

Scholarship

2009 Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Sculpture

COMMENTARY

Overall the Scholarship Sculpture candidates were highly effective, with more candidates being awarded Scholarship in 2009. It was pleasing to see such a diversity of high-performing candidates entering for Scholarship.

Most candidates were well grounded in the conventions of the discipline and used these to their own ends, with expertise. Understanding of technical conventions, material, media, process was well considered and understood. The range of sculptural practices being explored was wide, from formal studies, object, time-based, installation to concept-led. Many candidates showed a lateral approach initiating an extensive investigation, multi-layered with concepts, material concerns and formal enquiry. There was diversity in the way candidates chose to deal with scale; many established strategies looking for obvious scale shifts to further alter the reading of the work; e.g. deliberate use of miniature elements alongside mid-scale elements and real-scale spaces/ sites. This was both imaginative and original. Many candidates were also inventive in the way they addressed topics using materials and objects in unexpected ways and with humour.

There was a wider range of artistic references synthesised into candidates' own work. Workbooks and portfolios demonstrated a broad understanding of the contexts that could be relevant or integrated into the topic, with many candidates drawing on references from literature, film, or sociological and political issues, enriching topics and propositions beyond their initial intention. Workbooks profiled playful experimental works, tests, proposals and additional works related to those on the portfolio. The range of represented processes in the workbook resulted in candidates having choice, which also helped with clarification and editing. Most used drawing in line with the aesthetic and logic of the work; i.e. it existed in its own right as a resolved idea with propositions made plausible due to other sculptural work in evidence.

Documentation generally provided good quality images being well presented on the portfolio. Consideration of framing (photographic composition) needs to be further observed. Many sculptural works/ installations are still being represented in detail rather than the whole artwork. 3D work should be photographed as it exists for its three-dimensional qualities. It is also key that particularities of context are clear, even if this requires labels on the portfolio with details such as location, site, time, sequence, materials, scale, etc. Documentation should not be confused with creating a pictorial image. Both can be relevant, but do operate differently.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- created propositions that offered rich opportunity for exploration of sculptural conventions, research and lateral investigation (both conceptual and visual)
- had an implicit understanding of scale, shifts between scale and how to manipulate this to their advantage
- used a wide range of approaches to drawing that allowed for a sensitive exploration of the ideas and processes investigated within the sculptural process
- operated with a complete sense of ownership and purpose throughout the enquiry.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- employed a broad range of research to substantiate sculptural propositions, for example, literary, philosophical, political, sociological, and even mathematical
- set up well-established links between formal and conceptual issues in the work
- used techniques and processes in keeping with the aesthetic logic of the sculptural proposition
- used appropriate labels in indicating scale, site, materials and duration when necessary.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- did not show understanding of what was appropriate and realistic in established practice at this level of study
- did not identify a proposition with sufficient intelligent starting points
- described their portfolio in essay form
- described the manufacture of work through photo documentation and written commentary
- used a disparate range of established practice and so did not make coherent links in a body of work
- repeated sculptural works, in both drawing in the workbooks and on the portfolio, rather than extending ideas through new works or drawing
- did not use materials, media and processes in an appropriate manner, in relation to their ideas
- did not advance the holistic nature of the portfolio and workbook relationship.

Recommendations for 2010, arising from Scholarship 2009 Assessment Process:
Visual Arts: Sculpture

Candidates who are performing at Merit or Excellence throughout the year should be encouraged to enter for the Scholarship examination. Even with a somewhat limited workbook it is still possible to be competitive within the field given that it is a holistic picture with two sites of evidence (portfolio and workbook) that is in consideration for Scholarship.