

Scholarship

2009 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Painting

COMMENTARY

Overall, the Painting Scholarship cohort presented evidence that was comprehensive in range, style and type with varying technical, formal and conceptual approaches employed. Practices involved and referred to a complexity of artistic, historical and cultural contexts with confidence and inventiveness. Candidates awarded Scholarship positioned their enquiry (question/ intent) by building relevant and appropriate means to play out their painting investigation. They maintained their own direction and pulled in source, established practice and other contexts, as and when required.

Of the various sources that led the painting investigations, simple topics had the most traction, often expanded through incorporation of other elements or a deeper investigation into associated content. In general the selections of topic and question were of interest to each candidate, open-ended enough to enable ongoing interpretation and intervention (called a 'deep hole'). The more appropriate the issues candidates took on, the more knowledge, experience and access they were able to bring to the conversation. Some topics were just too big, e.g. *World Peace* or *Save the World* and these candidates had to generalise, usually through cliché, thus being limited to superficial description.

The relationship between portfolio and workbook worked best where process and subject were intrinsic and connected. Many outstanding candidates had additional work in the workbook, which revealed other options and expanded fields of experimentation and exploration. There were some candidates whose workbooks were too dense and were disconnected from the portfolio. They relied heavily on written material to explain the portfolio (like a key), with the portfolio work only being exposed by the workbook instead of being readable in itself.

Particular to Painting was the use of devices, such as cutouts on Board 3. For some candidates the insertion of such devices (cutouts, installation, site propositions) as an endpoint was not relevant to the core focus/ enquiry and counteracted the thrust of the engagement by ending on a tangent.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- intelligently selected, edited and shifted conceptual ideas with the lateral use of artistic influences and ideas
- assimilated contextual, conceptual modes of working from established practice into an individually oriented body of work
- developed and reinforced a symbiotic relationship between the content, context, concepts, theme, story, narrative of the proposition and pictorial devices, processes and procedures used to convey the ideas
- operated with a complete sense of ownership and purpose throughout the enquiry.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- positioned an enquiry that was easily sourced, referenced and driven by themselves

- expanded an enquiry beyond a derivative, descriptive superficial understanding of artistic influences
- showed a clear understanding of the parameters of an investigation, employing, utilising visual strategies located in contemporary practice, to extend beyond proposition
- employed highly fluent techniques and approaches to make clear decisions and achieve a purpose
- generated own photographic source material.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- made superficial written descriptions of steps taken in making the works
- made tenuous connections between own works, which were of little significance or relevance
- wrote lengthy descriptions about *concepts*, *symbolism* or *meaning* behind works, that were not visually apparent in the work
- chose topics that were too general, lacking understanding, selection and depth
- did not adequately grasp, select, draw together a range of experiments with media and conventions of painting into a coherent whole
- presented submissions that focused on descriptions of artists and artistic periods, without evidencing assimilation into own work
- appended a *further developments* or *extensions* section in the workbook, which amounted to a superficial add-on decision.

Recommendations for 2010, arising from Scholarship 2009 Assessment Process:
Visual Arts: Painting

The format of portfolios is key to the readability of the development and argument. Candidates should carefully consider the study as a whole when assessing layout, so as to better synthesise the investigation. Synthesis isn't combination. If there is confusion between the re-stating and synthesis, this creates a tendency to synthesise in a superficial sense, perhaps with a combination of style, concept and processes. It is also not always appropriate or necessary to lay out the portfolio in the order the work was produced.

Candidates who are performing at Merit or Excellence throughout the year should be encouraged to enter for Scholarship. Even with a somewhat limited workbook it is still possible to be competitive within the field given that it is a holistic picture with two sites of evidence (portfolio and workbook) that is in consideration for Scholarship.