

2022 VCE Studio Arts external assessment report

General comments

The 2022 Studio Arts examination offered students an opportunity to respond to a range of questions in three sections. Overall, the majority of students gave responses appropriate to the questions asked of them. There is evidence that some students still lack understanding of the meaning of command words that are used in questions throughout the examination. Students are advised to refer to the VCAA's [glossary of command terms](#).

Generally, students responded very well to the examination with some students writing extensive responses to every question. The higher-scoring responses directly addressed all aspects of the question, whereas those that did not score well may have only addressed part of the question. Students are encouraged to use the reading time effectively, reading the questions carefully so they understand what is being asked and respond fully to the question.

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.

Section A

For each of the questions in Section A students were asked to select an artwork from the 15 artworks in the detachable insert and use this as a basis for their response. Students could use the same artwork or a different artwork for each question. The students who scored highly in this section were those who consistently referred back to the artwork that they had selected, continually citing the specifics of that artwork. These responses used correct art terminology fluently throughout their writing.

Question 1

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	1	4	9	13	15	16	18	15	8	4.9

Students who scored highly selected an artwork that involved materials and techniques they were familiar with and that they were able to describe using specific art terminology, demonstrating their knowledge of materials and techniques. They were also able to reference the inherent qualities of the materials and style in the technique. High-scoring responses were able to differentiate between materials and techniques, whereas some students did not clearly understand the difference between the two.

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

Ryusei's "Portrait of Reiko Sitting" is a combined use of indirect and direct oil painting techniques of canvas. The canvas would initially have been stretched to fit a 72.7 x 60.7 cm wooden board where the artist could then apply colour and primer without marbling and warping of the colour. Due to the early 20th century time period and the consistency of colour across the canvas, the canvas would have been primed with rabbit skin glue using a large flat head brush to achieve equal consistency. This would add a tooth to the canvas and allow for greater absorption of paint to the canvas for brighter more saturated colours, as seen in the fine yellow detailing in the cloth and the bright highlights of the face. Next Ryusei would have continued with a natural light grey wash to create a coloured natural base that ties the colour palette of the work together, followed by the indirect layering of a solid black background. Finally, the artist would have employed a wet-on-wet direct method of oil painting to achieve the smooth transition of shadows between the fold of the clothing, muscles of the face, and texture of the apple. Small thin flat and pointed brushes would have been used in conjunction with similarly toned colours in sections of the work to achieve equal distribution of shadows and colour gradation. Lastly, in long thick strokes, a clear glaze would have been applied over the top of the painting to seal the work, protect it from physical damage such as markings, bleachings, as well as stop any of the colours from leaking or changing.

Question 2

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	1	2	6	13	20	19	17	14	8	4.9

Overall, most students scored highly in this question, demonstrating an understanding of what the question was asking. High-scoring responses were able to clearly identify the aesthetic qualities of the artwork and reference it in all aspects of the question. They were able to identify and describe in detail how art elements and principles had been used in the artwork, and referred to how they had been used to build the aesthetic qualities of the artwork.

Some responses may have only listed art elements and principles that existed within the artwork without an explanation of how they contributed to the aesthetic qualities of the artwork.

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

Andrew Donohue presents an eery forest in his linocut, titled 'Waxing Weld'. Through the use of monochromatic colour, Donohue creates a melancholy and lonely night-time scene. The stark contrast between the black of the trees and the white of the moon draws attention to the large scale of the moon despite the overlapping trees. The lessening scale of the trees, too, builds perspective as the forest seems to stretch back forever. The repetition of organic, flowing lines in the sky creates balance in the two colours and aids in the communication of a deathly quiet area, the sky blanketing the trees. The straight, vertical nature of the trees contrasts the tight, circular characteristics of the sky, too, creating balance as the eye focuses on the juxtaposition, gaze following the line of trees but held by the vividness of the moon. The resulting scene is both calming and alluring, yet somewhat eery in the removal of life through the lack of colour as darkness penetrates the foreground of the scene.

Question 3

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	3	2	5	11	16	21	16	13	9	5	5.2

For this question, students were asked to discuss the processes associated with the preparation and presentation of their selected artwork in either a public gallery or commercial gallery. The highest-scoring responses included detail of presentation specific to the inherent qualities of the selected artwork and incorporated reference to details of preparation that extended past transportation, storage, condition reports and handling to also reference what was included in terms of cleaning, framing-wall colour, lighting, type of hanging/plinth, didactic panels and context with other works in the exhibition. In these high-scoring responses, conservation considerations were referenced but they did not make up the bulk of the response.

More general responses focused on the conservation and preservation aspect of this question and may have only touched on presentation. Lack of the use of correct terminology was also a characteristic of responses that did not score as well.

