

2023 VCE Art Creative Practice external assessment report

General comments

The 2023 Art Creative Practice examination provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, referencing many aspects of the [VCE Art Creative Practice Study Design 2023–2027](#). In Section A, students were required to describe the use of art elements and principles, use the Structural Interpretive Lens to interpret artworks, use visual language to communicate ideas in artworks, identify and describe ideas related to artists' practice and use the Structural and Cultural Interpretive Lenses to compare the meanings and messages of artworks to unseen and unstudied artworks. In Section B, students needed to discuss one idea or issue related to the practice of an artist they had studied in Unit 3 and to use the Personal and Cultural Interpretive Lenses to compare the meanings and messages of one contemporary artwork and one historical artwork.

Students generally addressed all sections of the paper, and stronger responses used descriptive art terminology and regularly referenced features in the artworks throughout their responses. Students are strongly advised to remove the colour insert from the question-and-answer booklet during reading time. This minimises the risk of inadvertently missing a question or selecting artworks not allocated to the question they are responding to.

One concern identified was the number of students who did not apply all aspects of visual language, the Creative Practice and the Interpretive Lenses in their responses. This term is clearly stated in the study design, and students must ensure that they can correctly identify and describe these key terms and concepts when analysing unseen and unstudied artworks. Another concern was the number of students who did not use consistent comparisons throughout their responses.

Where practical, students should also use the white space below the line space in the exam booklet to continue writing their answers, rather than resorting to the extra space at the back of the booklet. Doing so minimises the risk of assessors missing significant parts of the student's answer if it is continued in the additional writing space without a note from the student.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	1	3	23	42	28	3.9

Question 1 required students to describe how shape was used as an art element in an artwork. For the most part, students were able to correctly identify shape and used examples within the artwork to support their description. Students who scored highly were able to use descriptive art terminology with clear and regular references to the artwork.

Some students were able to identify shape. However, higher-scoring responses were able to describe and locate shape using specific examples from the artwork. Students should read the didactic information and attempt to make links between the element and possible symbolism.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Round organic shapes are repetitively used and spread out relatively evenly on the linen canvas. Though appearing identical, the amorphous biomorphic shapes overlap each other to form a more complex image, underpinning its simplicity in nature. The extensive overlapping oblong shapes in the centre forms a focal point in comparison to the empty space of the surrounding purple ovular shapes, forming a harmonious circle in the upper centre of the work. The use of a wavy squiggle mark along the edge of the work also contrasts with the broken separate shapes of the work, reminiscent of a ring or necklace holding the 'birth scars' together, which are represented by the varied simple shapes distributed across the composition.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	1	3	13	26	36	19	4.5

Question 2 required students to describe how contrast and repetition were used as art principles in an artwork. For the most part, students were able to correctly identify both contrast and repetition, and used examples throughout the artwork to support their description. Students who scored highly were able to use descriptive art terminology with clear and regular references to the artwork.

Some students only referenced one of the art principles or discussed one principle more heavily than the other. Higher-scoring responses were able to make the connection between contrast and repetition and use art terminology to clearly locate where the principles are evident, such as the foreground, middle ground and background. Some students were also able to apply their knowledge of printmaking and discussed how the carving created repetition and how the ink printing from the surface was used to create contrast in the figure and animals, therefore linking the use of materials, techniques and processes to art elements and principles. Students are advised to read the questions carefully, as some made the mistake of using the same artwork for Questions 1 and 2.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A stark contrast in the use of black and white forms a striking image. This is evident from the flat white tones of the birds in contrast to the solid black tones of the horse and figure in the middle ground, creating the impression of being overwhelmed. The flat tones also contrast with the use of a patterned background, where repetition of short broken lines represent the uniformed ploughed crops. This contrasts to the repetition of round continuous lines representing the sky in the background, forming a distinct horizon line. Additionally, repetition of the bird-like shapes overlapping in the middle ground creates an abundance of movement and vigour, filling the piece with energy. This is exemplified by the contrast in overwhelming positive space on the left in comparison to the right, creating a forceful contrast to form asymmetrical balance to highlight the farmland.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	5	1	2	9	25	30	20	9	4.6

Question 3 asked students to use the Structural Lens to interpret *Red-tailed Black Cockatoo* by Stephen Bowers. Some students were able to apply the Structural Lens with a focus on the use of art elements and art principles and the application of materials and techniques, and linked them to the interpretation of ideas and meaning in the artwork.

