NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Scholarship, 2006

Visual Arts

Assessment Report

Visual Arts, Scholarship, 2006

Commentary

In 2006 candidates received an overall mark out of 24. This was determined by three assessment criteria, each given a mark out of 8. The three criteria were: Analysis, Synthesis and Communication (see 2006 Visual Arts Scholarship assessment schedule). This was to provide candidates with better information regarding examination performance and to provide teachers with a closer understanding of how assessment judgements were arrived at.

Scholarship in the Visual Arts is examined through an holistic 'reading' of both the portfolio and the workbook. Visual Arts Scholarship is one submission with two components and is assessed as 'one' submission of work. Best practices are those that operate within an integrated approach, ie the candidate engages with a workbook throughout the course of study for the level 3 external standard, and this enables the portfolio and workbook to equivalently represent the whole engagement. This approach allows candidates to take chances, be experimental, interrogate the boundaries and continuously revisit the central proposition.

There has been a noticeable and inevitable increase in the use of digital tools, and candidates need to be mindful that digital technologies can now offer many possibilities. It is important, however, that digital engagement be purposeful and appropriate. Simply changing images from one colour to another is insufficient without a critical and analytical appreciation of why this is being done and the subsequent advantages that can be achieved.

The Scholarship Assessment Reports for 2004 and 2005 both emphasised the need for the central proposition to be aligned to a candidate's own interests. Comments made in these two reports are still highly relevant. This report however, makes special mention of the role of research and the manner in which workbooks can function in this regard.

The use of artist models and their unquestioning imitation is not part of the requirements for Scholarship Visual Arts. However the awareness of artists and knowledge of practice will enable candidates to provide evidence of research, analysis and understanding of strategies that critically underpin their proposal. Issues occur when selection of research is based on shallow and superficial connections. It is important that artist models are not used so referentially that they limit the ability for a candidate's own standpoint to come to fruition. If a candidate does not clearly create links that demonstrate their own interpretation in relation to the model, a problem ensues which literalises the reference. Candidates often learn more effectively by example and the intention should be to for candidates to familiarise themselves with procedures and processes and model certain critical behaviours.

Theoretical and practical research need not only be reference to what other practitioners do. The function of research is to frame the context of how a candidate operates. It provides evidence of insights observations and reflections of a candidate's understanding about how they construct their own creative endeavours.

In constructing the workbook, conventional research practices should be adhered to. Artworks referred to should include the artist's name, title and date, and candidates should ensure that written annotations are clearly legible.

Candidates need some support in how to structure and maintain a workbook, and in understanding its purpose and benefits. However, they should not be prescribed its particular components. Support given should focus on the general necessities for close observation (real and imagined), research (both practical and theoretical) and exploration of the unanticipated and critical reflection. The process should reveal how a candidate engages with this evidence, offers insight into their own practical thinking and creative endeavours. A prescribed structure suggests that there is a correct manner in which a workbook should be constructed and may prevent candidates from

compiling the information that they feel best serves and relates to their own purposes and intentions.

There are a great many ways in which a workbook may be put together. Whilst the evidence of manual dexterity, visual acuity and strategic thinking should be apparent in a scholarship submission, it is the manner in which meaningful connections are constructed between such types of evidence that provides for a systematic and in-depth study. These connections should be supportive of, and consistent with the concepts being proposed and the interests of the candidate.

