

GENERAL COMMENTS

The VCE Art examination is based on content from the *VCE Art Study Design 2010–2016*. This report should be read in conjunction with the study design, the 2014 VCE Art examination and the examination assessment criteria.

The following criteria are used in context to assess the Art examination paper:

- understanding and appropriate use of art language and vocabulary
- knowledge of artists and interpretation of artworks made before and after 1970
- knowledge of a range of relevant resources used to support the interpretation of artworks
- comparing and contrasting the meanings and messages of artworks produced before 1970 with artworks produced since 1970
- understanding and applying all analytical frameworks to the analysis of artworks
- analysis of artworks to comment on their messages and meanings
- ability to develop a personal point of view on ideas and issues about art
- ability to discuss and debate issues with the use of supporting evidence; reference to the different points of view and opinions expressed in commentaries on art and relevant aspects of the analytical frameworks.

The examination assessment criteria can be found in the VCE Art examination specifications on the VCAA website. It is highly recommended that students and teachers read the sample examination and previous examinations carefully, paying particular attention to examination advice and specifications.

Students need to have a comprehensive understanding of all analytical frameworks in order to respond well to the VCE Art examination. Students should practise applying the analytical frameworks to a range of unseen and studied historical and contemporary artworks throughout the year. To do this, students must engage with the study design by reading it carefully. The area of study description, key knowledge and key skills help to unpack each of the outcomes students complete during Units 3 and 4.

It was essential that students be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the artists and artworks studied during the year without relying on prepared essays to answer any of the questions. Students must be ready to demonstrate their knowledge of every artist and artwork studied, drawing upon the research they have completed during the year. Many responses used a range of artists and artworks, demonstrating that students were well prepared for the examination.

Reading time in any examination is very important. Students need to actively engage with the examination during this time by reading and then re-reading the paper carefully, including the insert, noting relevant instructions. Some students did not read every question carefully and missed important instructions. For example, in Question 4 some students provided a very good discussion of statement, explaining how the physical placement of the artworks affected the viewer's experience, but did not make comparisons between the two artworks. Students might like to highlight key terms or instructions before they commence answering each question; this can be a good reminder of the important aspects of the question.

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

This section required students to apply key knowledge and skills to answer questions on unseen stimulus material.

It should be noted that not all art forms are represented in these types of theoretical questions, so it is advisable that students prepare themselves by accessing artworks that are produced utilising a range of different art forms. This section assessed the theoretical understanding of key knowledge and skills in Units 3 and 4. These questions did not require responses with great breadth and depth of analysis, but rather a focused application of the student's

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understanding of key concepts such as the elements and principles of art, style or subject matter and how these convey meanings and messages.

Questions 1 and 2

In Questions 1 and 2 students were asked to discuss how colour and line were used as formal elements in the artworks. Overall, students responded confidently and demonstrated a good capacity to discuss how these formal elements were used in the artworks. Some students tended to merely describe the formal elements rather than discuss how the artist had used them. It was clear in high-scoring responses to both questions that most students had a well-developed understanding of the formal elements and could apply these to unseen artworks. Well-chosen adjectives were useful to link the art elements with the design principles to advance the student's response.

Students discussed the artist's use of the formal element of colour, often scoring well by using terminology such as 'complementary', 'contrast', 'vibrant', 'saturated', 'hues', 'palette' and 'harmonious' in reference to the composition. In response to discussing the formal element of line, students identified the 'illusion of depth', and the use of 'meandering', 'implied', 'repetitious' or 'chaotic' line to convey a sense of movement.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	17	50	31	2.1

Artwork presented

Joan Miró, *Bather (Banyista)*, oil on wood, 37.5 × 46 cm, 1932

Low-scoring responses tended to superficially address the artist's use of the formal element. Students were awarded marks for using language relating to colour, yet needed to apply this with specific references to the artwork. It is not necessary for students to restate the artist's name and title of the artwork in their answer. This uses up valuable time and writing space. Students should also be wary of writing too much. The answer space provided should be used as a guide to the required length of the response.

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

Colour is used to create contrast between three predominant colour palettes. The blue and orange are complementary colours and contrast against each other, establishing a foreground from the middle ground. The large, vibrant slab of yellows and blue suggest background. The neutral white and black create balance between the highly saturated orange to further create balance between the inferred image and solid background it predominates from in order to create confusion and intrigue within viewers, suggesting they are interconnected somehow.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	19	47	31	2.1

Artwork presented

Andreas Gursky, *Bahrain I*, chromogenic colour print, 302.2 × 219.6 cm, 2005

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

The swirling lines of the road appear organic in nature this creates movement, as the eye is led along the chaotic road, dominating the majority of the work. However, to provide a balance and establish depth, a horizontal mechanical line is seen to the top of the composition, establishing balance and providing a perspective as if to create a focal point between the chaotic road and the soft planes that appear in the distance.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	3	2	8	17	22	15	17	11	6	4.5

Artworks presented

Joseph Wright, *John Coats Browne, 1st, as a Young Man*, oil on canvas, 156.8 × 109.8 cm, 1785

Jan Nelson, *Walking in Tall Grass, Lucy*, oil on linen, 77.7 × 57.2 cm, 2010

In this question students were asked to compare the meanings and messages of the artworks. 'When the Analytical Frameworks are applied collectively to interpret and analyse an artwork, students learn to appreciate how an artwork may contain a number of different aspects and layers of meaning' (*VCE Art Study Design*, page 12). Students should

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consider the following: What are the stylistic qualities of the artwork and how do they contribute to meaning? What physical aspects or presentation of the artwork contains symbolic meaning and use of a metaphor? This may include the use of formal art elements, the compositional arrangement of figures or objects, the medium or technique used by the artist, or the style in which the work is created.

