

## GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2014 Studio Arts examination provided students with a range of questions requiring shorter responses as well as more extended and developed pieces of writing. Most questions were well answered and there were fewer unattempted questions than in previous years. High-scoring students were very knowledgeable and were able to cross-reference their knowledge with connections to other artists and artworks. They were able to discuss an artwork in a specific cultural and artistic context. It was also very clear that high-achieving students had carefully read previous examination reports and had absorbed the information and advice contained in those reports. These students, for example, clearly described the specific aesthetic qualities they observed in selected artworks and could explain how those aesthetic qualities were the result of the artist's manipulation of particular art elements.

Students must understand that every word in every question is carefully chosen and there are no superfluous or redundant words. When answering a question, each word must be carefully considered and addressed. It is very clear that the main reason a student is not awarded full marks is that they did not respond to all parts of the question.

It is worth noting that the examination questions use the word 'artworks' so as to allow students to choose a work of art from the full range of art forms. However, when discussing an artwork it is far better to refer to it as a painting, sculpture or etching, as the case may be.

High-scoring students:

- responded to each part of the question
- addressed the intention of the question
- used the key words of the question in their responses
- referred to works of art (as appropriate)
- wrote clearly, legibly and to the point
- used appropriate art language and terminology
- answered all questions.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

## Section A

### Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	13	20	23	16	14	10	3.2

This question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and discuss the artist's use of materials and techniques. The relevant art form and materials are printed under each image and the question specifically asks students to discuss the artist's **use** of these materials. The word 'use' directly relates to the word 'techniques', which describes what the artist does with these materials. However, most students did not understand this distinction and wrote extensively on artistic processes and not on the artist's techniques. The *VCE Studio Arts Study Design* uses the words 'materials', 'techniques', 'processes' and 'working methods', and students must understand the different meanings of each word. This distinction of meaning was clearly explained in the 2013 examination report, which states, 'The word "processes" relates to the art form, while the word "techniques" relates to the artist'. Many students explained an artistic process in considerable detail but did not discuss the artist's use of techniques in the artwork.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response to Question 1.

**Artwork number 8**

*Because of the thinness and uniformity of the lines in this drawing Lisa Roet probably used charcoal pencils rather than natural willow or compressed charcoal sticks. She would have had to sharpen the pencils quite regularly to maintain the crisp quality of the lines. She would have placed the silk paper on a hard surface such as a table or a large drawing board in order to achieve*

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*this sharpness of line. The quickness of gesture in the marks suggests that she attached the paper to a drawing board and did the drawing at an easel.*

## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	9	19	23	17	16	13	3.4

This question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and describe conservation considerations and methods involved in storing the artwork. The key word in this question was 'storing'. This is a question about conserving artworks in storage. Many students seemed not to appreciate this fact and wrote at length on such things as lux levels and crowd control. Artwork number 2 was a popular choice for this question but many students did not understand that an oil painting of that size would not be stored in a solander box.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response to Question 2.

### *Artwork number 8*

*As a charcoal work, when in storage, Mylar paper, which carries a slight static charge, should not be used as it may draw powder particles from the work. Instead an acid-free, stiff card paper should be used. Sensible gallery design, atmospheric control, rotating an artwork between display and storage and being especially considerate to the charcoal material will preserve this work.*

## Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	21	29	18	14	8	3.2

This question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and to discuss the role of a curator in preparing it for exhibition in a public gallery. This is a question about the relationship between the artwork, a curator and a public gallery. Saying nothing at all about the artwork would not have answered the question and yet this is what many students did. Many students responded to only the first six words of the question. If the question had said, 'discuss the role of a curator', these students would have done well, but the question asked for more than that. High-scoring responses discussed the nexus between the artwork, the curator and the gallery. Well-researched responses mentioned that in some public galleries there are curators who specialise in different art forms, such as photography, textiles and fashion, and in different cultures, such as Indigenous or European art. Good responses referred to writing catalogue entries, seeking permission to reproduce the artwork in various forms (copyright), liaising with the artist to ensure the display is compliant with the artist's proposal, and working collaboratively with the exhibition designer, technicians, director, publicity manager and education officers to agree on a vision for the exhibition.