Candidates should not start their Scholarship Portfolio and Workbook slowly; they need to be immediate in their tackling of the content. Finished and often complex works are presented on Board 1 of the portfolio, with continuous and in-depth analysis demonstrated through each work leading onto the next. Candidates need to enquire laterally and have strong understanding of sculptural language

PAINTING
The best performing candidates most commonly:

- demonstrated a high level of performance
- demonstrated a diversity of forms of practice in contemporary painting which often included critical responses to such things as photography, illustration, installation and sculpture
- produced submissions that elaborated their own cultural environment such that its critical influence on their work was highly evident and substantiated the choice and application of artistic precedents
- demonstrated a depth of individualised invention that resulted from candidates being able to identify and extract options from the central proposition of their work
- made fluent use of a range of media in one form of practice (eg contemporary landscape) that enabled conventional approaches to the subject to be challenged, evaluated and reformed. Other candidates demonstrated fluent use of a range of forms of practice within one media convention (eg super flat hard edge painting) to subtly evaluate and instigate new and complex redevelopments of the established and central proposition
- presented submissions that revealed evidence of the purposeful and coherent production of original work
- presented workbooks that increased the markers' depth of understanding about appropriate critical decisions related to what motivated the work and the use of appropriate artist models. Such submissions provided clear evidence of the 'running line' of the work as well as unexpected connections that were 'driven' by the central inquiry.

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

- made leaps that were too big from one phase of the project to another, thereby under-utilising possibilities important to the project. This seemed to be done in favour of introducing possibilities that, while legitimate, were disconnected from the possibilities that preceded them. Thus a central proposition was difficult to discern
- presented submissions that focussed on laying out surveys of artists and artistic periods considered to be of significance to the project, without providing evidence of the significance of this to their own work
- did not use their workbooks as a forum for revealing tests and experiments or advances and intelligent divergence
- appended a 'further developments' section in the workbook, which amounted to a superficial decision, the implications of which were not signalled or responded to in the project as a whole
- presented workbooks that only provided more examples and wordy explanations of works contained in the portfolio and thus failed to provide evidence of greater depth, range and lateral working.

PHOTOGRAPHY
The best performing candidates most commonly:

- demonstrated a breadth of research that allowed propositions to develop from a broad understanding of not only contemporary art issues across a range of disciplines, but also to draw upon conceptual ideas from research in other fields, including broader cultural contexts
- produced submissions in which research was not predetermined and artists were investigated because their ideas or methods had relevance to the candidates' investigations. This was reinforced through candidates' exploration of these ideas and propositions were able to develop in a more lateral and explorative manner
- developed propositions that were explorative and inquiring. These candidates were continually engaged in research, employing on-going reflection, developing knowledge about art making ideas, analysing and making connections, and synthesising these in practice
- provided evidence of an evaluation process arrived at through careful examination and analysis of ideas and processes. This was often supported by image analysis that included an examination of how images communicate ideas
- presented strong submissions that continued to question, did not have pre-determined outcomes and explored the proposal within its progression. Successful submissions asked meaningful questions, were research-based, with a sense of inquiry rather than being outcome-focused
- demonstrated fluency with selected processes, materials and techniques; an investigation of the selected processes demonstrated a sound understanding of the form/concept relationship and thereby explored and used processes with clarity of purpose
- investigated what photography is, how it communicates and makes meaning, through the interrogation of either analogue and/or digital processes offered a depth of inquiry. A high level of engagement with both practical and theoretical research enabled these propositions to critically engage with what photography is and does.

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

- provided poorly laid out portfolios which resulted in difficulty in reading the range of developments and options This may have been due to the lack of process drawing. However an increased move to exclude smaller passages of ideas, explorations trials and tests often resulted in a submission looking rather linear and narrow in its development
- used workbook pages to explain the portfolio board layout decisions. This added little to the depth and breath of the proposition and did not provide evidence of research, analysis or demonstrate understanding of strategies that critically underpin their proposals. Structuring the workbook with headings such as 'Board 1', 'Board 2', 'Board 3' was constraining in that it encouraged candidates to work in a purely descriptive manner
- replicated or re-presented images from the portfolio in the workbook, which offered little additional evidence. However, the inclusion of work from which the final portfolio were edited may, have demonstrated other options and evidenced the breadth of the investigation
- analysed every single film. Although analysis of work is essential to the development of the proposition, the analysis of every single film does not need to be documented in the workbook
- researched artists without identifying their particular relevance. This offered little opportunity for the exploration of a range of associations and interpretations. Artworks investigated need to be analysed and engaged with; their conceptual dimensions need to be understood
- included very descriptive passages that described in detail the steps undertaken without examining the reasons for these. These passages were often in the form of diary extracts which did not serve a clear purpose; writing needs to be analytical and developmental and ideas clearly articulated