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

A public gallery would use extensive preparation methods and planning for presentation when exhibiting 'Images of Men II' as they aim to educate the public and adhere to international standards for conservations. As such, a condition report would have been completed before the work was transported to the gallery, and if the space had been previously painted, at least 1-2 weeks would need to pass before it could be put up for display. A scaled model of the space may have been created, to allow curators and exhibition designer to plan for presentation and the flow of the exhibition. As the work is silver gelatin on paper, it is very susceptible to decays so a public gallery would need to mount it on acid free board using [nylon] tape. Additionally, when presenting, low light levels of 50 [lux] would have to be used to prevent from colouring, buckling or burning from exposure during the exhibition period. The photograph would likely be displayed at eye level, surrounded by works which also explore the tension between subjectivity and the external world, to create cohesion and increase the curational vision of the public gallery, allowing the audience to better understand the themes of the work as the aim of the public space is to educate the audience.

Section B

For each of the questions in Section B students were asked to write about their own artmaking process. This included themes and ideas, their use of materials, techniques and processes, and the valuation of their finished artworks. Students who scored highly were able to respond to the command words (discuss, analyse and evaluate), while some students had difficulty with understanding what they were being asked to do.

Question 4

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	2	2	7	15	24	26	19	8	4.5

This question asked students to discuss the conceptual possibilities and ideas that they explored in their exploration proposal. It is a reflective question, and high-scoring responses were able to explain their exploration of the conceptual possibilities in some depth. Some students had little understanding of the term 'conceptual possibilities', and so struggled to fully answer this question. Other students wrote about their use of materials and techniques instead of focusing on the key concepts and ideas.

Many students chose themes that were subjective, with an emphasis on self and emotions. Higher-scoring responses tended to explore a wide range of potential topics and were able to discuss concepts using clear, concise language.

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

My Studio Arts practice for 2022 examines the “peculiar intricacies” of the human condition through the lens of war, with a particular focus on exploring the mediums of oil paint and photography.

My initial Conceptual Possibility poses the question, how does confrontation of danger cause us to mistrust the world around us? I explore the “blind trust” associated with everyday objects, taking inspiration from my own routine to find ways to manipulate or weaponize such objects to evoke “fear, mistrust and anxiety” as well as draw out our “shared experiences and vulnerabilities.” In another Potential Direction I examine the representation of war (particularly imitations of immense human heartache) in entertainment to explore the role the media possesses in our perception of being vulnerable. In an extension of this idea, or conceptual possibility 3 I express a fascination for the idea of censorship in its many forms, particularly the exaggeration of cartoon violence – taking inspiration from the inherent invincibility of Coyote or other classic characters that visually express indignation for vulnerabilities – my intention was to appropriate frames and bring the characters into confrontational realism to highlight desensitisation of modern culture.

Question 5

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	2	5	11	16	22	15	13	9	5.2

High-scoring responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how the choices made with regard to techniques used in a potential direction contributed to the clear communication of ideas. There were students that were able to provide a sophisticated analysis and discussion of their own experience and engagement with their chosen techniques. Responses that did not score well tended to list rather than analyse or did not address how the choice of techniques impacted on the communication of ideas.

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

My second potential direction explored the possibility of communicating a strange, magic narrative through the form of a rug. I developed techniques of tufting, in which I needed to hand-tuft yarn into a piece of fabric, then using sheers, trim the loops to reveal my imagery. This specific potential direction explored the idea of a young flower child eating a cake that was not meant for her. I wanted to capture a moment of obscure whimsy through the tactile form of the rug to create a sense of curiosity and wonder in my audience. I altered the setting of my punch needle to create different depths to the rug, placing emphasis on the cake, raising it to the highest setting so the loops were longer. I lowered the background so I didn't take away from the subject matter. The differing levels allowed me to create a sense of depth necessary to my concept, as I wanted viewers to visually explore the narrative I depicted. Having captured this snippet of a story in such a soft, inviting form, I was able to create an allure in my audience.

Question 6

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	4	2	4	7	13	20	16	17	12	5.5

Higher-scoring responses were genuine evaluations of the positives and negatives of the finished artworks and clearly articulated the aesthetic qualities of the two artworks. These students also were able to discuss

the refinement of their use of material. Responses that did not score well tended to be a description of the two finished artworks with little or no evaluation of how successful they were in communicating their ideas.

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

In my first final artwork 'lost arches' I explored the ideas of the push and pull of deceit through sculpture, which was effectively represented through the interlocking, [tendating] organic [arch forms] made of neon-colour infused Perspex. The dynamic composition of the 3 arches, interweaving in and out of each other successfully depicts the ideas of confusion instilled in society, degrading condemning societal norms for limited individual agency. Furthermore, the lack of negative space under each archway is successful in depicting a void, a lack of beauty associated with choice in the highly conceptual sculpture.

In my second artwork 'lost pathways' I depict ideas of a [central] machine, in which people are only seen as a cog, needed for the survival of conformity (through sculpture). Sculpture allowed me to effectively perceptualize a metaphorical voyage with no true destination. I created a neon-pink infused Perspex set of interlocking stairs which never truly resulted in any upwards progress. This was effectual in displaying human's [own] of hierarchy, and dispelling the myth that individual thoughts are recognised, espousing society's hold on individuals. The motif of transparent faceless figures on the stairs defies gravity. This symbolism of defiance successfully depicts the [jarring motions] of movement and inhibition that exist in our current day.

