

Scholarship

2010 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Painting

COMMENTARY

The Painting 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 painting and contemporary practice in the Visual Arts.

In general the submissions that gained scholarships had an obvious ownership around the direction of the work undertaken. This was apparent in the way that the premise for the portfolios was often established early on, which subsequently allowed students the time and room to develop complex and sophisticated understandings in their approach to painting.

Typically, Scholarship Painting was characterised by comprehensive 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 (proposition) by building relevant and appropriate means to play out their painting investigation. They maintained their own direction and pulled in source material, established practice and other contexts as and when required. Many candidates began their workbook with a proposition/question. The best of these framed this in a broad context that provided options, pathways and approaches that were open-ended. They did not have predetermined specific outcomes, nor did they preclude the necessity to continually revisit or remodel the enquiry in light of critical insights that emerged from the analysis of the practical activities undertaken. This promoted genuine engagement with the proposition as work was developed and allowed for new research to emerge during the process of the investigation, as opposed to the research being a descriptive record of finite concerns.

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship Painting utilised the workbook for evidence of ‘critical’ thinking and creative options that fell outside the often-linear direction of the portfolio. Workbooks manifested the candidate’s individualised approach and ongoing engagement with painting and the contexts in which their work derived meaning.

Successful candidates demonstrated an understanding of the difference between subject matter and ideas. Those more limited candidates wrote a description or analysis of their subject matter disguised as a proposition. Those not achieving Scholarship usually failed to present an investigation founded within the conventions of contemporary practice. Subject matter that was limited to a single object, i.e. ‘gardens’ or ‘fish’ had limited potential. There was some confusion demonstrated between subject matter and painting propositions. Candidates needed to ask themselves *‘what are the ideas inherent or related to particular subject matter and what is it that I am endeavouring to find out about, in painting terms?’* Some topics were too far-reaching in scope, e.g. ‘the desire for world peace’ or ‘saving the world from pollution’. Candidates were then often forced to generalise, usually through cliché and thus risked being limited to superficial description.

Workbooks continued to demonstrate an understanding of ideas and approaches undertaken in the portfolio work by elaborating on and extending that dialogue. Generally they revealed the same sense of ownership apparent in the portfolios and a total engagement with their painting investigation. Where additional work was presented in the workbook, candidates revealed not only other options, but also an expanded field of experimentation and exploration. These workbooks were an integral part of how the submission operated and thus successfully communicated the goal. The best workbooks were able to navigate their way around references to artist models, technical concerns, how to re-introduce new, yet related, themes and make precise analytical decisions on

expanding these concerns. In essence, these demonstrated critical reflection on their practice in a clear and informative manner.

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 propositions in painting 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
- understood the various means by which drawing operates within production of paintings and employed this understanding with sensitivity and accuracy
- understood inherently the ability of paint media to generate a strong body of work with fluent control over the painting processes and procedures utilised
- 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 practice to develop and extend an individually conceived painting proposition
- utilised a range of investigative drawing to explore insightful and eloquent ideas and enquiries
- utilised painting technologies, materials and processes fluently in keeping with the aesthetic intent in order to achieve purposeful resolutions
- produced work that was both elegant and sophisticated in its execution, demonstrating a high-level understanding of painting procedures
- critically understood painting genre and were able to demonstrate purposeful control over paint media and methods with fluency appropriate to conceptual requirements
- expanded an enquiry beyond a derivative, descriptive superficial understanding of artistic influences
- sustained a constructive and informative relationship between the workbook and the portfolio
- demonstrated a considered and strategic approach to practical exploration and theoretical research with one informing the other and therefore substantiating interests with authority and inventiveness

- 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 painting practice at this level of study
- did not identify a proposition with sufficient scope and depth to enable a sustained investigation of painting ideas
- failed to adequately grasp, select, draw together a range of experiments with media and painting 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 painting 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
- failed to elucidate and sustain a purposeful and structural relationship or connection between the workbook and the portfolio
- 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 their 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.