

2021 VCE Studio Arts external assessment report

General comments

Most students were able to answer all eight questions in the examination and used the range of artworks in the insert to support their responses to the questions that required them to refer to the stimulus material.

There were questions that extended the students' understanding and knowledge of the Studio Arts study design, and this challenged some students who had prepared responses for questions, while others were able to write at length and demonstrate a very good understanding of the content in the study design. It was good to see the selection and range of artists, both traditional and contemporary, that the students responded to in Question 7 and the range of exhibitions, both virtual and physical, that students accessed during the year. It was interesting to read responses of virtual exhibitions where it was evident students had not only viewed the exhibition online, but they had researched any other information and resources galleries offered online to support the exhibition.

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 been 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 more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

For each of the questions in Section A, students were asked to select one artwork from the 13 artworks in the detachable insert and use this as the basis for their response. Students were able to select the same artwork or a different artwork for each question in Section A.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	1	6	14	21	20	14	11	7	4	5.0

The question asked students to select three elements and/or principles but some students tried to write about all six (three elements and three principles), which was far too demanding and resulted in them not being able to write enough detail required for the response. It is key that students practise using previous examinations and understand the format used and exactly what they are being asked to write about.

Responses that scored highly were able to make direct links between the art element and/or principle with the communication of ideas and meaning. They used appropriate art language, which clearly explained how

the identified art element and/or principle was used by the artist to convey a certain mood or feeling on the viewer. Responses that did not score well tended to list or describe the art element and/or principle without making direct links to the suggested meanings communicated in the artwork.

Occasionally students incorrectly identified an art element and/or principle, using words such as 'shadow' or 'depth'. It is important for students to familiarise themselves with the specific references for 'art elements and principles' as specified in the VCAA Studio Arts support material.

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

Johansson has utilized the art principle of unity through his amalgamation of the objects in his sculpture such as an armchair, a typewriter, books and a clock. This communicates his ideas of obsolete technologies and objects being categorized together as outdated and irrelevant. To voice his critique on such notions, Johansson utilizes the art element of colour to contribute to his perspective in which historical and non-modern objects and tools still have significant relevancy within the 21st century. Furthermore, Johansson exerts the art element of form by creating a rectangular cube out of the historical objects he uses. This element communicates Johansson's idea that obsolete technologies that were once heavily present, are now rather used for decoration. The rectangular shape which looks similar to a table or bedside table, verifies his perspectives, indicating his belief that nostalgic and historic items that used to be so heavily utilized, are now nothing more than a decorative memory. Thus, Johansson's use of unity, colour and form signal his ideas in which obsolete technologies and objects are categorised together as outdated and irrelevant in the 21st century, and critiques such notions by colouring the objects in a red/orange colour scheme to promulgate how they are still relevant and undeserving of being glamorised into nothing more than nostalgic décor.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	4	4	11	22	19	14	11	8	5	3	4.3

In Question 2 students were required to explain how the historical and cultural context of an artwork they selected from the insert contributed to the materials, techniques and processes used in the artwork. The understanding of materials and their place in history was often written about as well as events that were happening at the time the work was made. Responses that scored highly were able to explain the historical and cultural context and how this influenced the use of specific materials and techniques. They selected an artwork with materials, techniques and processes that they were familiar with and were able to demonstrate their knowledge and experience of these, including detailed descriptions of specific areas in the selected artwork that reflected a point in history or a certain culture. They could define the steps in the process of creating an artwork, for example the use of calcium carbonate and rabbit-skin glue to seal a canvas or the use of an analogue camera or dark room processes, and were able to describe these in detail.

Some students misread the question and discussed how the historical and cultural context contributed to the communication of ideas and meanings or the use of art elements and principles. Sometimes the term 'process' was not addressed; students needed to describe the sequential steps of the process involved in the making of the artwork. Responses that did not score well tended to give a general description of the historical and cultural context and did not address the specific areas of the question.

