evidence of experimentation with materials and techniques to understand their qualities and possibilities. Choices were often unsympathetic and inappropriate to the intention of the wearable. Artworks reflected a limited understanding of the artmaking process and poor design skills, while subject matter was often obviously copied and clichéd.

Teachers and students are advised that still photographs are helpful in the marking process in this area. They provide visual information for the markers and illustrate how the student intended the wearable to be worn. Videos are neither necessary nor encouraged. Students should not submit statements of intent. Mannequins are **not** to be submitted. Because wearables are intended for body adornment and the body is a base for sculpture, consideration must be given to the safety of the submission and the practicalities of wearing and marking the work. Many students submitted elaborate boxes to house their wearables. It is suggested that this effort should have been directed into the actual wearable where the time and effort spent could have been acknowledged in the marking process.

Jewellery attracted a small number of submissions — approximately 20 — which was an increase from 1995.

Works were innovative, experimental and exciting and students explored a variety of techniques from traditional to avant-garde styles and expressive combinations of materials as well as binding and assemblage techniques. The range of media included traditional metals — silver, brass, copper, perspex, fibre, natural objects, found electrical components, wires and industrial materials. Materials were often used in exciting ways. Colour and surface finishes were carefully considered and contributed to the conceptual basis of the works.

Excellent and above-average works successfully combined interesting concepts with competent and highly skilled handling of media and techniques resulting in beautifully finished surfaces and details. These artworks reflected a clear understanding of jewellery design parameters in terms of function and wearability. Some referred to other artists' work and art history, while others made statements about individuality and the student's world. Thematic considerations were evident, with pieces interpreting interesting concepts, often with an historical focus.

It was apparent that previous experimentation had taken place and also that students had selected the most appropriate materials and forms of decoration. The process of informed selection was also evident in some submissions in which students selected and submitted their best pieces only, rather than all the work attempted during the year. This resulted in

consistent and confident submissions of work that were impressive in their quality. There was a considerable amount of body adornment beyond the traditional, such as pieces for whole fingers and hands.

Average works attempted to combine interesting experiments with some clear concepts, and showed an understanding of the potential of chosen materials. Joining and assemblage techniques were reasonably well handled and consideration was given to presentation. There was some evidence of an innovative and adventurous use of found and natural objects such as twigs, combined with silver, copper and other precious metals.

Less than average works were characterised by a lack of finish and little consideration for how the jewellery was presented and viewed. Some pieces could not be worn because of their size, while the function and suitability of the jewellery piece had not been considered. One technique was often repeated, with little experimentation or development of concept. There was limited manipulation of materials, joining techniques were often unsuccessful and works were not clearly resolved.

Photographs accompanying jewellery submissions were helpful in establishing how pieces should be worn and viewed. As jewellery is a form of body adornment, issues such as the weight of the piece, sharp edges and finish should be carefully considered.

Integrated Visual/Verbal Studies (3 Unit only)

There was a decrease in the number of works presented in this category in 1996. Many of the works incorporated media collections of either painting or sculpture. Containers (eg. boxes) were a popular form of presentation. Some works did not address the criteria of the Integrated Study, and others ignored the issue of *'incorporating an awareness of twentieth century art, images and attitudes'*.

The most successful Integrated Studies combined and manipulated image and text in a sophisticated manner, providing a site for a thoughtful encounter that reflected an authentic investigation of subject matter. Most of the works submitted were resolved and well presented. In excellent and above average submissions students created works that were engaging, providing that the work and research was developed from a personal and intense interest in the Visual Arts. Excellent works employed visual strategies that were exciting and highly innovative. Here students carefully considered their presentation and content and research methodologies. In some instances students approached artists or theorists rather than relying on secondary sources to develop their studies. Highly successful works gave evidence of their ability to edit information.

In average works the aesthetic evidence provided in the artwork was not always complementary to the intentions specified by the essay or vice versa. The submissions resembled an assignment rather than an integrated Visual/Verbal study. Average works only partially displayed the unity of better works in which the text and the artwork complemented and enriched the viewer's understanding.

That less than average artworks were poorly executed was evident in the disjunction between the artwork component and the concept presented in the written component. Concepts were unresolved in both components and the text was either inappropriate or copied verbatim from other sources.

Students should incorporate a wide and varied range of research techniques in their Integrated Visual/Verbal Study, and should seek out a wider range of sources rather than relying on secondary texts. They should be made fully aware of the guidelines and criteria set for Integrated Studies. It was clear that some candidates had a poor grasp of the requirements of the Integrated Visual/Verbal Study as a 3 Unit Option.

STUDYING IMAGES AND OBJECTS

Questions in the Focus Areas of *Art in Australia* and *Art and Culture* continue to attract a large proportion of responses in Section I of the 2/3 Unit written examination. The most popular question was Question 2A, attracting 14% of responses, closely followed by Question 3. In Section I the most popular question was Question 13 which attracted 63% of responses.

Those who were most successful in this component of the 2/3 Unit (Common) examination answered all aspects of their selected questions and were able to sustain a complete and coherent case, supported by carefully chosen examples which reflected their deep understanding of the visual arts. Essays were well written, and indicated an impressive ability to interpret the visual arts and deal with issues of meaning, content, and context as required.

It should be noted that this component of the examination is worth the equivalent of the submitted artwork (50%). Preparation for the written examination should be on-going throughout the course of study and should lead on from work undertaken in the Preliminary Year. Teachers and students are strongly advised that one or more of the Focus Areas should be engaged with comprehensively over Years 11 and 12. Study of the Recommended Areas of Study in Year 12 should enhance, focus and further develop understandings gained in the Preliminary Year. A solid grounding in Focus Areas provides a strong conceptual base for addressing issues in Section I of the examination.

The Recommended Areas of Study which are published in the *Board of Studies' Bulletin* each year (by June) are intended to be read and interpreted in conjunction with the appropriate Syllabus Focus Area, and Examination Specifications. The Recommended Areas of Study **do not replace** the Focus Area but direct teachers in planning and articulating selections of content for study in the Focus Area.

Teachers and students should look carefully at details of the Focus Area in the Syllabus. **It should be noted that the study of Australian Art should not occur within the Focus Area of Art and Culture.**

In 1996, in Section I, plates chosen to represent a range of media, forms, regions and historical and contemporary cultures were generally used well. In Question 13, which was the most popular in Section I, Plate 4 (Amphora) and Plate 11 (Bodhisattva) were likely to have been a common combination for student selection. Responses to Question 14 and 15 dominated by Plate 6 (Lichenstein) and Plate 7 (Norrie), with Plate 9 (Friend) also attracting a significant number of students. The most frequently selected image was Plate 7 (Pesce), which was often used in conjunction with Plate 6 (Lichenstein) and Plates 4 (Amphora) and Plate 9 (Friend).

1996 Visual Arts Higher School Certificate Examination Report

In 1996 there were less than 50 multi-responses to questions within or across sections of the 2/3 Unit written examination. This is consistent with patterns of student response since 1992.

In the 3 Unit (Additional) written examination the most popular Focus Areas were *Art in Australia* and *Art and Culture*. Those who were most successful in their responses showed sophisticated understandings of the visual arts — beyond the requirements of the 2 Unit Course.

Students in both 2 Unit and 3 Unit courses should be provided with opportunities to develop understandings and skills on making use of citations in their essay responses.

2/3 UNIT (COMMON) —

STUDYING IMAGES AND OBJECTS

SECTION I

Question 1

Explain how the study of Australian art has contributed to your understanding of significant issues in your environment.

Refer to specific artists and works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Very few students covered all aspects of the question and most drew on their knowledge of twentieth century Art and artists, particularly contemporary Australian artists. Students tended to focus on the words 'environment' and 'issue' to the exclusion of all else, connecting the two and thus interpreting the question as being about ecological issues. Other issues commonly dealt with were Aboriginality, gender, the Australian stereotypical image and War. Commonly discussed artists were Tucker: *Victory Girls*, Ruth Waller: *Endangered Pawscape*, Gordon Bennett: *the Outsider*, Tracey Moffat, Tom Roberts: *Shearing the Rams*, the Heidelberg School and 1930's Social Realists.

The more successful students related an appropriate and broad range of artists and artworks to the question and also acknowledged the reference to *both* the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in terms of artists and artworks. The better students often demonstrated an historical knowledge when discussing a diverse range of artworks. Essays developed in an ordered and logical manner, and issues were elaborated upon with clarity.

Above average responses showed an understanding of the 'environment' on many levels, including the political, social, psychological, natural and cultural. They extended their discussion to include the media, techniques and symbols as a way of linking works with significant issues. Their language was confident and fluent; such students could communicate complex ideas and concepts while using relevant art terminology. The responses were noteworthy for their clear and organised structure.

