

Scholarship

2011 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Photography

COMMENTARY

Candidates are engaged in complex, interesting, and diverse propositions and have a thorough understanding of their own work and the nature of art-making at this level. Successful candidates understood how to use their subject matter to explore, communicate, and express ideas and concepts. These ranged from global, political issues to personal, introspective studies. The common element in these undertakings was the candidates' understanding of the difference between a specific subject matter and conceptual issues involving the subject matter i.e. they knew they had to have an idea about their subject matter to explore and develop conceptually. This distinction allowed for inventive, holistic, and open-ended approaches to photographic picture-making on the folios and in the workbooks.

Candidates are working in a wide range of photographic processes, including traditional analogue, antiquarian processes, digital colour, and black and white, and manipulations using a range of technologies etc. Candidates demonstrated total understanding of choices being made and the use of specific processes to communicate the ideas that the candidate has undertaken. Candidates demonstrated effective management of the links between subject and media, material, processes to concept. This was particularly evidenced on folios in which transitional developments were extended by innovative and well-considered shifts in format, approach, and aesthetics.

Workbook pages were complex, dense with ideas, and articulate. In addition, they were lucid, readable, and sensible in the choice of research models and approaches. There is no single way to present the workbook; however the genuineness of candidate's exploration is a key factor in success. Many submissions have a 'slick' or tidy look, but offer an insubstantial view into the candidate's thinking and work. Some candidates mistakenly think that the more artist models they refer to, the better. Also, simply 'liking' the work of an artist does not make the reference meaningful or useful in the development of the candidate's own work. Pertinent, focused use of established practice is often implicit in work, and successful Scholarship candidates evidenced this understanding well through rigorous and effectual application.

Finally, the Scholarship panel would like to encourage students who are performing at Merit or Excellence at L3 to enter Scholarship. Even with a somewhat limited workbook, it is still possible to be competitive within the field, given that it is a holistic view of the two sites of evidence (folio and workbook) that determine the award of Scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- established propositions that allowed their work to develop along unpredictable, lateral pathways with confidence and authority
- used photographic processes that were faultless in the relationship to and execution of their ideas
- utilised a wide range of research and sources that allowed them to inform, advance, and enrich their work, and which extended the contextual framework
- had complete ownership of their work – image making, research and writing – and were completely engaged with their own practice from the first works on the folio to the end of board 3 i.e. they hit the ground running and maintained active engagement throughout

- understood the holistic nature of the workbook and folio as two parts contributing equally to the development of their ideas and production of work. Workbooks often documented parallel bodies of work or other opportunities that had been explored alongside the work selected for the folio.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- understood that subject matter carries the development of ideas, and that the articulation of ideas into concepts (through context) is the most important part of their art-making process
- showed an integrated and seamless understanding of the use of photographic processes appropriate to their intentions and proposition
- made clear connections between formal elements – picture making, composition, lighting etc and conceptual issues in their work
- employed purposeful strategies in the layout on the folio and in the workbook – ordering, sequencing, and editing to evolve the proposition that were appropriate to conceptual requirements
- presented a considered selection of images in the workbook that supported their folio, often including alternative images or ideas to provide options for development.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- did not identify a sustainable proposition that was appropriate to this level of study
- described the process by which they had made their work, often outlining technical details with limited or no reference to ideas and concepts
- described the content of their Level 3 panel in their workbook, usually in chronological order with no sense of purpose
- used a scattered approach to researching established practice, attempting to justify very tenuous connections between artists and their own work
- had one idea rather than a range of ideas, which limited the potential for a full and rich engagement
- referred to 'Google' as a form of established practice and presented artists' works that they 'liked' as a form of research, whom were often irrelevant to the investigation
- presented text-heavy workbooks that focused on descriptions of artists and artistic periods, with little or no evidence of the relationship to their own work. Workbooks should be visual documents with appropriate notation and figurings, not an essay in their own right
- submitted folios that lacked any real direction or subject-related skill. Folios need to evidence at a high level in order to holistically connect with the workbook and be in contention for this award.