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

Luis Valde's is the artist of 'economy of resources' which is an installation of a small kitchen that is rundown and in poor form. The historical context is the artwork being made in 2010 of post modernism time in Chile. 2010 is a time of creative freedom, using different materials and techniques to offer conceptual meaning to artwork this explains the use of cardboard as structure for the large-scale model. Technology enabled cardboard to be thick and sturdy thus enabling the production, adhesive has also

progressed enabling Valde's to stick the cardboard together. As for the cultural context, the low economy in Chile may have caused the artist to represent a more rugged aesthetic to the kitchen and home thus the use of black outlined furniture such as the chair adds to the rough aesthetic of homes in that area. This area of Chile being [im]poverished may also contribute to the rough joints of the cardboard seen in the right wall symbolizing the foundations of homes to be unstable and not safe.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	3	3	12	25	26	18	9	4	3.8

In Question 3 students were to select an artwork from the insert and discuss how a public gallery would prepare the artwork for transportation to a commercial gallery or other art space. Responses that scored highly discussed a number of ways an artwork could be transported from a public gallery to an exhibition space they identified. These responses detailed how an artwork could be wrapped safely, in bubble wrap or acid-free tissue paper, placed in a crate padded with foam or a solander box and transported either by a specialist removal truck or other form of transport and how the chosen artwork was handled during this transportation process. Also included in these discussions were the purpose and method of using a condition report both on site and at the destination. Responses that did not score well tended to discuss storage, which was not relevant to the artwork chosen or did not include details relating to each gallery / art space in transporting and receiving the artwork.

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

In this artwork the artist used pencil and watercolour on paper which puts this artwork in the highly sensitive category. Due to the artwork being highly sensitive the conservator of the public gallery would have to store the artwork for transport in a solander box. A solander box is a large black box that is airtight, dust free and protects the artwork from harmful light that could cause discolouration. As well as being wrapped in a solander box the work would also be wrapped in acid-free tissue paper only being handled with white linen gloves to protect the artwork from acidic damage. The solander box could also be wrapped in bubble wrap to avoid collision damage during transportation. The condition of the transport vehicle would also need to be kept at around 20-22° to avoid any heat damage while in transit. As well as that a condition report should also be done by the curator upon start of transport and end of transport to the commercial gallery to determine if any damage occurred.

Section B

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	2	2	6	18	24	17	12	10	6	3	4.7

In Question 4 students were required to describe how they developed their conceptual possibilities in the Studio process and how the development of their conceptual possibilities influenced their selection of materials, techniques and processes. Some students had little understanding of the term 'conceptual possibilities'. These are not based around one idea and do not follow a linear path in their development. They are also ideas, research and information based around the development of an artwork, which includes the materials, techniques and processes. The materials, techniques and processes would be explored and manipulated and would then be used for the making of an artwork.

Responses that scored highly often linked their inspirations to the development of conceptual possibilities. They also carefully selected artists and developed ideas either around the artists' ideas or their use and development of materials and techniques. In doing this, their work went in different directions, exploring the many possibilities posed to them.

Responses that did not score well missed creating the link between the conceptual possibilities and the materials, techniques and processes. They listed these without going into any further explanation of their choices, or did not explain the conceptual possibilities in detail. Some students talked entirely about their conceptual possibilities.

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

During my studio process I developed my conceptual possibilities by first researching my key artists of inspiration Jenny Saville and Lucien Freud. Both artists work in oil paint following a figurative style to explore the true dense texture of human flesh as shown in their self-portraits. As both artists predominantly worked in oil paint, I decided to explore this medium and use it to portray my own personal body and expose my imperfect features in a self-portrait. After researching Saville's and Freud's painting technique, I trialled the medium in a range of ways, such as by employing a palette knife to scrape and drag paint across my paper, by using a wide flat brush coated in several different values to make each brushstroke highly visible just like Freud, by layering wet oil paint over a dried layer to create a very dense texture in a similar way to Saville. The sort of underpainting technique, in particular, allowed me to establish tonal variation first and the focus on texture and fine details in the later stages of my artmaking process. This technique is highly evident in my first potential direction, in addition to wide thick visible brushstrokes, which highlighted my conceptual idea being the male human body and density of flesh.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	2	8	13	16	23	15	11	7	3	4.9

In Question 5 students were required to explain how they refined the use of materials and techniques from their potential directions to the production of their finished artworks. 'Refine' was the key word in this question and it was overlooked in a number of responses. Responses that scored highly gave clear evidence of how the refinement was developed through the use of materials and techniques. Students who approached the question in this way made direct connections to their potential directions and made direct reference to the aesthetic qualities used in a detailed and descriptive way. Some students just wrote about the process of how they produced their artworks; they may have mentioned materials, techniques and processes in their response, but omitted the refining process and just discussed the studio process. Responses that did not score well often identified the potential directions but did not explain how materials and techniques were used to make the finished artwork.

