

Scholarship

2012 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Design

COMMENTARY

In 2012 Design Scholarship candidates presented well-directed and intelligent investigations inclusive of a wide scope of design practices, topics and interdisciplinary approaches. Facility of design language (technical conceptual interface) was at an extremely high level with effective selection and decision-making being employed in regard to design elements, such as type, colour, formal geometric, etc. Candidates understood their brief and the audience they were designing for, which was widely demonstrated through believable scenarios transported through solid processes of art direction, visual development and self-critique. Briefs had enough breadth to develop tangible concepts, and in high performing submissions the added potential to carry lateral and parallel bodies of work.

Of significance was the level of ownership taken over the 'whole project'. Communication was key; candidates achieving Scholarship never forgot what they were trying to do and constantly maintained a critical viewpoint throughout their decision-making. Projects continue to reflect knowledge of contemporary and formalists approaches; formal and conceptual operate together and compliment one another. There was a cognisance of print/media/illustrative qualities as a conceptual formal aspect within the design process, for example, selection of paper (print stock) as a considered element in the conceptualisation of design solutions. Size, placement and hierarchy of layout on folios strategically advanced the reading of work presented and ideas in action. Candidates understood that layout could further conceptualise intent.

Candidates were able to merge interdisciplinary aspects with ease, for example, when three-dimensional and installational modes were utilised, they were able to move back into the graphic with fluency, control and articulation. Many candidates attempted new approaches – inventing new areas of design reflective of contemporary modes of practice and technology; phone and iPad apps, flash mobs, webpage animation, screen touch graphics, projections on buildings, animation, anime, etc. The imagination of candidates to locate projects of personal interest that incorporated their passion alongside appropriate technical and conceptual management was exemplary.

Workbooks were excellent this year; they exuded confidence and evidenced reflective analytical thinking. Visual figurings was a strength in the workbooks. Candidates appreciated the limitations/parameters of their briefs and type (format), what was executed was owned and successive extensions engaged in risk taking that advanced solutions, for example, contrasting changes of scale – scale was not just improvised, it was used productively. This was also supported by intelligent employment of Photoshop to construct convincing credible situations.

There are still large numbers of Level 3 Design entries that would be competitive in Scholarship not making submissions, which is disappointing. Thus the Scholarship panel recommend that candidates performing at Merit or Excellence enter Scholarship in 2013.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- initiated a conceptual premise at the start, which was informed by a wide set of drawing strategies and cross-disciplinary research and reinterpreted through art direction, photo shoot, experimentation and exploration

- fluently extended precedents and conventions to foster lateral and unexpected outcomes, and to synthesise new opportunities and claim stylistic authorship
- negotiated and implemented a broad range of collateral types pertinent to concept and enquiry (PR campaign, branding, street art, packaging, environmental installation, interactivity, motion graphics) and managed this journey in a self-reliant and purposeful way
- critically managed thinking and making and reinterpreted resources/research to extend and clarify propositions/concepts/artefacts
- were flexible in their approach and able to intelligently edit and apply meaningful shifts, additive strategies and risks to challenge new forms of communication.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- authored a proposition that fostered an open ended inquiry by building a rich resource at the outset, enabling a range of authentic outcomes to enhance audience engagement
- elicited a range of research models and contexts that allowed for expansion, analysis and synthesis to drive and reinvigorate the enquiry
- identified and worked fluently through a series of phases that fostered engagement with design conventions, aesthetic decisions and ideational experimentation
- utilised a range of media, other materials and processes to explore new means of generating ideas, motif, image and object
- used the workbook to reveal strategies behind drawing processes and research pertaining to contexts; site, place, typography, subject, technology and media
- focused on an in-depth set of conventions attached to very specific formats and concepts, which allowed them to take ownership of the project (magazine, social campaign, graphic novel, children's book, interactive game, character development).

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- set up a brief that was self-limiting in its scope and purpose, therefore preventing a real engagement with resource building, drawing strategies and media exploration
- struggled to craft and employ visual language conventions appropriate to their proposition, subject and associate aesthetic sensibilities
- were unable to manage research appropriate to the discipline and often overlooked the conventions within a design context
- lacked systematic serial ways of working and therefore did not initiate enough options to experiment with or expand ideas
- presented folios that lacked discipline-related skill or focus. Folios need to operate at a high level in order to holistically connect with the workbook and be in contention for Scholarship.