

Scholarship

2012 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Painting

COMMENTARY

Scholarship Painting in 2012 presented an exemplary field of sophisticated and thorough submissions. This included a broad range of investigations utilising both refined and lateral concepts in conjunction with a rich range of subject matter and topics; formal, personal narrative, social commentary, painting processes, story, politics, global issues, etc.

Confidence in the painting medium was demonstrated through candidate's understanding of the genre, and in some instances multiple genres, non-art as well as contemporary and historical practice. This was embedded within folio work knowingly and with conviction, rather than just being documented in the workbook. Strong editing and critical decision-making specific to genre exemplified the level of understanding and investment; ideas, concepts and context, and the discourse surrounding that type, i.e. what it includes and how the stylistic attributes contribute to that dialogue.

Candidates activated the conceptual through a visual vocabulary that produced content. They generated specific photo shoots at the beginning and again during the production of work. This re-visiting of source and image created rich resource and conceptual depth. There was a heavy investment in technical and media aspects of painting practice, regardless of the genre. Complexity was appropriately activated through technical ability, media application and use of paint to transport ideas and concepts into intimate subtle projects.

It was felt that workbooks were stronger this year with a similar aesthetic to the folio and parallel organising of information. They were also coherent and well laid out. It was encouraging to see less writing and more visual exploration and thinking. Clear relationships were established between folio work, contextual information and artist reference, including links to other media and disciplines to strengthen underlying ideas. This exemplified candidates' ability to rephrase their question and move forward. Research across a range of theoretical disciplines relevant to the topic successfully established a rigour and strong set of contexts to respond to via practice. Where candidates utilised or referred to other modes of art making it made the work richer.

Although the range of topics being utilised by candidates are extensive, it is worthwhile to consider what are often deemed 'traditional' topics as a departure point within the frame of contemporary practice, e.g. conventional picture making such as still-life, landscape, portrait. Also relevant are submissions with a focus on non-figurative/abstraction propositions, investigations that start and end with abstraction.

There are still large numbers of Level 3 Painting 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:

- developed broad and deep investigations into both formal and conceptual issues that were motivating and personally significant
- demonstrated sophisticated understanding of several genres of painting and how to tease out and exploit links between them, which in some cases included forms of cultural practice outside of painting, such as fashion and advertising

- utilised a well formed visual vocabulary where stylistic, formal and intellectual ideas were synthesised into original solutions
- produced workbook extracts that reflected a deep investment in their proposition and which revealed conceptual focus, inventiveness and associated aesthetic choices
- articulately integrated social or artistic themes, theories, or media and methods of established forms of artistic practice with intelligence and ingenuity.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- integrated phases of developmental, regenerative and analytic work throughout the project in both the folio and workbook
- combined technical facility and selected painting style and genre with awareness of potentiality of relationships between media, processes and concepts to activate ideas
- effectively outlined in the workbook appropriate contextual reference and decision making in the development of work
- sustained a productive investigation that engaged in painting conventions evidencing a solid understanding of the painting medium, applied in a variety of ways
- utilised drawing to advance the work during all developmental phases, as an investigatory tool, a work in its own right and as a means to examine or reflect critically on outputs.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- adopted a disingenuous method of constructing a workbook, lacking authenticity to the development of work
- presented workbooks that contained an annotated bibliography of artistic models and their stylistic and biographical information, without appropriate analysis or relevance to their own enquiry
- lacked the technical facility and painting knowledge to truly engage in making at the level required
- selected subject matter, which did not frame a proposition or set of aims that had relevance within a painting enquiry or sufficient scope to develop a body of work
- 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.