Many students did not discuss the application of materials and techniques linked to the interpretation of ideas and meaning in the artwork. It is important that students are aware of all parts of the Structural Lens, for example the application of materials, techniques and processes. They must also ensure that they constantly reference the artwork and use specific examples in their responses.

Higher-scoring responses were able to use specific examples of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes to interpret the artwork. They were able to reference relevant specific examples from the artwork and link them to the interpretation of the visual language used by the artist. The responses also referenced specific relevant examples to discuss style and symbolism within the artwork, employing accurate and highly descriptive and relevant art terminology. Some students made connections with ideas of Australian culture and endangered species.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Bowers uses tactile textures to evoke a realism in his work. Precisely outlining the feathers of the cockatoo and the flowers of the plant with subtle tonal gradations and contour lines, Bowers creates an organic texture redolent of the roughness yet beauty of the Australian landscape. Through the material of earthenware, natural textures are used again within this work. Yet, there is a strong contrast in the inorganic porcelain like forms that shatter across the background. This disrupts the serenity and organic composition of the cockatoo and plants, perhaps commenting on the destruction that artificial/human made products has caused on the natural environment. Using jagged edges, the porcelain pieces seem threatening to the amorphous form of the cockatoo, with the repetition of this a persistent reminder of possibly many Australian animals facing the threat of being endangered. As a relatively small piece of 6 x 63 cm, the composition is filled with contrasts: the contrast between the geometric form of the circle/frame and the bird as well as the native Australian flora and fauna juxtaposing the decorative commodities all allow viewers to contemplate the destructive impact of humans on natural spaces.

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	1	0	1	10	27	30	19	11	4.8

For Question 4, students needed to use visual language to communicate ideas in the artwork *Invasion (Giant Lizards)*, by Michael Cook. Many students engaged very well with this artwork, linking the artist's use of visual language to a broad range of ideas related to topical issues and popular culture. However, students should revise the key terminology and concepts in the Study specifications and Terms used in the study on pages 11–18 of the Art Creative Practice study design, so they understand the definition of visual language.

Question 4a. asked students to discuss ideas Michael Cook explores in the artwork, using specific examples from the artwork. Higher-scoring responses referenced the visual language component of the question. These students discussed aspects of the visual language beyond just the subject matter including the materials, techniques, processes, elements and principles. They identified and used specific evidence from the artwork. By discussing the materials, techniques and processes used to make the work, for example by

photo montaging using a digital software program, and the use of vignetting, these students added further depth to the responses.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

In his 2017 print 'Invasion (Giant Lizards)' Michael Cook uses imagery and visual language to convey the ludicrous obscenity of the catastrophied 'apocalypse'. Cook riddles a stereotypical London landscape with Big Ben present, with unrealistic and exaggerated symbols of catastrophe, to mock the 'doomsday' attitudes to the future. Cook inserts screaming children with exaggerated facial expressions, with varying amounts of shadow and light upon their faces., which makes them appear as 'cutouts' and unrealistic, enhanced by the vintage clothing with contrasts against the futuristic alien ship in the air. Cook employs a shadowed vignette around the image to construct an atmosphere of darkness and doom, reiterated by the desaturated colour and menacing eye contact of the viewer with the lizard.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	2	1	2	8	32	29	17	9	4.7

