

Scholarship

2010 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Design

COMMENTARY

The Design Scholarship cohort firmly established itself within the requirements of this particular discipline. Successful Scholarship submissions capably engaged in systematic and innovative visual inquiry to do with both design and contemporary practice in the Visual Arts.

It was clear that successful candidates understood that Scholarship performance is based on both visual execution and ideational intelligence. Candidates that operated at this level employed and exploited conventions located in ‘best’ practice to communicate inventive and authentic approaches to design ideas and procedures. The evidence of critical and rigorous attention to both ‘form’ and ‘concepts’ resulted in outcomes that were refined and fluently executed across a range of design contexts, subjects and topics – all soundly resonating with the students’ own interests and knowledge.

Those candidates who were awarded Scholarship, confidently situated their proposition (brief) within a genre or context that enabled them to explore and exploit a range of skills that they had command over. From ideational play to visual language strategies and stylistic competencies, these candidates performed to their strengths fuelled by a brief that set an open-ended challenge – one that fostered enquiry, inventiveness and opportunity to generate a range of potential options (both two-dimensional and three-dimensional).

Candidates who generated and managed their own imagery through photo-shoots or 3D, sculptural, installation or time-based events continued to sustain a process that promoted diverse ideas and inventive solutions consistently throughout the investigation. Often this was how the candidate’s own individuality surfaced and differentiated from outcomes located in established practice. Those candidates who were awarded Scholarship understood the need for a ‘holistic relationship’ between the portfolio and workbook. They also utilised layout strategies to exploit space limitations whilst presenting a systematic account of concepts, research, exploration, synthesis and visual communication. The strongest workbook exemplars reflected an on-going analysis that highlighted the discovery, development and critique of ideas, format, media and visual execution. The categorisation or underlying structure of the workbook was important and workbooks that signalled the links between research, resource generation, drawing (experimentation) and refinement were able to succinctly communicate decision-making and idea advancements within each generation of activity.

In the awarding of Scholarship, the workbook is seen in relation to the portfolio and not as a separate entity. The workbook operates in many ways to help the viewer ‘understand’ the portfolio. For candidates with obvious ability at level 3, the addition of a workbook and the entering into the Scholarship examination extends and enhances learning.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- identified design briefs that enabled sustained, complex and insightful investigations
- employed a multitude of strategies within research, and extrapolated options through the careful evaluation of the ideas generated
- synthesised contextual/conceptual and/or formal modes of working from established practice into an individually conceived body of work
- integrated workbook and portfolio completely to link ideas of research, established practice and candidate’s own ambitions within the subject

- demonstrated strategic approaches to practical exploration and theoretical research with one informing the other, thereby substantiating interests with authority and inventiveness
- understood the value of producing outcomes in order to move forward; reflecting a critical and decisive approach to practice that enabled work to communicate a clear and distinctive point of view.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- demonstrated a clear understanding of the parameters of an investigation, by utilising visual strategies located in contemporary design practice to develop and extend an individually conceived design proposition
- confidently exploited formal design elements and employed type, image and materiality with skill and sophistication
- set up a range of challenges in terms of technical and physical scale of projects to allow for complex and comprehensive interrogation of the design process
- produced work that was both elegant and sophisticated in its execution, demonstrating a high level understanding of design conventions
- used technologies, materials and processes fluently in keeping with the aesthetic sensibilities of the design intent in order to achieve purposeful resolutions
- generated their own photographic source material rather than an exclusive and arbitrary reliance upon secondary source material
- expanded an enquiry beyond a derivative, descriptive superficial understanding of artistic influences
- sustained a constructive and informative relationship between the workbook and the portfolio
- employed purposeful strategies for the layout, ordering, sequencing and editing on the portfolio and workbook that were appropriate to conceptual requirements
- operated with a comprehensive sense of ownership and purpose throughout the enquiry and were able to communicate visually complex ideas in a succinct manner.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- misunderstood what was appropriate and realistic in established design practice at this level of study
- did not identify a proposition with sufficient scope and depth to enable a sustained investigation of design ideas
- failed to adequately grasp, select, draw together a range of experiments with media and design conventions into a coherent inquiry
- utilised artist models haphazardly in order to justify changes in work or as a reference list to establish subject matter
- wrote lengthy descriptions about “concepts”, “symbolism”, “meaning” behind works that were not visually manifest within the work
- used written language to describe design intentions when the visual work was unable to communicate these ideas formally and/or conceptually
- presented work that was not technically competent for the required level of performance

- utilised poorly directed and/or poor quality photos or had difficulty taking ownership of the images used, which signalled authenticity issues
- failed to elucidate and sustain a purposeful and structural relationship or connection between the workbook and the folio.
- replicated or re-presented the same images from the portfolio in the workbook which offered little additional evidence and did not advance the argument or understanding in a meaningful way
- used the workbook to descriptively record step-by-step the process rather than as a critical analysis of the 'journey' undertaken
- appended a "further developments" or "extensions" section in the workbook, which amounted to a superficial 'add on' or tangent that did not advance or contribute to the overall thrust of the inquiry.