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

Whilst I used many of the same materials and techniques from my potential directions (PD) to my finished artworks, I heavily refined them prior to my completion of my artworks. In my first final artwork, I developed my materials from my PD's by accelerating the amount of embroidered depictions of the ideas. My PD's depicted a single representation of the ideal body type and in my final artworks, I had completed 10. This intensified my critique on the ideal image society praises. Further, I developed my use of embroidery text in my final artwork by using the phrase 'Courtesy of the Patriarchy' to clarify my stance on the subject matter of body image. Whilst my PD's lacked this clarity in my critiques. For my second artwork, I refined my technique of photographing a projection of the ideal against the ordinary. In my projection PD's, my camera technique produced low-quality, fuzzy photos where there is difficulty in perceiving the present juxtaposition. Thus, in the creation of the final artwork, I precisely set the aperture and shutter speed to precisely show the juxtaposition and contrast of the ideal and the ordinary.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	2	2	9	26	26	19	11	4	4.0

In Question 6 students were required to discuss how the presentation of their finished artworks demonstrated the cohesive relationship and intended ideas of their artworks. Responses that scored highly often separated the answer into two parts: the first addressed how the presentation of the two artworks created cohesive relationships; the second addressed how the presentation of the two artworks communicated ideas that often linked back to the ideas discussed in their exploration proposal and potential directions. Some responses also illustrated how the two artworks were displayed to consolidate the ideas expressed in their written answer.

Responses that did not score well generally talked about a cohesive relationship simply being the use of the same materials in two different artworks. Some students only referred to the narrative linking them. Few of these responses only addressed the physical nature of presentation, with little consideration to how the work was hung, the colour of the walls or the lighting.

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

My film "Businessman" was displayed on a chunky 2000 Panasonic TV I found on a nature strip. The regressive technology refers to the man's desire to retreat to a simpler time. The nostalgic cathode-ray tube monitor glarily illuminates a ring around the man, intended to display his alien disharmony as a corporate man in nature. The small TV size provokes curiosity, inviting a small audience to gather and watch. Above the TV, hangs, my charcoal series "The Boardroom". Each of the smirking corrupt men are lined highly up in elegant frames, just like important portraits of important people. The height makes them look down upon the viewers disgustingly intimidating. However, their satirical depiction gives a comedic effect, designed to highlight their appalling corruption, and take away some of their power. I aim to criticize the industry that allows men like Henry Weinstein, Jeffery Epstein, Rupert Murdoch and Donald Trump to thrive. The cohesive emblem of the black suit in tie shown in both my artworks portrays my criticism of the corporate capitalist industry.

Section C

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	4	2	3	5	10	13	13	14	11	9	8	5	3	6.5

In this extended response question students were required to analyse how two artists they had studied in Unit 3 Area of Study 3 had used subject matter to demonstrate aesthetic qualities. Responses that scored highly had a clear understanding of subject and how their selected artists used it. They also had a clear understanding of the aesthetic qualities and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of how subject matter contributes to the aesthetic qualities. Some students did not clearly articulate what subject matter the artists were using and their response became very vague as this hampered them in addressing the aesthetic qualities.

It is advised that students should not prepare responses for the examination as some students used a prepared essay response for Question 7. They found it very difficult to manipulate this into a response that fully answered the question. Students who only used one artist for their response were only able to score a maximum of six marks.

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

Eugene Von Guerard, an Austrian (born in 1811) oil on canvas artist, who moved to Australia during the gold rush, in his artwork, 'Govett's leap and Grose River Valley', 1873 evokes a sense of wonderment, demonstrated through the awe-inspiring valley, in the Blue Mountains. Von Guerard's use of diminutive figures in the foreground being contrastingly out sized by a majestic scene of nature as the large scale mountains and valley towers over the figures. Von Guerard's use of German Romanticism inspired sky further evokes the sense of wonderment and creates a feeling of ablazement of the beauty of nature.

