

2015 NZ Scholarship Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Sculpture

Part A: Commentary

Comment on the overall response of candidates to the 2015 examination.

Sculpture Scholarship for 2015 presented the full scope of what is considered contemporary sculptural practice in the expanded field. The extensive range of propositions demonstrated lateral and highly inventive thinking as well as an ability to operate between varietal modes of sculptural practice; object making, installation, performance, improvisation, site, formal interplay, intervention, process-based. It is clear that candidates understand that they are making within the bounds of sculptural conventions and practices – they were all engaged in ambitious projects that grew in physical scale and complexity.

There is huge variety in the ways that research is being managed and applied within practice. A real level of ambition is being employed that emerges as complex three-dimensional forms to large-scale installation to technically superb management of materials and processes, or a combination of all three. Candidates who utilised simple yet multifaceted methodologies to create both small and large-scale resolutions to their sculptural propositions were successful in building an articulate and lateral investigation that contained many options.

The choices of topics undertaken this year straddled the personal, emotional, formal, craft, nature, scientific, architectural as well as some who focused solely on sculptural language/propositions to move the enquiry forward, i.e. they applied sculptural ideas, such as scale, miniature, volume, form, mass, weight to motivate new ways of understanding and thinking. It was exciting to see candidates recognising the successes they had made – and moving those into a new phase. The scope of topic allowed for some sophisticated and mature making to occur that located candidates' practice well within contemporary art.

The work presented in folio and workbooks included intelligent photo documentation that allowed the viewer to understand the work and expand upon the experience of the work. There seemed to be more understanding of the value of photography as a tool to document and as a representation of a sculptural idea, as in a photo document of a performance. Also of note was the inclusion of formal intervention practice as a mode of making. Found sites were utilised as a platform upon which certain interventions and installational explorations took place in effective and experimental ways. This enhanced the nature of those enquiries and set up potentialities that could not be planned beforehand. This approach was utilised across the field in interesting and unexpected means.

The Sculpture Marking panel would like to encourage more students to enter Scholarship. It is clear that many of the candidates that are achieving excellence or merit at L3 would be positively competitive at Scholarship, if not Outstanding Scholarship.

Part B: Report on performance standard

Scholarship with Outstanding Performance	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertook broad and thorough research that directed the conceptual underpinnings of the central proposition of the submission • made lateral leaps in thinking about how to expand or enrich the central ideas within the body of work • established a workbook practice that was highly considered in its editing and visual presentation and which reinforced ideas presented in the folio • engaged in authentic inventive sculptural practice that referenced established practice and yet demonstrated an originality that was clearly the candidate's own work.
Scholarship	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • created a strategic framework in which to operate, so that the workbook and folio produced visual and conceptual harmonics of each other • engaged in rigorous analysis of each phase of work to facilitate a renewal of the central proposition • employed a strategic attitude to methods and ideas in the making of work that allowed for a cohesive and expansive body of work • presented workbooks that contextualised the work on the folio by revealing research and references to established sculptural practice.

Other candidates	<p>Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• presented workbook pages that showed how they literally made the work and also documented unrelated established practice• used written language to describe sculptural intentions when the work was unable to communicate these ideas• replicated or re-presented the same images from the folio in the workbook, which offered no additional evidence and did not advance the sculptural proposition• lacked a range of appropriate artist models; or worked superficially through established practice without criticality.
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