- included statements without clarification. Statements like "scrapped magazine idea"; needed to be qualified and reasons for decisions needed to be examined
- expressed options only through a change of colour or filter without analysis or purpose
- presented a workbook that read like an essay with a conclusion - a tightly structured argument with a clear supposition, lacking in exploration, which tested, refined, evaluated and synthesised ideas, processes, procedures, materials and techniques.

DESIGN
Best performing candidates most commonly:

- confidently understood and employed contemporary design processes, which included critical and reflective practices and research methodologies. These candidates were self-assured in their application of conceptual, technical and formal strategies, which fostered inventive ideas and design solutions. A structured methodology enabled them to negotiate a series of provocations whereby they initiated creative ownership. Candidates were able to set a proposition they could identify with and work alongside. This intention was claimed from the start and ideas were developed through critical evaluation
- were pro-active in their engagement with drawing. Ideas were positioned at the forefront of the inquiry and substantiated with appropriate visual (two-dimensional and three-dimensional) communication. This understanding empowered candidates to engage in the themes being investigated and align research methods with their personal interests. These candidates recognised that the theme alone did not in itself constitute a design problem and were able to locate a particular conceptual provocation that moved beyond the initial thematic premise
- produced aesthetically informed compositions that communicated to their intended audience. They applied strategic purpose to explorative drawing in order to discover inventive and lateral possibilities. The key concepts were analysed and interrogated until appropriate design solutions originated. A genuine understanding of artist/designer models and broader insights into cross-disciplinary practice enabled candidates to develop ideas, media and format
- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding, integration and re-interpretation of their own typeface-design and application. This often included analysis and consideration of the relationship between hand-drawn text versus typesetting, narrative text and image, irony and metaphor. Candidates clearly understood how to exploit visual language through practice, evaluation, research and further practice. They developed a sophisticated visual vocabulary that became distinctly their own through a wider understanding of context, visual investigation and research.

Candidates who did NOT achieve Scholarship within DESIGN lacked some or all of the Skills and knowledge above and, in addition, they:

- failed to establish and sustain links between the workbook and portfolio. A workbook should start with a strong page one, ensuring that all eight pages are fully utilised and information is presented at an appropriate scale. Work presented on the portfolio does not need to be reproduced at the same size again in the workbook. The inclusion of work from the internal level 3 research standard in the workbook was precarious in instances where it did not wholly relate or was not re-contextualised. Careful consideration has to be given to this approach as the relationship between the portfolio and workbook has to be meaningful in its pursuit of new insights and reflections
- were unable to utilise their workbooks to clarify and extrapolate ideas presented on the portfolio. This limited the evidence of meaningful analysis, critique and research. The combined evidence of the portfolio and the workbook should reinforce the readings and meanings displayed in the portfolio. It is important that the workbook does more than superficially pertain to the setting of the brief or simply be a replication of what is apparent in the portfolio. This very linear approach denies lateral connections and new ideas. This also applies to the portfolio. If the argument on the portfolio is narrow then the workbook has to interrogate lateral and creative options and contexts. Candidates misunderstood the many different ways designers can utilise workbooks. The workbook can also employ drawing as an exploratory tool and

research into drawing methodologies are required to ensure that candidates use drawing to advance options and investigate lateral links

- presented workbooks that relied too heavily on a body of writing. Although this is valid, candidates should be encouraged to produce visual annotations. An over reliance on writing can override an effective explanation. Ideas are transported more successfully through visual explanation, particularly if narration is overly descriptive of process or just labelling what is already apparent