In average responses students concentrated on describing artists and works, mentioning issues only superficially. They engaged in a basic form of analysis that usually involved two examples (most commonly contemporary Australian) and rarely mentioned a nineteenth century example. Those whose essays were in this range tended to itemise specific characteristics of artworks rather than linking them to issues in any meaningful way. Sometimes they created an issue to suit their limited knowledge of Australian Art.

In less than average responses, students did not grasp the intent of the question and/or interpreted 'environment' in only a limited way. Some significant issues were not even linked to Art in Australia or were linked to it in a rudimentary way with few examples. These students often confused information about artists and works of art and were unable to recall specific factual or descriptive details. Some responses did not discuss an issue at all and/or introduced irrelevant topics.

Students are advised to read the whole question carefully and establish its main intent. They should ensure that they are adequately prepared, doing more than describing *one* work by an

artist. Art connections should be made with other artists or artworks. Students would do well to aim for a balance of factual information with informed debate reinforced by discussion of relevant artists and artworks.

Question 2a

'If artworks can be used for political ends, that should be the first priority.'

Evaluate this statement with reference to TWO OR MORE twentieth-century Australian artists, or groups of artists, whose works deal with issues of power and politics.

This question challenged students' understanding of the issues and ideas specified in the Recommended Area of Study, their knowledge of artists and groups they had studied and the relationship between the Recommended Area of Study and the Focus Area — *Art in Australia*.

It tested students' understanding of *'function, meaning the purpose of the visual arts as political action'* as well as their study of relevant twentieth century Australian artists. To fully *evaluate* the implications of the statement used in the question, students were required to make the link between political ends and political action. Those who had concentrated on a partial study of this Recommended Area of Study — incidents or examples of political subject matter in twentieth century Australian Visual Arts without consideration of *'function, meaning and purpose'* — found this a difficult question to examine fully.

Despite a wide range of responses, the question attracted well prepared students, who could, for the most part, discuss relevant artists and artworks with varying knowledge of historical context and familiarity with the appearance of their artworks. This high degree of preparation led to an increased use of quotations from artists, critics and historians.

Excellent and above average responses showed familiarity with issues and ideas associated with art and politics and a broad knowledge of twentieth century Australian art as well as a detailed knowledge of artists' engagement with political action. This allowed students to evaluate the implications of the statement in relation to issues such as: the artist's role in society, the social and historical context of the production of his/her artworks, issues associated with the artist's intention and the politicisation of his/her artworks, as well as personal/political debates. Many of these students could also refer to alternative aesthetic and expressive ends of artworks.

Forms of evaluation varied between direct agreement or disagreement with the statement and more subtle considerations and explorations of art and political debates. Most responses were characterised by the students' excellent knowledge of specific artists and artworks. Examples were chosen carefully to represent differences of approach or responses to various political demands. These students successfully discussed historical and contemporary perspectives of art as well as political engagement in relation to issues such as war, economics, work, feminism, the environment, Aboriginality and land rights.

Most average responses addressed the different parts of the question unevenly and presented well-prepared descriptions of artworks. Here many students responded to the statement in a generalised introduction and conclusion, often given as an uncontroversial topic, and concentrated on a discussion of artworks and artists in relation in the context of social and political issues.

Most responses did not examine the notion of political ends/action or power directly. Evaluation was often basic — a typical response would determine the priority of political ends in artwork or would judge an artists by the success with which the political issue was expressed in the artwork. That is, evidence of political concerns in an artwork was taken as evidence of priority. Examples were chosen less carefully to broaden an argument. Students tended to concentrate on responses to War and/or Aboriginal issues, with a generalised sense of political context.

Less than average responses concentrated on descriptions of artworks with no reference to context. Brief reference to the subject matter — Artworks — was usually the only indication of political content.

Teachers and students are advised that the Focus Area should be fully explored. While the Recommended Area of Study should be seen as working within a Focus Area. Students with a broad understanding of the relationship between the specific Recommended Area of Study and the wider context of the Focus Area enter the examination with greater flexibility and choice as well as the ability to deepen their response through reference and allusion. Teachers should consider the relationship between the Preliminary Year and study of the Focus Areas and HSC courses and selected Recommended Areas of Study. They should ensure that a diversity of artists/groups/works is studied to provide flexibility in responding to examination questions and to introduce students to a variety of media/forms which can be studied within the Recommended Area of Study and the Focus Area. Students should avoid over-prepared essays which assume that the published Recommended Area of Study will provide the wording of the examination question. Contextual information should be treated with concern for accuracy, reliability and understanding.

Question 2b

Assess the impact of gender and identity on themes of the intimate, private, and the domestic in the visual arts.

Refer to specific Australian artworks made before and after 1945.

This question challenged students to assess the impact of gender and identity on themes of the intimate, private and domestic in the Visual Arts with reference to Australian artworks made before and after 1945.

Excellent and above average responses commented critically on the statement and thereby indicated their ability to make an assessment of the impact of gender and identity on the specified themes. This assessment was supported by reference to artists and their artworks in which students linked themes through associations with specific artists and their works. Reference was made to artists such as Thee Proctor, Tim Maguire, Grace Cossington-Smith, Brett Whiteley, Davida Allen and Mike Parr. In some instances the role of the viewer was also considered both the intrinsic and the extrinsic quality of artworks, showing an ability to explain contextual understanding of artists and works. Essays in this range were coherent and reflected students' excellent grasp of art concepts. Language used was technically correct, sophisticated and expressive and candidates used quotations to support their understanding. Those whose essays appeared in this range referred to works produced prior to and after 1945, showing an understanding of the parameters of the Focus Area in Australia as applied to this Recommended Area of Study.

Average responses were generally proficient. Students whose essays appeared in this range referred to particular artists to demonstrate their understanding; the essays, however, were more restricted in scope, for example, a more limited time span between selected artists was evident or the essays were more descriptive than critical, although some attempt was made to explain the meaning of selected works. In some instances essays included unsubstantiated opinion or works were placed haphazardly in their cultural context.

Less than average responses were restricted by the limited range of examples used by students. These essays tended to be opinionated, with little understanding of the ways in which the question could be interpreted.

Teachers and students are advised to consider how the Recommended Areas of Study acts as a focus within the broader Focus Area. Those with a deeper understanding of the Focus Area showed their greater ability to select relevant examples and make associations between examples to illustrate their arguments. Students should focus on key words within questions. In this question students were required to 'assess'.

Question 3

Discuss how looking at and reading about works by Australian artists has contributed to your investigations in artmaking.

In your answer, refer to TWO OR MORE artists and their works.

Excellent and above average responses dealt with all aspects of the question. The responses in this range indicated a depth of research into artists and their works that had contributed to their own investigations in artmaking. Essays in this range were critical in their focus and interpretation of selected artists and works, which were well understood. Connections between artist/works and student's own work were well explained and thoughtfully selected.

Average responses were more descriptive of influences. At times historical understandings of artists and works were discussed although students were obviously not as able to deal with conceptual understandings that they had grasped and applied to their own work. In this range it was pleasing to note that students could discuss a range of artists as well as name particular artworks which had influenced their investigations. At times, however, this was expressed as 'My first artist is' and 'My second artist is' suggestive of prepared answers which did not deal with the whole question.

Less than average responses often provided a few paragraphs on one or two artists in which links with students' own interests were not clear. Statements were used such as 'I have looked at' or 'I liked how he used his colours ... I decided to do the opposite.'

Teachers and students are advised to consider the scope of the Art in Australia Focus Area in preparing for this question. It was interesting to note that the Recommended Areas of Study for this Focus Area were considered by a number of students in attempting this question. It is important to note that the Focus Area can be examined in many ways other than through the two Recommended Areas of Study. A broader approach to the Focus Area should be followed in order to extend the range of options available to students for making and studying artworks.

Question 4

'Australian art has been shaped by international innovations.'

Discuss this statement with reference to THREE examples in your local environment.

You could consider painting, sculpture, architecture and/or design.

You may use sketches in your answer.

The majority of responses in Question 4 came from weaker students who generally showed a limited knowledge of art and a strong reliance upon unsupported opinion. Many students responded to the environment component as the focus of the question and proceeded to describe their environment or followed a *'clean up Australia'* approach to the question. The requirement for the three examples proved to be difficult for many students.

In excellent and above average responses, students were able to cite the minimum of three and sometimes more examples on their local environment. The discussion revealed an excellent depth of study which was assessed in a sound form and incorporated a differentiated vocabulary. Responses in this range discussed the statement fully. In above average responses candidates had thoroughly studied a specific area such as architecture and showed a detailed knowledge of various architectural components and made pertinent historical links. They also referred appropriately to international innovations, including Queen Anne influences, and Marseilles tiles. There were also specific links between the work of Glen Murcutt and the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as Seidler's work including Rose Seidler House and Bauhaus influences.