Students who had learnt about the role of a public gallery sometimes confused this information with the more focused but wide-ranging role of a curator working in a public gallery and did not distinguish between the two. This had the effect of weakening the response. Low-scoring responses mentioned only conservation considerations and repeated information already provided in Question 2.

The following is part of a high-scoring response to Question 3.

### *Artwork number 2*

*The oil on canvas painting would be brought into the gallery on a specially designed trolley to protect it from accidental dropping. It would be carefully inspected by the curator for any signs of damage and checked against a condition report. The curator would supervise technicians who, wearing cotton gloves, would carefully take the painting from the trolley and place it on foam rubber blocks and lean it against a wall. It would be left for at least 24 hours to acclimatise to its new environment. When it was time to hang the painting the curator would determine which paintings would hang on either side of it and determine the measurement between the paintings. The curator would check that the wire and the D rings on the back of the painting are secure and that the hanging system is suitable for the weight of the painting.*

## Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	4	9	17	22	17	14	10	6	3.5

This question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and discuss how the artist used the elements of art to develop particular aesthetic qualities in the artwork. Note the use of the word 'particular' in this question, directing students to identify specific aesthetic qualities and to avoid writing vague generalities. It was designed to help students identify particular aesthetic qualities in the artwork; qualities generated by the use of art elements such as colour, shape or form. Most students had no difficulty discussing how the artist used art elements but few were able to discuss the

aesthetic qualities of the artwork. Even fewer students could explain how the viewer's perception of a particular aesthetic quality resulted from the artist's use of art elements.

The following is part of a high-scoring response to Question 4.

**Artwork number 7**

*Tania Joyce's In the Beginning uses vibrant hues of fuchsia and magenta, juxtaposed against a complementary and equally vibrant green grass, as well as rounded soft background blue in order to create an aesthetic quality of innocence and fantasy for her audience. In particular the bright pink flowery figures conveys this aesthetic of fantasy through its vibrant colour palette. Contrasting against the highly saturated green, colour has been used to create a heightened sense of reality associated with the Creationist allusions of the work's title. In the cloud shapes, undefined, pale and thus child-like in their construction, their white bodies against a more subdued blue sky are indicative of the use of soft, rounded shape to contribute to the aesthetic quality of innocence.*

## Section B

### Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	8	17	26	19	16	10	3.4

This question asked students to compare the roles of two art exhibition spaces from a list of five exhibition spaces. To fully answer this question, it was imperative that students compare two exhibition spaces. Writing two unrelated statements about different exhibition spaces would not have answered the question. The word 'compare' means 'to bring together for the purpose of noting points of likeness and difference' and two separate pieces of writing will not do this. Some students nominated the National Gallery of Victoria as a community environment and this was accepted.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response to Question 5.

*Privately owned the main role of commercial galleries is to make money as they rely on commissions to continue. They also promote emerging contemporary artists such as the Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning Art Gallery, which provides an opportunity for aspiring regional artists to present and sell their artwork. Contrastingly, artist-run-spaces are run purely by an artist or group of collaborating artists in order to present their art to the public. It is at their own discretion whether they choose to sell their work or not.*

### Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	6	10	12	14	14	10	9	9	5	4	4.7

This was a question about the legality and ethics of two Australian artists using the work of other artists for their own purposes. Most students answered this question reasonably well although many did not relate what they had written to the artwork by Sharp and Lewis. Most students had a good understanding of the legal and ethical considerations involved in the practice of artistic appropriation.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 6.