- relied too closely on the artist/designer models they were looking at and did not demonstrate a critical awareness of contemporary models and ideas relevant to their project. Research has to reveal wider contexts and an understanding of contemporary visual and conceptual strategies. Design can encompass spatial, object, motion, web (interactive) and print practices. The breadth of specialisations available requires a good understanding of the constraints of the design field candidates are operating within. Many artist models pasted into workbooks were not utilised to advance the proposition and candidates did not understand how artistic models shown in the workbook could be evaluated to make new links, eg those strong in picture-making and the development of motif need also apply the same sophistication to typography
- were unable to develop a brief or a provocation that deepened their engagement with research, analyses, evaluation, procedures, materials and the synthesis of ideas. The design brief has to provide a platform that establishes a central concept. The brief or provocation has to open up an extension. In some cases submissions only ever stayed with the initial intention and were subsequently limited by adopting different promotional formats. Rather than being preoccupied with one-idea or motif, candidates needed to locate new contexts by revisiting previous strategies or re pitching new 'punch lines'
- failed to apply technical mastery over visual language and fluency of materials and techniques. There are a range of design specialisations on offer to design candidates, all of which require an integral understanding of process and context. Candidates cannot mimic design processes and solutions that they don't actually engage with. Candidates must direct a brief/inquiry that prompts their practice to explore and understand materiality, technologies, formal qualities, content and context.

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

- demonstrated a total engagement with the criteria. This was made visible by the way in which the workbooks submitted not only reinforced the strength of the portfolios but also indicated an individual ownership of the conceptual and visual ideas dealt with. In this instance it was obvious that the workbooks were being used as tools by which the candidate could inform the decisions made on the portfolio
- undertook far-ranging research whereby the references that they included went further than examples of printmaking artists. These candidates looked across the various disciplines and found a variety of artists who appropriately informed the concerns they were dealing with. They were able to synthesis these visual/conceptual issues into their own work without falling into mimicry
- researched and referenced wider conceptual ideas and influences. These candidates were able to locate ideas from a wide source and contextualize them into the work they produced. Such research were able to fuel, excite and sustain candidates' learning
- provided themselves with a range of options to work with. This occurred "during" the process and clearly identified candidates who constantly asked themselves questions of "why" when determining whether to use particular ideas or images. Written information was used to support and clarify the prints they were making. The workbooks then honestly documented their thinking as they developed. This type of engagement was of an informative nature rather than merely descriptive. In essence the workbooks were jam-packed with visual and written information that offered a plethora of densely considered options

- often broke the boundaries of the accepted notions of printmaking in a controlled and knowing way. Skills to do with surface, tone, line, form, composition etc were always achieved at a high level in regard to whatever the particular genre undertaken. Skills were obviously rewarded but always in relation to the informed decisions and development of ideas that occurred. The options that the successful candidates took also demonstrated a wider grasp of actual printmaking processes. Rather than show accomplishment in one or two print mediums they were able to extend their visual and conceptual argument across a range of the print possibilities. These processes were always closely aligned with previous learning and helped to deepen the level of engagement and communicate intentions/concerns clearly
- used drawing as a device to investigate a number of ideas. Drawing was seen not merely as descriptive or skill based but used as a means by which they could find solutions to problems/questions they encountered as work developed. These drawings operated in unison both on the portfolios and in the workbooks
- developed clear ideas and resolved work through sound and wide ranging research that appropriately informed the range of print options they undertook.