In Question 4b., students were required to use evidence from the artwork to discuss how the use of scale communicated ideas. Higher-scoring responses referenced the visual language component of the question. Many students considered how 'Invasion' was evident in the artwork and used a range of examples to support how they thought Cook was exploring scale. Students who used multiple and explicit examples of imagery that used scale to communicate ideas and referred to more than just the 'scale of the lizards' responded well to the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Scale is seen within the background of this inkjet print as monumental buildings such as the Big Ben which is normally viewed as a large scale is represented as small and being destroyed in the background rather than the foreground. This creates a lack of significance of this building as the subjects within the foreground are bigger. Suggesting the lack of importance material items or buildings have compared to life and living things or that there are greater issues within the world. The size of the lizards contrasts with the humans running away from them, this makes the humans appear more fragile and victimised, thus insinuating the idea of how much damage there is within invasive attacks and how vulnerable ordinary humans are to them, within war and conflict. The size of the space around the subject matter consisting within the background insinuates that a lot will be destroyed within these events and attacks and conflict results in a lot of damage due the mass of the space within the inkjet print.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	4	1	1	2	3	4	6	9	10	12	12	12	10	8	6	8.9

Question 5 asked students to discuss the ideas explored in the artwork. Students needed to identify and describe the ideas related to the artists' practice using specific examples from the artwork and substantiate an interpretation referencing at least two sources of information provided. In their responses, students were required to discuss the artists' practice. Students were able to empathise with the artwork, and could reflect on some of the aesthetic choices the artists had made. Some students were able to make links to the fragility of the ceramics and the environment based around the artists' practice. They were able to clearly link the artists' practice to ideas and at least two sources.

Higher-scoring responses did not only quote the sources of information and restate them but indicated the students' understanding of the information and wove it into their discussion by introducing new ideas. In their responses they were able to present an interpretation of the installation and discuss how the artists had explored ideas in their practice. The higher scoring responses were able to make regular reference to the artists and their art practice, which was key to exploring ideas and utilising the visual imagery and the information provided, such as the site of the installation and number of tiles.

The following is an example of a high scoring response.

Ken and Julia Yonetani's work explores the unconscious human destruction of nature through the use of traditional Japanese Fumie tiles. As a symbol of 'renouncing ones faith by stepping on it' the Fumie tiles represent our subconscious actions that make a large impact to our natural environment. With the repetitive butterfly imagery printed on the tiles, the uniqueness of each individual butterfly is diminished – a representation of our blindness towards the beauty of nature. Within the artists practice, Ken and Julia's format of exhibition brings to light how we have been impacting nature as cracked tiles, created by the pressure of a step, continue to permeate through the whole piece. Once complete and decorative, the tiles have become fragile under duress – a representation of human's endless exploitation of nature. Representing the 'depleting number of butterfly species in Australia', Ken and Julia herald for more preservation efforts to be made, preventing humans from unknowingly 'killing their own ecosystems'. Here, the artwork delineates that even in the simple human act of walking, ecosystems are 'vulnerable in the hands of humans'. This unfortunate reality is supported through the achromatic depiction of the tiles, exhibiting not only the death of the butterflies but the universality of nature suffering under human actions. Obliging people to walk through the tiles in order to get to the main exhibition, the Yonetani's visitors confront the reality of their damage to the ecosystem. Just as the fumie tiles were used to challenge faith in 'Jesus and Mary', the Yonetani's bring to light the true damage done by humans to nature and challenge the innocence/faith of those that are seemingly 'ecofriendly'. Thus, through using a medium traditionally representing restriction, the Yonetani's herald for a more liberating future for nature, where human influence cannot negatively penetrate and diminish.

Question 6

Question 6 required students to use the Structural and Cultural Lenses to compare the meanings and messages in the artworks. They also needed to use specific evidence from both artworks, the cultural information provided, and any of the following ideas: excess, waste, consumption.

Higher-scoring responses were able to draw on similarities between the artworks, and the meanings and messages. They used highly descriptive terms when describing and comparing the artworks. Students used explicit references to features in the artwork to support their ideas around the meanings and messages of the artworks. They made use of the cultural information, for example, that 'Guerra de la Paz were a collaboration/group of artists' and this information influenced the messages conveyed in the work.