*Appropriation is the use of borrowed elements in the creation of a new work. The 1968 Copyright Act protects original artists from having their work used plagiarised or exploited without their permission and copyright is in place for seventy years after the artists' death. Whilst this perhaps means that Sharp and Lewis could recontextualise Van Gogh's piece without breaching copyright they would have needed to seek permission for Warhol and consulted the owners of Van Gogh's copyright. Furthermore, the Right of Attribution protects an artist's right to be attributed as the original creator of the ideas and images. Whilst this appropriation clearly uses direct elements from iconic artworks it is required that Sharp and Lewis acknowledge their original sources. The Right of Integrity also protects original artists from having their reputation defamed in an appropriation. This appropriated piece could possibly be seen as derogatory due to the comical juxtaposition of the two motifs. However there are more layers of complexity as 'Fair Dealing' exceptions lie within the 1968 Copyright Act. Therefore, if Sharp and Lewis' piece is intended to be an homage or parody of the original artworks (both of which seem valid options) then copyright has not been contravened.*

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## Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	6	6	11	12	17	15	14	10	9	4.3

This question asked students to discuss ways in which an artist explored ideas and communicated meanings in one artwork. Responses to this question were, on the whole, well prepared and competently written.

## Section C

### Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	6	3	5	6	9	15	12	10	9	7	8	3	4	6

This question tended to be answered as if it said, 'discuss differences in two exhibition spaces you have visited this year'. However, the question was, 'discuss different approaches to the preparation and presentation of artworks in two different exhibition spaces you have visited this year'. This is a totally different focus and students who did not address the preparation and presentation of artworks did not score well. High-level responses gave background information about the exhibition that related to the preparation and presentation of specific artworks. These responses also discussed ways in which artworks were prepared and presented according to themes and curatorial concepts.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 8.

**Exhibition space 1**      **Oliver Family Room**  
**Exhibition space 2**      **The Colonial Gallery**

*The Oliver Family Room is the smallest room (4×3) in the Art Gallery of Ballarat and was originally intended to provide relaxation and reprieve for those viewing the galleries extensive collection. However, with an ever-expanding collection of works its justification as a resting room was rendered obsolete. Adorned with a leather couch and blue walls the room now holds 10 impressionist paintings. The blue walls radiate the strong colours of the impressionist works especially John Peter Russell's 'Red Sails at Belle Isle' in which the reds of the landscape are drawn out and accentuated by the modest blue walls. Size 20 Helvetica font is printed on the walls denoting the date and artist as well as a brief explanation of the work.*

*The Colonial Gallery, on the contrary, is a large (20×15) exhibition space also located at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. Works are classical and hung salon style – a return to the original hang. The director wanted the works to be hung as close to the original hang of over 100 years ago. Moreover, period sculptures and furniture are used to enhance the period mood and create a classical setting relevant to the period in which the works were produced. Rich burgundy red walls showcase the rich green vegetation and blue skies in the artworks. Spot lighting is evident most markedly on a plaster marquette of 'Burke and Wills', the centrepiece of the room.*

### Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	6	4	6	6	7	8	10	9	12	9	7	4	5	2	3	6.6

This question asked students to analyse how two artworks by different artists reflected particular influences and cultural contexts. Again, the word 'particular' was inserted into this question for the same reason it was in Question 4 – to direct the student response to specific, identifiable influences. However, far too often this tended to be Frida Kahlo's unfaithful husband rather than Mexican folk art or French surrealism. High-quality responses identified the artist, artwork and date, and integrated facts about the artists' personal backgrounds with specific aspects of the chosen artworks.

The following is part of a high-scoring response to Question 9.

**Artist 1**      **William Delafield Cook**  
**Title of artwork**      **A Sprinkler, acrylic on canvas, 1969**

*William Delafield Cook's 'A Sprinkler' illustrates explicit influence of David Hockney's 1967 series title 'A Lawn Sprinkler' from where the subject matter has thus been derived. This influence, however, is limited only to this, where Delafield Cook explores hyperrealism through rendition from a photograph in his characteristic deadpan style as opposed to Hockney's cartoonish one. The cultural context of Delafield Cook's 'A Sprinkler' though is shared with Hockney. The sprinkler is a motif of 60's and 70's Australian summer culture, a time unrestrained by water restrictions. The generation of my parents often tell stories of running and jumping through the sprinkler and having it running overnight and the lush green lawn being a memory of a brighter more youthful Australia. The selection of the sprinkler as Delafield Cook's subject matter thus reflects his influences and the cultural content of his work.*