There were very few responses in the average range. Such responses relied upon sketches, used only a few examples and reflected a limited knowledge. They tended either to address the statement or to discuss examples, but rarely did both. Many referred to the statement by mentioning painting, sculpture or architecture in very general terms. For example, claims such as *'all painting in Australia has been affected by international innovations'* were followed by non-specific discussions.

Less than average responses relied heavily upon sketches which had little bearing on the question. Most responses that fell in this area commented on the vastness of Australia and the importance of keeping the country clean and beautiful. Some students referred to Plates 1-3 and gave an *unseen* type of weak response with no elaboration, interpretation or analysis, simply citing the plates.

Question 5(a)

Explain how the culture of cities and metropolitan life has influenced subject-matter in the visual arts.

In your answer, refer to specific examples from ONE OR MORE of the following regions:

- Europe
- Asia
- the Americas
- Africa
- Oceania.

This was generally a well-answered and popular question and those selecting it were mostly well prepared. The best candidates used this question to explain their understanding of the character and issues of the Focus Area of *Art and Culture* by examining the relationship of subject matter and cultural context in a specific investigation of the culture of cities and metropolitan life undertaken in the Recommended Area of Study. The content studied was adapted to form a clearly articulated and cogent narrative that specifically answered the question, using examples and particular instances to explain and illustrate the relationship between subject matter and culture.

Whilst the majority of students centred their responses on specific examples from Paris in the late nineteenth century and/or early twentieth century European modernism, there was a range of content selected from different times that included the Renaissance (Florentine examples in particular), Caneletto, El Greco, American examples such as Davis, Hopper, Segal and Kruger as well as Modernist and contemporary architecture and films such as, for example, *Metropolis* and *Bladerunner*. There were surprisingly few Ancient or Asian examples, with, only a few students discussing the city culture of seventeenth century Japan as an artistic influence. With the exception of Segal and Giacometti, there were very few discussions that included sculptural examples and also very few that used examples of photography or considered the role of popular culture. Many students cited contemporary critics, notably works by Robert Hughes such as *Shock of the New* and the recent television series *American Visions*. The use of other critical opinion strengthened their explanations by lending authoritative weight to their remarks. Students still used inappropriate examples by Australian artists; it should be noted that the Syllabus description of this Focus Area does **not** include Australian Art.

Excellent responses were characterised by their highly interpretive and carefully constructed responses to all aspects of the question. These responses revealed a thorough understanding of the nature and significance of the relationships between the cultural context and the subject matter selected. Many of these excellent responses developed particular discussions about the city that moved beyond the notion of the city as simply a physical site to include ideas about the psychological experience of the city, the city as a modernist icon or Utopia, metropolitan life as bourgeois pleasure, or the city as an emblem of wealth, status or progress. Such narratives formed the basis of these responses and acted as a connecting thread that coherently explained their influence and the ways in which the milieu of the city and metropolitan life was shown in particular examples.

In the most successful responses, examples were well selected, richly described and made relevant with interpretative analysis and explanatory statements that connected to the general discussion. The language used was precise and varied and good use was made of art concepts and terms. In some responses, students examined in depth a specific time such as

early twentieth century Modernism or conducted a wider survey of different examples from different times. In both cases, excellent responses presented a number of different aspects or perspectives about the influence of the city on the subject, with some students making considered evaluative judgements about the nature of the relationship; this indicated a high degree of thoughtful analysis of historical viewpoints and critical positions. As noted earlier, it was apparent that many of the best students had read a variety of authoritative sources in their study of this Focus Area and this informed their judgements.

In average responses, students generally made appropriate selections of images and artists and used these to show a fairly direct and unquestioned connection to city life that was almost always presented in terms of the physical features of the city or the artist's experiences of the city. Discussion of the works was more descriptive and less supported with outside evidence or opinion. The connection of the example to city life was seen as being self-evident and was not supported or explained in these responses. The depth of contextual explanation was also more limited, as connections between the subject matter and the city were seen at a more superficial level. In this range students were not always selective in their discussion of the works and many chose aspects of style and technique that did not further their explanation of the connections between subject matter and context.

In the less successful responses, students selected one or two examples and made one or two points that indicated some familiarity with the work, but these remarks might not have related to the question itself. Often the response was not focused on art and art works but dealt in general terms with the experience of living in the city.

Question 5(b)

Examine the effects of power, patronage and ownership on the visual arts in a range of regional contexts.

In your answer, refer to specific examples.

You may consider the impact of possession, dispossession, conquest, and/or assimilation in your answer.

The known nature of the Art and Culture Recommended Area of Study led to reasonably good responses to this question. Students who attempted the whole question in a systematic fashion generally gave appropriate and capable responses which were well received.

Excellent responses demonstrated an understanding of and insight into the concepts and knowledge of visual arts. This was reflected in historical and contemporary contexts and personal interpretations based on well-chosen examples of artworks, objects and images. Many students made judicious use of quotations and showed familiarity with video resources such as Hughes' *American Visions*, the UK series *Art Ache and the State of the Art*, together with print sources, including magazines, journals and critical writing from John McDonald and other local writers. The Russian Avant Garde and its relation to official State styles was a popular choice. Students from several large centres used quotations from sources such as Pliny, Degas and Fuseli throughout their work.

Historical references ranged across the Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian and Persian Empires, as well as Greece and Rome. The power and influence of the Church as a patron during the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods were widely considered. References included the patronage of the Medici, the totalitarian influence of twentieth century dictators such as Hitler and Stalin, with their rejection and suppression of so-called 'degenerate art' and

endorsement of State-sponsored, heroic imagery. More innovative examples included the Nationalist mural painters of Mexico in the inter-war period led by Diego Rivera, whose brush with the forces of capitalism in Detroit (Ford Motor Company mural) and New York (Rockefeller Centre mural) was woven into several explanations. Up to five regions were examined by many students and in above average responses artworks were well connected to the region, culture and period being discussed.

Contemporary manifestations of patronage included J P Getty and the Getty Institute/Museum, prizes, fellowships, international studios and scholarships. Passing reference to Australian examples provided relevant and acceptable illustrations of bigger concepts, eg the Archibald and the MoÏt et Chandos Prizes, State and national museums, and Alan Bond's abortive acquisition of cultural material. Incidental Australian references provided context, whereas detailed expositions of the history of Australian landscape painting or the struggle of indigenous communities were mistaken strategies within the Focus Area *Art and Culture*.

Excellent and above average responses also showed an understanding of the relationships between power, patronage and ownership which can be shown in a variety of ways — as subject matter, in the art forms commissioned, in the institutions and individuals that provide support, sponsorship or other endorsement of works, in the power of the artist over her/his craft and in the authority of the audience which accepts or rejects what is made and displayed. The effects of the conquest within and amongst regions was also widely discussed, with students frequently discussing the Elgin Marbles, Benin bronzes and German cultural property initially looted by the Nazi regime and subsequently spirited away by the Russian military.

Average responses used examples as illustrations rather than as instances of a powerful explanation. They often did not completely discuss the question or adopted the position that power, possession and patronage had an effect on the Visual Arts without exploring the whys and wherefores of the occurrence of these effects. The focus on the Visual Arts in the question is deliberate and specific. Detailed explanations of politics and power should be used to contextualise the Visual Arts, but not as an end in themselves. Average responses also lacked specificity, either in examples used or in the way in which those examples were integrated with the discussion. Generally one region was emphasised and discussed in detail, while other regions were referred to almost in passing.

Less than average responses were in the minority; here, however, these students focused almost exclusively on Australian indigenous content, with Gordon Bennett being popular. There were some students who rather unconvincingly explained the classics of Australian landscape one more time.

The question required discussion of a range of regional contexts and those students who answered by relying exclusively on Australian indigenous art and culture neglected not only a requirement of the question but also ignored the specifications of the Focus Area.

Poor responses were simple, generalised, and lacking in any detail other than stereotypical descriptions. The small number of below average answers were noteworthy for repetition rather than any particular linguistic difficulties. These responses also tended to ignore the central issues of the question, choosing, instead, to deal with only some parts of the optional elements of conquest, assimilation and dispossession and generally limiting discussion to one example from a region.

Question 6

Explain how your study of artists and artworks from regions outside Australia has influenced your artmaking.

Refer to TWO OR MORE specific examples.

You may consider subject-matter, meaning, materials and technologies.

The wording of the question was both clear and concise. One issue that became apparent was the *extent* to which the students linked their own artmaking to that of the studied artists — many simply tacked on a paragraph at the end of the essay when finally referring to their own artmaking. This usually constituted a poor response to the ‘*explain how*’ component of the question. There was a heavy reliance upon Ganguin, Van Gogh, Munch, Picasso, Matisse, Dali, Kahlo, the Impressionists, Warhol and Pop Art, and Michelangelo as influences. Many students, unfortunately, included discussion of the influence of Australian artists on their artmaking when they discussed only two artists. Some references were made to computer graphics and graffiti artists, as well as authors.

