

# 2015 NZ Scholarship Assessment Report

## Visual Arts: Photography

### Part A: Commentary

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

Photography Scholarship for 2015 presented a strong engagement with the conventions of photo media and the breadth of genre available within the discipline. Candidates developed simple propositions that took them far and which enabled complex and enduring enquiries to occur with academic rigour. There was a total sense of ownership and engagement with photographic processes in order to attain intended images, which demonstrated decisiveness and analytical thinking in process. At the high end, candidates knew they were 'making images' and did this with finesse and sophistication.

Many of the propositions offered personal connections, giving advantage to an authentic investigation. A high level of commitment to the project positioned candidates well towards maintaining a sustained engagement, where they were always searching for options and uncovered many. Parallel bodies of work were located in workbooks, including works that had been edited out. In some instances, through lateral experimentation and effective scrutiny candidates had re-directed their proposition in new directions. This evidenced an exploratory approach and a 'working *with* the process', and an open responsiveness to outcomes and potential trajectories. The best of these showed evidence of alternative methods to provide 'other' options for photographing, with actual examples of tests and/or works.

The language of photography was extensively utilised to transport the folio work through a series of clever and innovative technical shifts; lighting, focus, scale, perspective, viewpoint and for a few, the employment of different cameras. It was good to see more documentary on the floor and for it to be used to explore a number of topics from personal stories through to community-based and also social, political, cultural and ecological issues. Editing was effectively used as a tool to fine-tune the folio work with the workbook acting as the space where works that deviated from the main focus could be presented.

Workbooks showed evidence of re-visiting original sites and locations, and what candidates were photographing with clear notations of the gains made and subsequent decision-making. Candidates demonstrated the ability to take aspects of established practice without reproducing a facsimile, i.e. the panel often commented that they were not a 'slave to the model'. It was clear that they understood the contexts the work was operating within, in relation to contemporary art thinking and practice through notable visual intelligence and analysis within the folio work, but also detailed in workbooks.

The Photography 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

<b>Scholarship with Outstanding Performance</b>	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence an authentic investigation by embracing their proposition, while at the same time intelligently generating both personal and conceptual ideas</li> <li>were very explorative in their approach towards their proposition, including using a vast range of processes and techniques to test out possibilities</li> <li>produced a large volume of work, which was indicative of the level of commitment they had for their project, to the point where every image including idea development in the workbook had a purpose</li> <li>reflected on their work thus fulfilling the role of critical analysis and intentionality.</li> </ul>
<b>Scholarship</b>	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presented research that was pertinent to the fluidity between the folio and workbook</li> <li>were continually searching for new ideas, in many cases very successfully through the introduction of new subject matter</li> <li>showed strong links between ideas and processes where experimentation and testing often provided answers for ideas or research questions</li> <li>referenced in workbooks particularly relevant examples of established practice, including 'other' interests that further supported the proposition.</li> </ul>

<b>Other candidates</b>	<p>Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• presented a basic description/synopsis of what was on the folio, which sometimes consumed half of the workbook pages</li><li>• did not invest research time into extending their proposition, hence photographic outcomes were limited and created a distance between the folio and workbook, rather than a connected relationship</li><li>• demonstrated a lack of critical analysis, particularly when having to make more than one decision, in part due to often formulaic and template driven formats</li><li>• produced workbook pages with research from the '3.1 research standard', which had no relation to their work as they developed their ideas.</li></ul>
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