



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Assessment Report

Scholarship, 2006

Art History

Art History, Scholarship, 2006

Commentary

Successful candidates demonstrated a very good general understanding of the contexts studied and used selected works effectively to reflect that understanding.

There is a clear need for many Scholarship candidates to extend their knowledge through their own efforts and by thinking through issues independently. The best-performing candidates demonstrated independent thinking and provided evidence of risk-taking.

Many of the unsuccessful candidates did not demonstrate the knowledge or skills required at this level. The need for analysis of specific works cannot be over-emphasised. It should also be noted that the use of examination scripts from previous years runs the risk of repeating errors in those scripts.

In Section A: most candidates understood the term 'function' but several had difficulty understanding 'form' despite this being part of the basic terminology for the subject. Several candidates drifted away from the term 'face' into a broader discussion of portraiture or in some cases, a more generalised discussion of the gesture and detail of figure. Some ignored 'in works of art' and fell into a discussion that was sometimes irrelevant. Successful candidates were able to evaluate different uses of light (eg symbolic, naturalistic, chiaroscuro, as subject) through in-depth analysis of key works. The question relating to art documenting history was possibly perceived as less technical and drew a wide range of responses including sophisticated discussions of subjectivity and reliability of any historical record. Weaker essays tried to attach favourite works to 'documenting history', often relying heavily on artist's 'personal history' or confusing history with belief.

In Section B: a wide range of quality and understanding was evident. Many candidates limited their discussion to the artist rather than specific art works in response to the first question.

There was some very good discussion in response to the question relating to developments in art as shifts in emphasis rather than breaks with tradition. Several candidates ignored the 'rather than' aspect of the question and some struggled to see the question clearly.

The question relating to beauty was a popular choice and most candidates responded well. Some had difficulty defining what they meant by 'beauty'. Many identified beauty as being 'in the eye of the beholder' but were then unable to develop an argument. The best responses identified the concept of beauty as an idea itself, often writing in a sophisticated manner.

There was a wide range of quality in responses to the question relating to representation and reality.

The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:

- ability to read the questions carefully, noting key words and qualifiers and to structure their answers around the central idea presented in the question
- engaging intellectually with the question asked, taking a clear and appropriate stance where that was required, and maintaining that stance throughout
- planning answers so that responses were cohesive and sustained
- knowledge that was wide-ranging and supported discussion with detailed and perceptive analysis of key works and contexts relevant to their argument
- extensive knowledge, both in depth and breadth, and the ability to select specific effective key works to support their discussion

- integration of perceptive analysis of those key works and their broader contexts
- use of a confident writing style.

Candidates who did NOT achieve scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above, and in addition they:

- lacked the ability to analyse specific works and contexts. There was a tendency to describe and generalise which is inappropriate at this level
- showed insufficient understanding of terminology. This was particularly noticeable in those who struggled with terms such as 'form' and 'representation'
- did not address all parts of the question
- were not able to adapt their knowledge to the question asked, trying instead to rewrite the question to fit rote-learned and generalised information
- were unable to answer two questions at a similar level. Often one (usually the first answered) was considerably stronger than the other - it is important to plan carefully and allocate time evenly to the two essays
- were unable to select works which worked well for the question, responding instead with broad survey-type answers, often chronological, and usually superficial and unconvincing
- included material which was incorrect or irrelevant.