In the excellent and above average responses, the better students answered all parts of the question in a manner which reflected depth of research and an articulate sensibility. These students were able to place their examples correctly in a historical context and elaborate fully by a full explanation of Pop Art, along with its social and political background. These responses often included excellent useful/enlightening sketches or diagrams to assist with the ‘*how*’ part of the question. The better students often linked their work to that of their chosen artist on a more conceptual level reflecting a sophisticated understanding of the artist’s works and art concepts. These responses often used appropriate quotations from artists or literature, and linked these to coherent arguments. Emphasis on their own artmaking was linked to well-chosen examples, did not comprise drawn-out descriptions, but was directly focused upon the specific qualities and issues that related to their own artmaking.

In average responses students answered most parts of the question, but in less depth. They usually discussed two artists and their works first, and then briefly discussed their own artmaking; often making fairly superficial connections. Many students touched on historical contexts but more often described, rather than interpreted, chosen examples. Many essays in this range were very unbalanced and often did not show a clear understanding of how artists or artworks influenced their artmaking. Some cited only two examples, others focused mainly on their own artwork, each making only vague reference to the other part of the question.

In the less than average responses students often painstakingly compared their artwork point by point, without full description or detail, to that of the artist they felt had inspired their work, saying, for example: ‘*this artist painted a person and a tree, and so did I...*’. These students also relied upon opinions and feelings — saying especially ‘*I like*’ or ‘*I did this,*’ for example: ‘*I like red too, just like this artist*’. Many students did not address this Focus Area because they used artists from Australia and did not link their artmaking to that of their chosen artists. There was a strong tendency for these students to make extensive descriptive commentary on their own artwork with little or no reference to other artists. Some named artists or artworks, made spurious links to their own work, and were usually unable to contextualise adequately. Less than average responses were unable to ‘*explain how*’ and often mentioned only one artist.

It is advised that students need to know and understand the Focus Area and also the influences on their art making. Students need to be able to contextualise artists culturally and historically and to establish links between these factors and their own experience of the world that informed their art. Students should be encouraged to explore their chosen artworks more widely and not rely upon mere description as interpretation. For example, they should explore the social and political environment of both the artist and artwork and the time and place to which it belongs. Since this is an *Art and Culture* question, students need to be aware of the region they are studying in a cultural context. Diagrams may aid the clarity of the response in Type C question and assist the examiner to link the claims and the evidence. Responses could be strengthened by making connections beyond twentieth century painting.

Question 7

Look at Plates 1, 2 and 3.

Examine post-modern approaches to the Visual Arts in your environment.

Refer to the use of signs, symbols, images and materials.

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

This question was generally poorly answered, since the majority of students did not understand what was being asked of them. For most students the phrase '*post-modern approaches*' meant *modern* and was used to lead a discussion on new technologies and form using the plates. Few students saw the plates as examples of post-modern practice. A large number used the plates as for Section I-type questions, ignoring the requirements of the question. Very few went beyond the given plates in their responses. Most interpreted '*in your environment*' as only the physical environment rather than examining its broader conceptual meaning.

Excellent responses linked post-modern approaches as shown by the plates to conceptual concerns within their environment such as the search for identity and the evaluation of contemporary society. They used the given plates and the works of other artists which related to the stated concerns and particular post-modern practices. They related and assessed the influence of the technological environment and its agenda, particularly in relation to traditional conventions of art and showed ability to demonstrate how post-modern approaches question the state of contemporary life and its many contradictions and juxtapositions.

Average responses were very descriptive but included some good analysis of the plates. They lacked any connection with the larger issues embraced by post-modernism, however. Environment was seen on the local physical level and very little understanding of signs and symbols was evident. Most students connected post-modern approaches to new technologies or media. The better responses in this range tried to grapple with some issues raised by the plates and to interpret these in relation to their immediate physical environment.

Less than average responses made very little, if any, reference to the question and heavily relied on description of the plates. On the whole, these students treated the question as a Section I type with little or no analysis or interpretation of a link to their own environment. They often simply copied the plate captions and relied on guess-work. Although plates may

be comforting as they provide a visible image to discuss, students still need to understand the requirements of question, as well as a broader understanding of their own local environment and this Focus Area to answer this type of question.

Question 8a

Analyse the significance of copy and repetition in modernist and contemporary art practices.

Refer to particular examples, and consider their function, meaning and purpose as artworks.

The question was well-structured and straightforward, with a good relationship to the Focus Area. Most students appear to have understood the demands of the question, were well prepared and reasonably successful in their responses. The question allowed students much scope to explore all aspects of copy and repetition in terms of media, appropriation, technology, motif, image, formal qualities. Pop art was a popular choice, with many students using Warhol's soup cans as an example. The responses which were limited to Pop examples were generally weaker, the better students supporting their discussions with a broader range of examples.

Many students ignored the requirement to discuss both modernist and contemporary examples. Some seemed confused about the dates that constitute these periods. Not all students addressed all parts of the question, many omitting, especially, a consideration of '*function, meaning and purpose*'. A common weakness was their failure to link the significance of copy and repetition to chosen examples.

Excellent and above average responses revealed evidence of students' research and preparation as well as their thorough understanding of art concepts and contexts, expanding discussion into other areas of expression, eg literature. They used a wide variety of appropriate examples to demonstrate consistently the significance of copy and repetition, referring to meaning, function and purpose, thereby answering all parts of the question. They used sophisticated, coherent and fluent language and reinforced their discussion with use of relevant quotations. They understood the subtleties and complexities of the concepts of copy and repetition and interpreted the question with multi-layered perceptions, especially linking the concepts with technology. Students made informed judgements to support their discussion, commenting on the significance of copy and repetition in the context of today's society. Some of the very sophisticated essays approached the concepts from an unusual perspective, eg. philosophical or political, and revealed an understanding which supported these perspectives.

Average responses attempted to address the question, but often neglected parts of it such as '*consider function, meaning and purpose,*' failed to discuss both contemporary and modern art practices or made only limited reference to them. They relied on description of examples generally, not focussing enough on significance of copy and repetition. Some approaches merely analysed the formal qualities of examples. Others listed examples and artists with very little links to the question. These responses tended to be rote learnt or formulaic responses. Concepts of copy versus repetition were often tacked onto essays as an afterthought rather than being integrated into the discussion. There was often heavy reliance on historical contexts.

There were few less than average responses. Here, students attempted to answer the question, but only minimally, especially neglecting to discuss the significance of copy and

repetition, and often ignoring the concepts altogether. Essays contained very little discussion of examples with little or no analysis. Essays were often repetitive and included poor expression, naive judgements and errors of fact. Opinions were unsupported, the student relying on expression of feelings for most of the essay.

Teachers and students are advised that definitions of *copy* and *repetition* need to be clarified and concepts explained in greater depth. (Some whole centres were quite limited in their understanding of concepts. For example, they seemed to understand *appropriation* only.) Concepts of function and purpose also need to be clarified. Most students addressed only one or the other. Students need to understand the definitions of 'contemporary' and 'modern.' An expanded base of knowledge, better understanding of contexts and a wider range of artists and examples is required in this Focus Area.

Question 8b

'Images of women in Western art have symbolised such things as good and evil, virtue and vice.'

Discuss this statement with reference to historical and contemporary works.

There was a range of interpretations to this question. In excellent and above average responses students were able to link the question to theoretical social debates and terms such as *humanism*, *social issues*, *neo-Marxism* and *bourgeoisie*. These responses showed an understanding of the Focus Area, Art and Media as signs, symbols, images and materials.

Historical and contemporary contexts of artwork were discussed, ranging from general background information about society/culture/meanings, to a few carefully chosen examples which revealed understanding about the meanings of artworks in and over time, for example, the reception of Monet's *Olympia* at the time of its painting compared with its current reception. This was often supported by quotations from artists, critics (Hughes and Berger were the most popular) and/or literary texts to frame discussions of prostitutes, femme fatales etc. Students discussed the complexity and dichotomy of specific images and themes which included virtue/vice and good/evil. Discussion focussed on the formal and symbolic uses of darkness, light and colour to express moral values of evil and goodness in images of *Madonna and Child*, for example. Other examples included women in artworks by men (Monet, Munch, Ingres), women in artworks by women (Artemesia Gentileschi's *Judith Beheading Holofernes*), women as artworks (Kozic, Sherman).