Section C

Section C consisted of two extended response questions in which students were asked to write about two artists they had studied and two exhibitions they had visited during the year.

Question 7

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	5	2	3	7	9	9	12	11	11	9	10	7	5	7

Higher-scoring responses identified specific artworks even though they had not been specifically asked to. These students were able to make the connection between how works were presented and the intention of the artist or curator. Most students made the choice to focus on the curator's intentions rather than the artist's. Some students may not have referred to specific artworks but used the term 'artworks', writing more general observations about conservation and presentation, which might apply to any artwork exhibited within an exhibition space.

Responses to this question may have been influenced by rote-learned knowledge of conservation/preservation requirements in exhibition spaces and not an in-depth examination of the intention of the specific exhibition curator's intentions and the processes that the curator had been involved with to bring the exhibition to fruition.

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

The National Gallery of Victoria's 'The Picasso Century' (Melbourne Winter Masterpieces Jun – Oct) presents a narrative of Picasso's career in 12 thematic sections that reflect the socio-political climate of their time in a public gallery setting. While the direct intentions of both the Picasso estate and Didier Ottinger (curator of centre Pompidou e musée Nationale)/Miranda Wallace (curator of NGV) position complimentary works amongst Picasso's collection to reflect his impact on the ever-evolving artistic community. For example, Francis Bacon's 'self portrait'(s) are displayed at the exit, while his work was produced in the 1970s many cubist qualities can be observed such as abstraction and multiple perspectives, solidifying the legacy of Picasso's career after his death and upholds the pride

of both curators reflecting on Picasso's influence today. Similarly, the works celebrate their original resting place amongst history, presented in sandstone coloured walls to reflect how they were initially kept on sandstone walls, and some are adorned with deep red walls to present the emotional turmoil of the war during the artist's life, acknowledging the hardships of creative expression of the time.

Buxton Contemporary's exhibition 'Susan Jacobs, The Ants are In The Idiom' reflects the personal collection of Michael Buxton in a public university space with a strong focus on education. Therefore, many of Jacobs' works are presented with accompanying didactics to uphold the establishment's educational foundations. A particular work, 'Apple Massage' is presented among an array of other installations on the floor, so the space has been designed to guide you away from the outer edges (as one usually navigates a gallery) and into the centre, facilitated by an angular concrete wall at the entrance and the introduction of identical pillars (requested by Susan Jacobs) that enhance the industrial atmosphere of the space rather than concealing it, underlining the work's goal to mislead and contradicts the mind, emphasizing Jacob's fascination with riddles and word play.

Question 8

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

For this question, students were required to examine how historical and cultural contexts have influenced the subject matter in artworks of two artists that they had studied in 2022. Higher-scoring responses had a more sophisticated understanding of the history and symbolic contexts of the artwork. These students also demonstrated a thorough knowledge and an in-depth understanding of both artists, with an equal weighting given to both artists in their responses.

Students who did not score well focused more on one artist that they felt most comfortable with. Some students focused on the artist's personal life and emotional states, neglecting both 'historical' and, to lesser extent, 'cultural' contexts.

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

Ai Weiwei is a diverse artist who makes many political artworks reflecting his culture. In 2009 he created 'Remembering', a colourful sign on the side of a university in Munich. The enormous creation spelled out the diverse characters for "She lived happily in this world for 7 years", the statement of the parents of a missing child. In 2008, China was hit by the Sichuan earthquakes and 5,000 children in schools disappeared. Ai Weiwei attributed this to the poor infrastructure of the schools and a lack of care of the Chinese government. The artwork is made of brightly coloured children's backpacks, clearly indicating the impacted people. Ai Weiwei was forced to set up this artwork in [Germany] due to the harsh censoring the event had undergone in China. This artwork is intrinsically linked to Chinese culture and politics.

Ben Quilty is an Australian artist who also makes artworks linked to his culture. His 2020 'Freefall' and its surrounding exhibition being a prime example of this. The artwork is of a man that Quilty reportedly knew, a retired police officer with PTSD cast in bronze, upside down with the head disappearing into the floor. The statue is surrounded by images of violence, some inspired by the culture around professional fighting, others around true tragedies. The Cronulla Riots on Sydney's beaches some years ago had massive impacts on Australian culture. A [hoard] of white Australians went to a beach frequented by non-Europeans and attacked anyone visibly Muslim or "others". The lives of many immigrants were changed that day, and the violence that Australia is capable of was highlighted. With "Freefall", Quilty aimed to show the horrors that police are forced to deal with, and the impacts of that. The policeman is visibly aging, faceless, stripped of the pride that violence earns people. Hopeless and vulnerable. Himself and only himself.