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

- recorded and produced work that was of a predominately descriptive nature. There appeared to be a lack of analysis as to why they selected the particular ideas and artist models presented. Too much emphasis was placed on describing a timeline of the artist models rather than identifying a clear connection to their own work. Thus, artists were explored in isolation without synthesis. This limited the options whereby they could extend their work. It became apparent that the use of one or two models was too limiting
- were unable to select appropriate material for inclusion in their workbooks. Too much space was taken up with mind-maps or filling pages with post-production analysis. Analysis needed to occur during the process to inform decisions as they actually happened. Essentially, these candidates needed to supply more images (model and contextual references, own working drawings etc) combined with more analytical information to reinforce the concepts being used. There were too many "double-ups" of photos already existing on portfolios. Greater success may have occurred if candidates had determined a proposal at the beginning and continued to respond laterally to such a proposal. It is essential to establish a workbook practice early in order to sustain candidates' learning
- were unable to develop their work from a level of basic reference to models and a pedestrian repetitiveness. Candidates who produced strong print portfolios were able to navigate a learning process through their three boards, which not only indicated fluency with the mediums but also a sequential development throughout. The portfolios of candidates who did not achieve Scholarship demonstrated little understanding of a variety of drawing processes applicable to their work. Drawing was seen more as a starting point rather than the means by which the work could be re-invented and invigorated as the investigation unfolded
- failed to take ownership of the work/ideas undertaken and slipped into easily established patterns that did not allow for alternative learning to accelerate development.

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

- demonstrated a consistent, systematic, analytical and reflective approach that clearly operated within contemporary sculptural practice, and which demonstrated understanding of sculptural conventions
- identified a clear intent at the beginning of the sculptural investigation, which was key towards the further exploration, invention and re-invention of content. Challenging and engaging propositions encouraged expansion of ideas and supported a range of opportunities for candidates to identify their own pathways, take ownership and build their own directions

- engaged in a logical and solid exploration of identified contexts and then further elaborated this into associative considerations, such as alternative formats, solutions and media/material-based extensions
- represented sculptural investigations through a parallel body of work. A parallel body fills the spaces between decisions made and offers alternative methods and possibilities considered in the development of the broader body of work. The breadth of contexts explored is key in Sculpture as this enables a concept to be redefined and interpreted as the candidate's own solution, ie they move through and past the conventions employed by their artist models and the contexts they are referring. These candidates applied the artist models on various levels in order to examine the broadest scope of their topic
- explored, primarily through practical investigation and covered a range of visual types. In their integration of artist models these candidates were able to define their own strategies and still retain an integrity and understanding of their reference(s). Drawing was used to propose ideas rather than just describe what could already be seen in three-dimensional works. What was presented was a sophisticated body of 'visual thinking'
- made a large body of work. They explored through the act of making, utilising drawing as a tool, engaging in sculptural proposition and considering further options through visual (three-dimensional) experiments and explorations. The use of these types of processes enabled thoroughness, exploratory practice and demonstrated lateral thinking.

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

- presented portfolios that did not end with a strong proposition - rather a less resolved and inaccurate investigation of central concepts. It is usually inappropriate to end with a drawn proposition as this can undermine the plausibility of the concept
- did not make their idea; instead this was often represented through marquette, models or drawing alone. Discussion should always remain within a sculptural conversation, extending understanding through the unpacking of sculptural questions. This can be best achieved through actual production of works, resolving problems through accurate installation of pieces and pushing propositions through placement in appropriate sites/ contexts
- did not use the dialogue in the workbook to extend the breadth of what was already happening on the portfolio. If the workbook can document the 'spaces between'; as in other options considered through description and documentation of development in a range of visual engagements, it is likely to profile an inventiveness and breadth of exploration
- presented workbooks that had double ups of images with those on the portfolio. Replication verifies lack of extension, development and diversity of approach
- provided little variety with the scale of photographs. Varied sizes of photographs should be provided to show importance of ideas/works. Sculpturally, this is useful towards managing a range of resolutions and also supports lateral solutions alongside what is considered successful outcomes. A readable board exemplifies knowledge and understanding, and in outstanding cases confirms criticality on the part of the candidate. Details of scale, site measurement, etc. are helpful for indication of real dimensions, particularly in situations where this is not always clear in the documentation.