The better students discussed how women have been manipulated, viewed and represented as images and symbols predominantly by male artists and the purpose of this. They were also aware of how women artists portray women, particularly how contemporary female artists have questioned past traditions and conveyed this in their artmaking. Examples from advertising were frequent and included reference to Warhol, Kruger, the Visual Arts Design Team, and the Guerilla Girls.

Average responses often included reference to any paintings of women as a survey of the history of Western Art. Students described and interpreted artworks to justify the portrayal of women as either good or evil. They organised their responses chronologically. Such responses focussed on symbols of women as being motherly (*Madonna and Child*), connected to religious works (*Virtue*), and the prostitute (*Vice*). In these responses students made restricted reference to media and technique and artistic practice. The responses in this range rarely offered definitions of terms.

Less than average responses tended to describe artworks unconnected with the question. Essays included unsupported opinion about sex in advertising, making few links to artworks or art terms and concepts. Students usually referred to key words but neither addressed the question nor gave examples of 'good and evil' or 'virtue and vice'. These students gave personal opinions in very general terms, for example 'all men hated women', 'men have always dominated women'. They described the artwork and then stated what they thought the image portrayed women as being good, evil, weak or strong.

Teachers and students are advised to establish clear distinctions between historical and contemporary contexts and works. The Syllabus Focus Area should be referred to in order to verify terms. The Syllabus provides a broader basis for understanding the Recommended Area of Study and uses the terms 'signs', 'symbols', 'images' and 'materials' to explain the Focus Area. It also suggests the importance of looking at the context of the production of any work, that is, its society and place in time.

Question 9

Using particular examples, assess how TWO OR MORE artists have been influential in the development of your artmaking.

Refer to:

- *use of images*
- *signs and symbols*
- *materials and techniques*

'Assess' was the key word in quality responses and the understanding of students' artmaking processes. Most responses were well prepared and understanding of the subject was thorough. Students used mainly contemporary Australian artists and referred to artists working with video, computer-generated imagery, sound, etc. There was evidence of links to the Recommended Area of Study (sometimes at a very forced level), but at times the artists chosen were not appropriate because of a poor understanding of the artistic process.

In excellent and above average responses the examples and artists used were varied and related specifically to development of the student's artmaking on various levels — intellectual, physical, social and political. Quotations and references were used to contextualise and link it to what had influenced it. A strong use of art terminology and vocabulary in analysis and description was characteristic of these essays, although many did not mention a finished artwork, but focussed on the development of their artwork over a period of time. There was a convincing discussion of artists, both process and product, and students conveyed a genuine appreciation of their chosen artists. There was strong integration of influences, process and product. These responses discussed imagery with authority, indicating their insight into how imagery was used in their artmaking and in the work of selected artists.

In average responses the essays were structured the essays around the use of imagery, signs and symbols and materials and techniques. Specific examples quoted were also generally one per artist. Chosen artists ranged from contemporary Australian through to Surrealists, Pop Artists and Picasso.

Less than average responses tended to describe a submitted work in relation to an artist on a superficial level: 'Van Gogh used yellow on the house, I used yellow on my building'. Few

examples were used, with little or no analysis of influences and students tended to bypass the question. Their essays tended to be repetitions and incorporated terminology which was often inappropriate. They frequently displayed a lack of specific knowledge of individual artworks and artists or often discussed only one artist who was tenuously linked to the student's own artmaking.

Students need to develop reflective and evaluative skills in discussing their own artmaking processes in progress, so that their diary functions as a resource and record of research and process. This type of question is an excellent way of relating knowledge and practice, but students need to be aware of the demands of the question and to be alert to key words such as 'assess'.

Question 10

'Good design responds to the environment..'

Evaluate this statement by referring to THREE examples of design in your local environment.

You could consider:

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

Most students had an affinity for, and an understanding of, the environment and showed greater interest in this aspect of the question than the design product field of research. They were passionate about environmental issues and applied strong arguments to defend their point of view. The question drew very strong opinion-based essays.

Excellent and above average responses reflected some preparation for the question with research in the field of design and its relationship to the environment. The more successful responses defined the 'local' environment and showed an understanding of, and addressed the concepts of, design in relation to it. They chose appropriate examples with which to show their preparedness for this Recommended Area of Study. These students discussed particular designers and their philosophies and discussed architectural examples eg. the work of Phillip Cox, Glen Murcutt, Mies Van der Rohe and the Bauhaus, and Frank Lloyd Wright. A few essays discussed Australian furniture (chair) design.

Above average responses presented structured arguments, relating local objects in their environment to the question but did not indicate an in-depth research of the design field.

Average responses tended to be non-specific and rarely presented identifiable examples. Examples given were often highly personal, such as clothing labels, in particular Mambo and surfing type labels, Ken Done and Jenny Kee, footwear, and local unnamed venues — *'the pub down the road,' 'my local street,' 'the local shopping centre.'* Examples were described, but in most cases the object was not analysed nor the designer identified.

Less than average responses rarely mentioned examples and chose merely to discuss the environment in general. These responses were very brief and expressed opinions and viewpoints in colloquial language unsupported by reference to specific examples and designers. It was obvious that some students had not studied this Focus Area and had not prepared for this Type A question. Reference was made to Plates 3 and 7, and, while students

were unable to discuss these works specifically, they discussed them with reference to the environment.

Many responses were from multiple response scripts.

It appears many students are drawn to these questions through personal interest even when they have not been prepared in this Focus Area. Such students could be better prepared.

Question 11a

'Bridge construction combines materials, engineering, politics and economics in functional objects that are symbolic of their time.'

Assess this statement with reference to historical and contemporary examples of bridge construction.

You may use sketches in your answer.

This question required historical and contemporary examples; therefore an understanding of the development of bridge construction was essential. The Recommended Area of Study outlined particular points which needed to be examined. They included types of materials, engineering methods, political awareness, and economic considerations, which affect the outcome of the bridge construction and determine its general function and design. Students need to consider how all of these factors influence the function or nature of bridge construction, thereby deciding if the bridge is a *'symbol of its time'*.

Reference was made regularly to examples of Roman aqueducts and the development of keystone arches. The most used example was the Pont du Gard in France; the London Bridge was used as an example of design in relation to existing architecture; the Coalbrookdale Bridge, the Iron Bridge as a symbol of the Industrial Revolution, and the Brooklyn Bridge as a pre-WWI example. Contemporary examples included the Glebe Island Bridge, used to discuss advances in technology such as computers; the Gladesville Bridge, as an example of one of the largest reinforced concrete arches and also used to discuss form and function or aesthetic design, while the Harbour Bridge was used as an example symbolic of its time, as it was the largest bridge when built. Political examples included reference to the Hindmarsh Bridge and the secret Women's Business debate. This example was used to discuss communities' power, in this case Aboriginal communities, to influence the outcome of bridge construction. Most students presented factual accounts of the development of bridge construction, these accounts were usually well researched and provided many examples and diagrams. In general, most students failed to discuss the quotation. Average responses, in particular, found it difficult to relate technological advances within historical contexts and, thus, their influence on design and bridge construction methods.

Excellent and above average responses demonstrated an excellent knowledge of construction and/or engineering materials and techniques. These were sophisticated responses in which the students showed that they were fully aware of the political and economic influences which affect the results of bridge construction. Prominent engineers who had a significant impact on the development of bridge and building construction in general were well considered. Examples of such engineers included: Robert Maillart, Gustave Eiffel, George and Washington Roebling, Abraham Darby, John Bradfield and Eugene Freyssinet. Such students were capable of external analysis, relating the design of bridge construction to other art forms and issues of aesthetics/philosophy.

In average responses students were able to present generalised information with adequate factual content, but difficulty in conveying this knowledge other than through a descriptive analysis. These students showed an awareness of the functional needs of bridges and their impacts on the environment and society. Subjective interpretations of political and economic factors were raised. In this range, students' sketches were able to illustrate their understanding of bridge design and construction methods and showed that students are fully aware of the symbolic pride that landmarks such as bridges bestow upon a society.

In less than average responses students found it difficult to move beyond pure description of various bridges. They demonstrated a limited understanding of the question as well as of design and were unable to sustain a detailed response. Sketches appeared with neither annotation nor explanation. These students were also unable to give both historical and contemporary examples.

Factual information tracing the development of bridge construction might have appeared to be a good base for answering the question, nevertheless, students needed to interpret what the question was asking and to relate their knowledge to it.

Question 11b

Examine the practices used by artists working as designers in a range of contexts.

In your answer, refer to historical and contemporary examples.

Students were required to examine the methods/processes used by artists when they work in the field of design. 'A broad range of contexts' could have been interpreted to mean such fields as architecture, furniture design, fashion design, industrial design, graphic design, commercial design, interior design. Historical and contemporary examples should have been used to provide an artist or style/movement in support of the student's response.

