

# 2015 NZ Scholarship Assessment Report

## Art History

### Part A: Commentary

Comment on the overall response of candidates to the 2015 examination.

Section A of the 2015 Scholarship Art History paper focused on analysis of the elements of the subject while Section B offered a broader approach to the discipline. This is in line with previous Art History Scholarship exam papers.

In Section A, Question 3 was the most popular. In Section B, Question 8 was favoured.

Few candidates attempted Question 1. Those who recognised the potential in the question answered it competently and presented some excellent analysis of composition in a range of art works. Some candidates worked up answers citing examples that refuted the statement.

Candidates were enterprising in response to Question 2. Candidates addressed a variety of relationships – artist/patron, art work/viewer, elements such as colour and line, art and site, media and process. Responses to this statement demonstrated a range of knowledge and thought.

Question 3 was the most popular in this paper. However this question attracted some survey type answers and proved once again that rote learnt answers do not have a place at Scholarship level. On the other hand, there were some very strong answers to this question, particularly from candidates who engaged with the phrase, 'Discuss the impact of such influences . . .', and employed a wide range of examples to support their argument.

Candidates who addressed Question 4 found it straightforward, and it was generally well answered. Some candidates took the opportunity to develop comparisons and assess the role and significance of light in relation to elements such as site, narrative, colour, composition and line.

Question 5 was popular with candidates, who answered it assertively. Candidates felt comfortable with the question and could answer it with confidence and enthusiasm.

Responses to Question 6 tended to be considered and addressed a range of issues. Almost all candidates challenged the categorical nature of the statement. Some developed answers that directly refuted the statement and most essays addressed a range of content and a variety of contexts.

Question 7 was a popular question with candidates but it proved to be a challenge to some who answered it. Others presented logical arguments and strong visual analysis in support of their ideas.

Question 8 was the most popular question in Section B. However, some candidates found it difficult to hold a clear line of argument in answer to this question and their answers tended to become somewhat garbled. This suggests that candidates found the question more difficult than it first appeared.

### Part B: Report on performance standard

#### Scholarship with Outstanding Performance

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- had a clear understanding of the question and engaged with all aspects of it
- offered a critical response to the question that was supported by detailed evidence and reference to specific examples
- demonstrated highly developed skills of visual analysis
- presented a focused and sustained argument that was characterized by clarity of thought
- sustained a high quality over two questions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wrote with fluency and confidence</li> <li>were original in their approach and wrote with 'their own voice'.</li> </ul>
<b>Scholarship</b>	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identified key words in a question and demonstrated understanding of the question</li> <li>established a clear point of view or argument</li> <li>presented a developed visual analysis of specific art works and critical response to contexts and ideas</li> <li>demonstrated depth as well as breadth of knowledge in their answers</li> <li>wrote on a range of appropriate artists/art works rather than simply on context</li> <li>selected art works that were well suited to the key point of a question</li> <li>remained focused in their argument</li> <li>chose questions thoughtfully.</li> </ul>
<b>Other candidates</b>	<p>Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrated little evidence of skills of visual analysis</li> <li>wrote answers that lacked sufficient detail to show depth of understanding</li> <li>wrote generalised essays – often survey-type responses</li> <li>addressed context but not specific works of art</li> <li>wrote statements that were not supported by evidence</li> <li>demonstrated minimal knowledge and understanding</li> <li>presented a weak engagement with the topic</li> <li>repeated information across both questions</li> <li>provided a descriptive response</li> <li>left an answer unfinished</li> <li>answered only one question.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard specific comments</b>	<p>Candidates had clear preferences regarding questions in each section of the paper – Question 3 in Section A, and Question 8 in Section B.</p> <p>This did not however mean that these were necessarily the best options for the candidates.</p> <p>Candidates should be encouraged to read all the questions closely and to think carefully about each one before making their choices.</p> <p>Similar diligence is needed in the selection of art works as examples to support an argument. Trying to squeeze a pre-prepared essay into a vaguely related question does not lead to success in a Scholarship examination.</p> <p>The importance of visual analysis as a distinguishing feature of studying and writing on the history of art needs to be reiterated. Candidates need to analyse art works rather than describe them. This is core practice and the point cannot be over emphasised.</p>