Some responses did not provide an equal interpretation using both the lenses and needed to refer to the ideas of waste, consumption and/or excess. These responses did not draw out multiple similarities or link the answer to specific evidence in artwork. Students should also be mindful that they do not repeat the same information in their interpretation of the artwork using the Structural and the Cultural Lenses.

Question 6a.

Structural Lens

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	4	1	2	8	22	33	19	10	4.7

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Both Francois Boucher and Guerra de la Paz explore concepts of excess and consumption, however Boucher explicates exclusivity and luxury, while Guerra de la Paz explore the overwhelming mass production of the 21st century. This is communicated through the rich, tonal variety and vibrant colours of the oil paint within Boucher's painting, as the subject of the portrait lounges in a room glimmering with objects. Contrast of yellow and turquoise, and a bright focal point on the woman's pink face creates a sense of wealth, excess and luxury, whereas 'Mort' explores these same ideas of excess through monotony. The monochromatic pile of black clothing allows 'Mort' to exude a sense of overwhelmed chaos, and though the subject is also lying down, we only see the bottom of their shoes, (another product) emphasising how consumption is not about luxury and bespoke comforts, but of excess product.

Question 6b.

Cultural Lens

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	7	1	4	11	26	30	14	8	4.4

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Produced in 17th century France, Boucher's portrait explicates the wealth of the upper echelon of society, while Guerra de la Paz's 'Mort' expounds 21st century consumption, wherein anyone can have anything at the touch of a button. Oil paintings themselves are a product of expert craftsmanship, while the photograph of the installation of 'Mort' is conceptual, once again demonstrating the evolutions and decline of exclusive luxury. Despite 'Mort' containing more clothing and product than Boucher's portrait, the few pieces such as the bed frame and the fabrics in the painting are lavish and ornamental illustrating the dichotomy of wealth historically and mass produced excess in a contemporary setting. Both artists communicate excess and consumptions, however 'Mort' illustrates contemporary monotony within excess, as products are readily available rather than expertly made as depicted within Boucher's 'Portrait of Madame de Pompadour'.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	0	3	14	30	27	21	4.3

In Question 7, students were required to discuss one idea or issue related to the practice of an artist studied in Unit 3, referring to evidence from at least one artwork, and to make specific reference to the artist's practice. Students need to expand on the ideas explored by the artist in their practice. A definition of art practice is provided on page 11 of the Study Design in the Study specifications. Students were also required to use evidence from the artwork and link it to their discussion. Most students engaged with this question. Students should prepare themselves to respond to these questions by thoroughly revising the practice of the artists studied throughout the year and understanding all aspects of their work.

Higher-scoring responses discussed a well-researched idea or issue related to an artist's practice that they had studied throughout the year. They understood and could discuss 'artist's practice'. They used specific examples from one or two selected artworks to support their discussion of the issue or idea and included some information about materials, techniques and processes as appropriate.

Mid-range responses discussed facets of the artist's practice, or only discussed the final artwork. In these responses there was generally a limited discussion of materials, techniques and processes.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Artist: Jenny Saville

Artwork: Second Nature, 2020

Saville's large portraits communicate the idea of feminism and women empowerment in contemporary society. Her expressive painting style features splashing, scraping and splattering paint in heavy layers to become as visceral as the flesh itself, evident in the overlapping impasto brush strokes in 'Second Nature', in defiance towards the idealised perception of females traditionally depicted. Saville's use of electric colours of neon pink and yellow on the face evoke energy and freedom, whilst her realistic painting style to depict a childlike innocence in the eyes capture a unique 21st century realism to carry out the internalised weight of females. This sense of hope in her paintings amidst the chaotic composition is reflective of our embrace towards gender equality in contemporary society, as Saville bridges the gap between abstraction and realism to express a passion for feminism filled with power and hope and explore a more deconstructed and complex meaning in modern female portraiture.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	4	1	1	1	2	4	8	11	9	12	16	10	9	6	5	8.7

Question 8 required students to use the Personal and Cultural Interpretive Lenses to compare the meanings and messages of one contemporary and one historical artwork that the student studied in 2023. Specific references to the artworks were required, and the selected artists were to be different from the selected artist in Question 7. Students must be sure to use specific examples from the artworks for both parts of the question. Students should also ensure that they select one historical and one contemporary artwork, rather than two historical or two contemporary artworks.