Excellent and above average responses repeatedly used particular examples. Many responded overwhelmingly with the philosophies of the Bauhaus, in particular the work of Marcel Breuer (especially the B53 chair), Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe and Van de Velde. Australian examples included Ken Done, Reg Mombassa and other Mambo artists. Frequent references to Australian architecture highlighted the work of Glen Murcutt and Harry Seidler. Most students referred to significant developments in design, such as the theories founded in the Bauhaus and Arts and Craft movements. Students linked this to the impact that the Industrial Revolution had on mass production through the advent of new materials and philosophies. This initiated change in the way in which architecture and functional design were considered and produced. These students possessed a sophisticated command of language and a sound knowledge of historical and contemporary art and design. They were able to examine and define these practices within a range of contexts. Outstanding responses traced ideas back to the Renaissance philosophy of artist as designer — Leonardo da Vinci's Universal Man — and innovation in post-modern design such as that of Alessi. Other excellent responses referred to the impact of the Industrial Revolution in terms of new materials and the rise of new philosophies and manifestos which were fundamental to Gropius and the Bauhaus.

In average responses students successfully examined and discussed most parts of the question in descriptive terms, but whilst they were able to provide adequate understanding of their chosen examples, little external analysis was developed in their response.

The few less than average responses to this question failed to address the question or provide any content.

Question 12

What have you learnt from your study of designers and design practices that you have used in your artmaking?

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

This question required students to show their understanding and knowledge of designers and their works as well as design practices and to relate this to their own artmaking. Some responses reflected poor preparation and study and research of the Focus Area. Many responses were unable to define design and therefore, found it difficult to discuss designers and practices. Many did not answer the question or were unable to engage with the Focus Area, *Art and Design*, and to refer to designers and discuss practices, referring only to artists they liked or who had influenced their artmaking in a factual and biographical sense. These included Dali, Munch, Picasso and Van Gogh. Other design examples discussed included Ken Done, Reg Mombassa and Mambo, Alessi, Glen Murcutt, Art Deco and Art Nouveau styles and Japanese architecture.

There were very few responses in the excellent and above average responses mark range. Those that were in these ranges reflected a sound understanding of the role of design historically, design briefs and consideration for a market or audience were well discussed. Appropriate and specific links were made to show how designers had influenced such students' artmaking processes and practices. A range of designers and specific examples (Murcutt, Japanese interior design) were discussed in context, reflecting thorough knowledge and understanding. The concept of function versus aesthetics was given some consideration in these responses.

In average responses, artists rather than designers were referred to. Many responses did not differentiate between artists, designers and design practices, but discussed the influences of an artist's techniques and methods on their own artmaking in a general way. Glen Murcutt, Ken Done and Jenny Kee were discussed in detailed reference to their own artmaking but scant reference to design practices.

Less than average responses did not discuss the design aspects of the question and gave simple descriptions of their own artworks with little use of art concepts and shallow interpretations of the work of artists rather than designers. Little, if any, understanding of what design is, was apparent.

For such questions a clear understanding of the differing roles of artists and designers is needed. Naming specific artists and designers is useful, as are annotated sketches and diagrams in support of points made. Further analysis of examples is required rather than mere biographical details. Works should be referred to in their cultural context and consideration given to the historical factors contributing to the student's understanding of design.

SECTION I

Question 13

Look at Plates 4—11.

Critically analyse TWO of these plates.

Refer to:

- *cultural influences*
- *possible meanings and purposes*
- *visual qualities.*

Approximately 7000 students attempted this question. The majority made use of all plates in Section I, with the *Amphora*, *Lichenstein*, *New York Sofa*, *Susan Norrie* and the *Bodhisattva of Mercy* being the most frequently selected images. Only about 5—7% of students selected plates from Section I instead of Section I, with the *Imants Tillers* being the most regularly selected ‘*wrong plate*’.

The question allowed for a wide range of interpretation and gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and skills in discussing artworks. Most students understood and attempted to discuss areas designated by the question — cultural influences, possible meanings and purposes, and visual qualities.

Outstanding responses were characterised by a sound knowledge of the Visual Arts which was brought to bear on the images selected for critical analysis. Students showed a clear understanding of how cultural influences affected the production of the work and were able to interpret a range of meanings and purposes. Close attention was given to visual qualities within the works selected — analysis drawing on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, *Lichenstein’s Little Big Painting* was discussed in terms of the paradox of the apparently spontaneous gestural brush mark which in reality is a controlled, enlarged comic image imitative of commercial printing techniques and symbolic of American popular culture and Pop Art. *Norrie’s Untitled* was discussed in terms of its richly-layered, veil-like painterly and abstract qualities, and their combination with images from popular culture which were recognisable yet distorted, thus suggesting notions about the art of seeing.

Better responses were characterised by a confident use of appropriate and sophisticated Visual Arts terminology and intelligent synthesis of connections made between the two plates selected, in addition to connections made with other known artworks, revealing a depth of knowledge applied to the question.

Average responses tended to be more descriptive than analytical or interpretive. Students experienced more difficulty in contextualising the plates, and tended towards the tentatively speculative in attempting to do so. In these responses there was some misreading of the selected images and citations, as well as a limited ability to analyse images critically. Some students revealed a knowledge of Art movements and styles which were considered in relation to selected plates; this knowledge, however, was rather more generalised. For example, *Lichenstein* was often referred to as a Pop Artist. There was some general understanding of Pop Art, and students referred to some artists.

Many average responses relied on a formula (eg. the Feldman model) to help them structure an analysis of two plates. They tended to treat each plate separately, and any connections made with other known artists were rather basic and general; they showed a reasonable knowledge of aesthetic terms and concepts, however.

Less than average responses were often characterised by lengthy, but repetitive descriptive passages, indicating scant knowledge of context and very little knowledge of Visual Arts. Many failed to address the question, or attempted to do so in a very limited way. Students were attracted to plates such as *The Installation* and discussed issues of whaling as an environmental or political issue without connecting their discussion to the question or to the Visual Arts. Discussion of the Lichenstein plate was limited to guesses about the symbolism of the colours used. Generally such students did not make use of the citations to help them in their responses, and many made errors of reading, such as regarding the Romanesque church as a painting on stone or wood.

Students are advised to read carefully the information provided with the plates. In a number of cases students confused the birthdate of the artist with the date when the work was made. Further attention could be given to using quotations to help students with their contextualisation and interpretation of the works selected.

Students should be exposed to a wide variety of works to prepare them for the demands of responding to Section I questions. Developing their ability to develop responses as essays around a strong grasp of more than one of the Focus Areas, and art concepts is a great advantage, as is increasing their familiarity with the layout of the examination paper, and their organisation of time.

Question 14

Look at Plates 4–11.

Examine how issues and attitudes in the visual arts are represented in TWO OR MORE of these plates.

The direct nature of the question, in conjunction with a selection of plates, offered students a wide range of possible directions in which to take their critical discussion about the representation of issues and attitudes in the Visual Arts. Some limited their discussion to the analysis of aesthetic issues and attitudes that constitute artmaking practices, while others took the opportunity to interpret this question in terms of how social, political, religious, ecological and moral issues and attitudes have been represented by artists.

Excellent responses distinguished between *issues* and *attitudes* and were able to provide definitions of these terms that were based on evidence from the selected plates. *Issues* were explained as subjects, themes or topics taken up by artists. *Attitudes* were defined as particular beliefs about Art and Art practices. Sophisticated explanations identified issues and attitudes associated with Art practices reflected in artworks through subject matter, forms, materials and techniques. The better candidates were also able to contextualise artworks in terms of historical or contemporary Art practices, particular cultural settings, and evaluated examples as belonging to specific artistic traditions. This analysis was initially based on evidence from the artwork and then linked and related to other artists and artworks that supported and further illustrated the assertions made. In this way students used the plates as a focus for analysis which allowed them to demonstrate their wider understanding of the Focus Area.

Excellent responses addressed particular issues related to Art practice and were able to connect these to specific and shared attitudes or beliefs about representation. For example, the work by Susan Norrie was examined in terms of borrowed images combined with expressive painting techniques. In the context of their own artworks these aspects of Norrie's work were then related to artworks by other artists who use mass-produced images. Some students linked the expressive use of paint to the tradition of Abstract Expressionism as a way of revealing more about attitudes to representation and consequently, their wider knowledge of the Visual Arts. They also interpreted the artwork as a product of its time reflecting the beliefs and values of the society and linked aspects of the artist's practice to issues and attitudes of the wider society. In this way, the Norrie example was interpreted as a comment on the infiltration of popular icons of one culture into another cultural setting.

Discussion was often engaging, informative and lively in the better responses. Students confidently engaged in the interpretation of their selected plates and other artworks, demonstrating their thorough knowledge of artistic concepts by using appropriate language and vocabulary. These responses also tended to be well structured, and logically planned accounts.