Similarly, the New Zealand born (born in 1917) assemblage artist, Rosalie Gascoigne in her artwork, 'The Crop 1' 1976, which features the use of salsify heads, galvanised wire and galvanized iron is an assemblage that mimiates her inspiration from Japanese Ikebana. Her artwork represents the subject of an Australian crop this demonstrates the feeling of the hot Australian environment as the materials used show the effect of the sun. As Gascoigne quotes 'It's not about how it looks, it's about how you feel about it', to me, when I view her artwork I feel a sense of pride as it makes me feel Australia as it shows the damaging effect of the Australian outback and what it does to abandoned materials.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	7	2	5	8	10	13	11	10	8	7	6	5	4	3	6.2

In Question 8 students were asked to explain the considerations for conservation and presentation in one artwork from a public gallery and one artwork from another exhibition space. There was a good diversity of art spaces discussed for this question, with spaces from the city, regions and online. Virtual exhibitions (an online presentation of a physical exhibition) were discussed particularly well by the students who 'visited' the virtual site and they were able to source specific information from gallery websites to support the online resource of the exhibition.

Responses that scored highly made reference to both exhibitions and were able to write at length about conservation and presentation of artworks in the selected exhibition. These responses often mentioned the name of the curator and their role in the presentation of the artworks. Some were even able to quote the curator on the decisions they made for display. These responses clearly outlined the differences between the two selected spaces. Responses that did not score well still had a tendency to discuss one art space in more detail to another and to rely on conservation methods rather than the presentation aspect.

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

The NGV: Ian Potter Centre's 20th Century Collection houses the most iconic and aesthetically and culturally significant artworks and holds the highest conservation practices out of all galleries. An artwork exhibited here, arguably one of the highlights of the collection is John Brack's Collins Street, 5 pm (1955). As it is an oil painting, the NGV uses luxometer to maintain a LUX level of 150 to ensure minimal UV damage. They also utilize Tungsten bulbs to ensure that the UV is minimal as well as allowing no natural light in at all. Because the painting and canvas are delicate, particularly if the temperature is fluctuating, it may distort because of this. Using a thermohydrograph, the NGV is enabled to monitor and control the internal environment, keeping the exhibition space at 20°C +2°C and at a relative humidity of 50% +5%. This is crucial because if the humidity was below 45%, the painting can crack on the canvas my warp and if it is above 65%, veneers will detach and mould will grow. The NGV also has an Integrated Pest Management in which they monitor bugs and pests that can harm the integrity of the artworks by banning food and drinks, having doors to close at the end of exhibitions and regular cleaning after and before the exhibition. Collins Street. 5 pm is framed by a simple wooden frame with no perspex glass so that the audience can admire the brushstrokes without any barriers. It also insures a cohesive link between his artwork and the luxurious feel of the whole exhibition. Either side of Collins Street, 5 pm is Brack's other works: The barbershop (1952) and The Bar (1954) in order to highlight some of Brack's most famous

artwork. This painting is placed in a section room alongside other 1950s and early 1960s art. The walls are white to offer the best viewing experience for the viewer (head curator David Hurlston) and to allow the artworks to truly be the focus.

Forty Five Downstair's Making Nonsense by Janno MacLaughlin was a commercial exhibition that was intended to be a "hug" to Melbourne due to the lockdowns. As it is a commercial gallery with the intent on selling these artworks and a high turnover period, the gallery does not have any true conservation practices (head curator/gallery supervisor). This can be noted by the large window allowing diffused lighting in which would not be acceptable for some of the works in a public gallery. Her large acrylic canvas Raindance No.1 (2020) is directly exposed to this lighting. There were studio lights present and presumably at a LUX of level 150 to 50 LUX as some artworks were textiles. The internal environment was monitored by simple mechanics such as an air-conditioner but not a thermohydrograph. It was definitely more exposed to elemental nature as the entrance was quite open to the outside.

Rain dance number No.1 (2020) was presented alongside three other same size canvases in a 2 x 2 diptych formation. The canvas left minimal space at the top of the walls which were painted white to allow for extreme contrast between the various colours of the canvas and the other artworks. The entire studio was utilised and it was one big, open space, thus creating an overwhelming sensory overload as soon as one steps into the space. Thus, really feeling like it genuinely is a hug to Melbourne.