Higher-scoring responses were able to apply the Personal and Cultural Lenses to the interpretation of two artworks, each from a different period of time, and provide explicit references to the artworks. Common thematic or conceptual links between the artists that made strong comparisons under the Personal and Cultural Lenses were easier to navigate for students. There were strong, evidence-based comparisons

throughout the responses, linking to the personal and cultural experiences of the artists. The inclusion of the dates of the selected artworks was useful.

Mid-range responses required a more consistent comparison throughout as some students spent more time discussing the artworks applying one Interpretative Lens. In some responses, the artwork pairs were not always confidently compared in a meaningful way. Some responses provided more of a listing about each artist with little discussion of the artworks.

The following is an example of a high scoring response.

Historical artist and artwork: Claude Monet 'Impression Sunrise', 1872

Contemporary artist and artwork: John Olsen 'Popping Blue Bottles', 2007

Personal Lens: Growing up on the Port of le Harre, Monet became fascinated to the effects of light and colour in the changing environment, developing an Impressionist painting style as seen from the use of elaborate broken lines in the foreground of 'Impression Sunrise' to capture the rippling of the water. He paints 'en plein air', evident from the subtle movement of the rising smoke and gradual sunrise to evoke a serene feeling in his depiction of the harbour as he revisits the memories in his home town. In comparison, Olsen paints largely from memory in his studio as an avid traveller, resulting in the predominant use of abstract scribbles to depict emotions associated with the Australian landscape rather than a figurative painting. Olsen's use of exuberant complementary colours blue and orange form a striking image, evoking the joyful glimpses of his childhood on Bondi Beach where 'Popping Blue Bottles' is set. The overwhelming use of crowded space forms an eccentric atmosphere around the beach. In comparison to Monet's use of empty space in the foreground of the water to instil peace. Both works are an evocation of Monet's and Olsen's memories associated with their hometowns, where Monet's is filled with nostalgic memories whilst Olsen's is filled with joy and energy mimicking the inner existence of an Australian child.

Cultural Lens: Following the Franco Prussian war, 'Impression Sunrise' depicts the birth of day, symbolised by a rising sun to suggest the revitalisation of French pride and determination to recover, evident in the faint figures of factories in the background. The use of aerial perspective places focus on the foreground though, implying the disruptive effect of industrialisation in the 1800's to the once calm harbour, similarly, Olsen's use of contrast in crowded and empty space in 'Popping Blue Bottles' suggest an element of temperament, as he stands amidst the chaotic beach set in the 2000's, looking out on the distinct horizon line to revisit a more peaceful and simplistic time before urbanisation. The peaceful ocean contrasts to the violent notion of popping bottles symbolising the intrinsic drinking culture in Australia at the time. This is exemplified by the saturated red and orange colours, connoting images of blood caused by stinging of the blue bottles and the cracking of alcohol bottles. Whilst the predominant blue tones in 'Popping Blue Bottles' evoke the Australian value of being a 'true blue', Monet's use of vermilion against the dusty blue sky represents his resonance to the French pride and spirit as a French artist, although the Impressionist style was rejected at the time due to France upholding the traditional qualities of realism. This contrasts to a contemporary setting, where Olsen's abstract style is embraced by the public. Ultimately, both Olsen and Monet use the water as their subject matter, conveying emotions associated to their place and times, whether it is industrialisation and war in the 1800's of France, or alcohol and urbanisation in the 2000's of Australia.