Average responses attempted to explain and illustrate the distinction between issues and attitudes through discussion focussed on the more obvious interpretations of artworks. Selected plates were generally interpreted as reflecting the concerns of the society in which the artworks were made, rather than the particular concerns of artists and their practice. The discussion of *Whale's Generation* is a good example of how the subject matter of the artwork was more than adequately addressed — as a statement about the extermination of whales as well as issues and attitudes to ecology, while the artwork as an example of the contemporary practice of installations, was not.

Students were inclined to focus their accounts on an analysis of what could be seen directly in the images and made some attempt to link these observations to other artworks from similar traditions and cultural settings. Some knowledge of other art styles was used in interpretations of selected plates, but this was generally superficial, connections made were often insufficiently explained or supported. Students in this range were prone to base their discussion of the plates on the intrinsic qualities of the artworks and were able to make good sense of this. They tended, however, to rely more heavily on description of artworks rather than interpretive analysis that could then support a judgement about the value of the artwork.

Less than average responses were characterised by descriptive personal responses to the plates. Some students acknowledged the question, discussion, however, did not take up key points in a logical or focussed way and the question was often forgotten or ignored. Some attempted to analyse the formal qualities of works; their attempts at interpretation were limited and revealed their lack of knowledge of the Visual Arts. Little attempt was made to link the selected image to other artists, styles or artworks. Issues and attitudes were interpreted as being social in nature and were not related to the world of Art.

Attention needs to be drawn to the value of decoding citations accompanying the plates. Students should consider selecting examples that can be located within the Focus Areas they have studied and should be encouraged to connect their wider understandings to selected examples. Students are also advised to use this as a point of access to the work, especially when determining what the form of the artwork is. For example, the Abbey Church of St Foy, an example of architectural construction in stone in the Romanesque period, was often

mistaken for a painting of a church by an artist named Romanesque. Focussed exploration of the title or some images would also provide candidates with further points of access to the interpretation of the plates.

Some students have learned specific methods of critical interpretation to address Section I questions and, in some instances, responded to the question in a logical and structured way. In many cases, however, these students used formulaic ways of writing accounts about artworks and often forgot to express their discussion of the artworks in terms of the criteria of the question. In many instances they referred to only one image. When students are learning these specific methods of critical interpretation, they must practice considering the focus of the particular question and the number of plates which must be discussed in their response.

Question 15

Look at Plates 4—11.

Compare approaches to the making of images and/or objects in TWO OR MORE of these plates.

You could consider:

- *ways of representing ideas*
- *processes and technologies*
- *audience response.*

This question required students to make careful and considered choices of plates in order to interpret and engage with the question. Some students carefully used insightful platforms for discussion and prepared well researched, individual and valid responses.

In excellent and above average responses students analysed and discussed all aspects of the selected plates and made accurate comparisons between them. They successfully indicated *why* and *how* a work was placed culturally and historically, and which other factors of society, artmaking processes and technologies affected the work. Often students defined key areas, such as audience response, and used these to create the parameters from which to discuss the works. Students showed a wide knowledge of the Visual Arts through the use of additional examples which supported claims and reinforced issues and ideas introduced. Above average responses were thorough, structurally sound and logical, and used critical analysis based on a historical context, creating a multi-layered interpretation of the question. They used clear and sophisticated Art language in appropriate ways to consolidate concepts and reinforce their judgements.

In average responses students showed some understanding of the question. The responses, however, were often a description of the selected plates rather than an analysis and interpretation of the specific issues in the citations. Students used Art language, sometimes inappropriately, in an attempt to show their knowledge and support judgements made in relation to their rather limited choice of plates. There was a tendency to repeat information.

In less than average responses students either misinterpreted the question or failed to understand or acknowledge its intent. They presented superficial analyses of the chosen plates and, consequently, their arguments were often based on rather subjective, biased responses with little or no foundation of artistic knowledge. These students could not place

the chosen plates historically and, therefore, discussions of influences and references to other external criteria were not common. These responses were often disconnected and lacked structure and direction.

Students should become familiar with and confident about using the citations as prompts in order to assist them in determining function, meaning and purpose in the plates.

Students should realise that all Section I responses **do not** require an in-depth description and analysis of the chosen plates. Their responses should be addressed specifically to the criteria in the question.

3 Unit (Additional)

Studying Images and Objects

SECTION I — ART IN AUSTRALIA

Question 1

‘Australian art today looks to Asia and the Pacific rather than Europe or America for cultural exchange.’

Evaluate this statement with reference to historical and contemporary Australian artists and their works.

A small number of students attempted this question. The more successful responses evaluated more contemporary developments in the Australian visual arts, in particular the emerging interest in the visual arts and the culture of Asia and the Pacific. In these responses students synthesised their knowledge of various visual arts practices to develop and present a point of view, analysing and applying the discussion of relevant examples to the concept of cultural exchange. A few students engaged with the evaluative component of the question.

The average responses comprised set piece reports about Australian painting, with little or no evaluation and understanding of the concept of cultural exchange or the current interest and influence of Asia and the Pacific in the Visual Arts in Australia. Most students relied upon their knowledge of Europe and America to support their argument.

Question 2

Examine the cultural contribution of artists to contemporary Australian society.

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

This was a popular question. Many students used their understanding of contemporary Aboriginal Art, especially the work of Gordon Bennett, Trevor Nickolls and Fiona Foley in discussing the cultural contribution of visual artists to Australian society. Feminist interests in the Visual Arts were included. Some interesting discussions of particular exhibitions, such as *‘Don’t Leave Me This Way’*, were presented.

The better responses applied the student’s knowledge to the issue of cultural contribution rather than to a recital of rehearsed information from the Recommended area of Study. These responses drew on a wide range of artworks and practices, as well as a knowledge and

understanding of the Visual Arts in contemporary Australian social and cultural contexts. The successful responses were sophisticated and coherent accounts of chosen artists, issues and works. Discussion of these works did more than describe and analyse, connecting the work with possible and intended meanings and contexts in a multicultural Australia. These students had a clear understanding of contemporary works and were aware that *contemporary* commonly refers to the past decade. These students had read widely and investigated the visual arts, using journals, articles, catalogues and the electronic media rather than relying on the summary, conventional textbook resource, which tends to rely on artworks from the 1980s, rather than the more contemporary 1990s. Moreover, many of these books do not offer the challenging and incisive critique that encourages evaluation and personal interpretive responses to the visual arts.

Average responses failed to engage with the evaluative component of the question, describing examples and asserting, rather than demonstrating, a cultural connection or contribution. Some answers were very general, with little discussion of specific works while others relied on the description of one or two works and nothing more.

Question 3

Look at Plates 1, 2 and 3.

'Unless architects respond to community ideals, and to the site, architecture becomes meaningless.'

Discuss this statement with reference to these plates and/or other examples you have studied.

Few students answered this question and the response was generally poor, relying on descriptions of the three buildings illustrated in the plates which were used largely as unseen works. It was obvious that a knowledge of architecture, design and the built environment did not make a strong contribution to the responses to this question. Examining the quotation or taking the opportunity to craft a complete and coherent response to the required discussion was not the typical response. This was disappointing as it was felt that the question, quotation and plates provided many opportunities for students to draw on their knowledge of the architecture of Australia.

In the better answers students included discussion of further examples with which they were familiar, discussing the buildings and sites and using differentiated language and concepts. In these responses the varied interests and expectations of the community were considered.

Question 4

'Australian painting is nothing more than boring landscapes of gum trees and sheep. It has made no significant contribution to contemporary culture.'

Argue a case about Australian painting that supports or opposes this statement.

Refer to a range of historical and contemporary works.

The format of the question allowed for deliberation and articulation of the artwork and the artist. The better responses were able to examine the question on a more conceptual level, allowing students to develop tangential ideas and concepts that reflected their knowledge and ability.

In excellent and above average responses there was a strong use of sophisticated language and confident use of art terminology. These responses identified the key word 'argue', presented coherent arguments and discussions and demonstrated a keen ability to assimilate relevant information. Although the question gave a wide scope for response, excellent students were able to present a response that was focussed and succinct, with conceptual points and historical knowledge.

Most average responses used a chronological approach, showing a tendency to include some art terminology and appropriate art concepts. Here students showed good analytical skills in relation to issues raised in the question.

In less than average responses students answered only some aspects of the question, relying primarily on historical knowledge rather than incorporating conceptual and analytical knowledge in their response. The level of articulation and use of art terminology was low.

This style of question calls upon the student to utilise a certain degree of conceptual thinking and an ability to identify the key components of the question. In order to answer the question comprehensively they must tackle the question by using their own opinions rather than repeating the question verbatim. Key words in the question must be discussed fully and all aspects of the question answered in order to avoid presenting a naive and limited response. Students need to appreciate the complexity of the question; the more capable students showed a clear and articulate understanding, whilst the more naive responses were very general.

SECTION II — ART AND CULTURE

Question 5

'The interests of a culture can be seen in the work of its artists, designers, architects, and craftspeople.'

Analyse this statement by referring to a range of artforms from a culture in ONE of the following regions:

- Europe
- Asia
- the Americas
- Africa
- Oceania.

The majority of those who successfully answered this question selected appropriate examples which investigated specific aspects of a specific culture. They used coherent and sophisticated art terminology. Such students were able to evaluate critically the way in which a range of artforms reflect the aspects of a particular culture. They examined the spirituality, economy, morality and philosophy of communities and showed how these cultural features manifested themselves in art. Students not only described and contextualised but also made informed judgements about the examples they used.

A number of students restricted their responses by referring to only one art form. This indicated that they did not follow the guidelines in the Syllabus which clearly indicates that a 'comprehensive range of images and artforms should be studied.'

Question 6

Look at Plates 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Interpret how the subject matter of pleasure, sensuality and love has been represented in TWO of these plates and other artworks you have studied.

This question attracted a large response,, but the quality of answers varied greatly. The better students could distinguish between pleasure, sensuality and love and were also able to point out the fine differences in the plates and other examples and explain the works as cultural expressions. Their responses were both analytical and critical and incorporated examples, relevant quotes and appropriate ideas from Hughes, Berger etc.

In the average responses candidates based their answers on the 2 Unit Recommended Areas of Study but found it difficult to apply and extend this information in relation to the given plates. They were, however, able to give good examples of other artworks. These responses did not reflect a clear understanding of cultural differences.

Many students showed a very naive understanding of the three key words of the question. There was a tendency to treat the plates as unseen images and failure to link the question to the images selected.

Question 7

'Avant-garde artists believed that art could change society.'

Examine this statement with reference to the intentions and achievements of TWO avant-garde art movements you have studied.

In your answer, refer to specific artworks.

Students responding to this question had a thorough grasp of art movements in the twentieth century and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of two movements associated with the avant-garde. Reference was made to movements such as Futurism, Dad, and De Stijl.

They were able to write about the intentions and achievements of particular artists, illustrating their understanding through references to specific works which were often well described and explained. They could also examine the movements in more philosophical terms, indicating an understanding of such things as the Futurist Manifesto and the paradox of the anti-art of Dada. They were able to comment on how the selected movements were perceived by the public at the time, indicating a strong understanding of cultural/political contexts. They also used quoted artists and critics which indicated a breadth and depth of reading on the subject.

Question 8

'Images of men in art preserve stereotypes and myths of the hero, genius and conqueror.'

Explore this statement by referring to historical and contemporary artworks made in ANY culture or cultures in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and/or Oceania.

Very few students attempted this question, although it was generally well answered, with students showing a wide range of knowledge and critical thinking in their answers. The

better responses linked both contemporary and historical artworks and used examples relevant to the criteria set out in the question. They showed a clear understanding and interest in the notions of stereotypes etc.

The average responses made some reference to the criteria of the question but tended to answer only part of the question, frequently making no reference to contemporary artworks. Australian references were also mistakenly made.

SECTION III — ART AND MEDIA

Question 9

Look at Plates 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Analyse how ideas and meanings are encoded in signs, symbols and materials in ONE OR MORE of these works and other artworks you have studied.

This question could have been an excellent choice for students who had concentrated upon symbolism and meaning in almost any art context. In order to deal successfully with such a question, however, students need to have a depth and breadth of knowledge of a number of artists and their works. It was generally not well answered, although those who obviously knew of the works of relevant artists were more successful in addressing themselves to the key words — *signs, symbols and materials*. A number of responses, however, relied too heavily on description.

Above average responses showed knowledge of at least one of the plates and analysed the work by referring to the key elements of the question. Excellent answers were able to expand on this framework and used their detailed knowledge of the visual arts to interpret chosen works.

Average responses did address the question, but tended to look more superficially at the works selected.

Poor responses tended to be merely descriptive. Some students listed features of the works selected but paid little attention to the question and used less differentiated vocabulary than more successful responses.

Question 10

'In the twentieth century artists have frequently used their bodies as both material and symbol in making art.'

Discuss this statement by referring to TWO OR MORE artists working in ANY of the following:

- *performance*
- *photography*
- *installations*
- *electronic media.*

A straightforward question, this provided students with the opportunity to focus on areas of contemporary art and technology. The mention of the human form in the quotation elicited a wide variety of examples from Australia and overseas, suggesting a breadth of study and the

ability to see contemporary art practices in a broad framework. Students obviously possessed a good deal of knowledge of the artists, specific examples of their work, and the qualities which differentiated them from more traditional media.

Excellent and above average responses clearly examined the quotation used in the question and were able to explain the significance of an artist's use of his/her own body as material and as sign. They could clearly differentiate between these two things and show how they were combined in the artwork, referring back to this throughout their answer. Examples used tended to be diverse and were described in some detail, focussing particularly on the significance of the artist's body as the material of the work. Students were able to contextualise their chosen artworks accurately.

Average answers were characterised by detailed descriptions of appropriate examples. Here, however, students were unable to explain clearly the symbolic significance of the artist's use of his/her own body.

Less than average responses tended to ignore the quotation and simply discussed a range of artworks involving the human body. Analysis of these examples lacked depth and failed to examine adequately the intent of the question. Some students failed to understand the question and used inappropriate examples such as figurative artworks in which the artist himself/herself was neither the material nor the sign.

Students are advised to analyse very carefully the question itself as well as any quotations to ensure that they understand its intentions. During their study in the 3 Unit course students should examine a range of artists and artworks so that they have a wide knowledge upon which to draw and which they can discuss in response to a question such as this.

Question 11

Look at Plates 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Evaluate how the properties of particular artforms are used expressively to make artworks in ONE OR MORE of these plates and other examples you have studied.

In your answer, refer to meaning and use of materials, process and techniques.

This question was attempted by less than ten students.

The more successful students chose one plate for which prior knowledge was evident. Plate 14 was a popular choice, where a knowledge of cibachrome techniques was advantageous. This example was linked to other works by indigenous artists to create a unified and well-structured discussion of the question.

Average responses showed a more generalised knowledge of the styles represented in the plates. Their discussion combined personal response with factual debate, in a reasonably convincing answer.

Less than average responses tended to be more speculative in nature. In many the discussion was too brief and too general, as well as vague and ambiguous. In a number of these responses incorrect statements weakened the quality of the answer.

Question 12

Give an account of how the work of TWO OR MORE artists has been informed by popular culture.

Refer to specific examples.

You could consider:

- *function and meaning*
- *cultural contexts*
- *materials and technologies*
- *signs, symbols and imagery.*

In general, the majority of those attempting this question showed a sophisticated understanding of the Focus Area, together with a depth of knowledge of modern and post-modern artists, and art movements, which resulted in confident and competent responses. In responding to this question, most students referred to Pop Art, with Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein being the most frequently mentioned artists. Post-modern artists such as Barbara Kruger and Maria Kozic were also frequently referred to, with Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman appearing in a number of essays.

In excellent and above average responses students were able to define the term '*popular culture*' authoritatively and discussed appropriate artists and artworks in relation to this. In these, students addressed all aspects of the question, using differentiated and sometimes outstandingly sophisticated art terminology. Most students in the excellent range discussed more than two artists and specific examples of their work, as well as demonstrating a thorough understanding of the social, political and historical contexts of the works in question. These students tended not to follow the points set out in the question for consideration, but took more inventive approaches to dealing with the intent of the question. Such students not only discussed the artworks or movements, or the interests of individual artists but also very competently examined theoretical contexts surrounding the selected works. They successfully made evaluative judgements about these contexts.

In average responses, students focussed more closely on artists and their works rather than their context tending, to be more descriptive and interpretive. In general the artists chosen for discussion were both relevant and appropriate.

There were few, if any, responses to any of the following questions in Art and Design.

SECTION IV — ART AND DESIGN

Question 13

'In the twentieth century, mass production and consumption changed the concepts, properties and processes of design.'

Discuss this statement with reference to specific examples.

Question 14

Assess the cultural contributions of *THREE OR MORE* design movements from the nineteenth and/or twentieth centuries.

Refer to specific designers and/or architects and their works.

Question 15

'Contemporary design is often the product of a regional consciousness which acknowledges social, environmental, and economic factors.'

Evaluate this statement with reference to *THREE* designers and their works.

You could consider:

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

Question 16

Look at Plates 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Explain how style and function, visual organisation, and cultural symbols are employed by designers to convey meaning.

ISBN 0 7310 9937 0



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