High-scoring responses sustained an insightful comparison throughout their answer and used many comparative words such as ‘compared to’, ‘whereas’, ‘in contrast to’, ‘comparatively’, ‘conversely’, ‘however’ and ‘contrary to’. Sound responses explained meanings and messages by citing symbolism and technique; for example, ‘*the confident stance suggests regal authority along with the rich fabrics worn by the young man*’. Students needed to ensure that they compared the two artworks and avoided simply listing their interpretation of the artworks by writing about one artwork and then the other separately. Many students simply gave a visual analysis of both artworks without presenting an understanding of potential meanings and messages.

The following are excerpts from high-scoring responses.

Example 1

Both artworks depict children on their own, but convey opposing responses about their role in society. Wright’s artwork depicts a young boy in formal attire, typical of the 18th century, which most likely function as a documentation of a wealthy heir. The boy is youthful and healthy, in fine clothes and in a relaxed pose, which reflects the traditional portraiture of the time. A large red cloth is draped in the background, to mean great wealth and prosperity and as such this work is likely to be at the will of his family and parents rather than reflecting much about the boy’s personality. Nelson’s work on the other hand shows a young girl in flamboyant clothing with her eyes closed to suggest she is defiant to the excited environment around her. The earmuffs accompany her defiance, to suggest that both this and her choice of attire defy her parents and family and reflect her own individual personality. As such, it contrasts Wright’s stiff portrait to show that children of contemporary society are more often encouraged and accepted of having individual voice and attitude that allows them to be defiant. Thus, Wright’s portrait functions as a document of a young aristocracy and rather fulfils social expectations of the time.

Example 2

Wright and Nelson both depict young children in their portraits, even as the meanings and cultural influences differ vastly. Wright’s sombre colour palette along with the lush fabrics and dress of his subject alludes to the boy’s nobility, implying how even at a young age, the boy is expected to uphold a degree of responsibility and honour through his intense gaze and upright posture. Nelson, in contrast, creates a psychedelic and trance like aura, so unlike the gravity and sombre nature of Wright’s. The use of bright, fluorescent colours along with the girl’s closed eyes and dreamy expression suggest that this child is lost in her music and has even left reality, thus contrasting to Wright’s depiction of youth as young nobleman who cannot afford to reveal such whimsies.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Average
%	2	2	2	8	12	13	20	14	12	6	6	4	6.1

Artwork presented

Phidias and workshop, sculptures from the west pediment of the Parthenon Temple, Athens, Greece, marble, over life-size, British Museum, London, c. 438–432 BCE

From left: figure of a river god, Hermes, Athena, torso of Poseidon, figure of Iris, Amphitrite, and sea nymph (?)

Dean Colls, *Rex Australis – The King is Dead, Long Live the King*, Corten steel, Skye Road exit, Peninsula Link freeway, Melbourne, 2012

This question required students to compare the two images in reference to the statement ‘An artwork exhibited in a museum will be experienced differently from an artwork displayed in a public, outdoor space’. Students responded well to the images and were able to confidently compare the artworks by referencing the cultural analytical framework, ‘How does the physical placement of artworks affect their interpretation?’ (*VCE Art Study Design*, page 13).

Most students understood this question, demonstrating their understanding of the context of art challenging traditional settings and different ways artworks can be exhibited. Many students engaged insightfully with both images and the text.

High-scoring responses cited evidence within the illustrations to support their own interpretation of the experience of the viewer. Some students did not make reference to the statement and/or images, thus missing significant elements in relation to the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The viewer's interpretation of an artwork depends heavily on its placement in the environment, especially when comparing a gallery setting to a roadside location. Firstly, the rate at which viewers may see the work differs starkly; in a gallery, the fine details of the organic shapes of the torsos can be inspected closely, whereas on the roadside viewers may only catch a glimpse of the rust-coloured rams head, so the lines in this sculpture are less defined, it's form more industrial and rough. Scale is also affected by environment as if viewers are to see a roadside sculpture, it must be larger than the torsos in the museum. Also, the roadside sculpture will be affected by and interact with the elements, meaning perhaps it will change over time due to rust, whereas the sculptures in the gallery remain a constant representation of Greek gods. However, the gallery setting removes the sculptures from the artist's intended location, perhaps changing the figures from symbols of worship to that of art appreciation - an inspection of form, the roundness of the torsos and the delicate rendering of muscle fibres. Had the two works been displayed in each other's environments, the effect of the elements would be different, perhaps destroying the marble and causing the viewer's to imagine destruction rather than divine beauty, and the industrial form and scale of the roadside sculpture would be more imposing.

Section B

This section required students to respond to the written and/or visual stimulus provided on the examination paper and assessed students' ability to analyse and interpret artworks and commentaries.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	3	1	2	4	5	8	10	14	13	9	9	7	4	5	4	4	8

Artworks presented

Artwork 1: Paul Signac, *The Dining Room*, oil on canvas, 89 × 115 cm, 1886–1887

Artwork 2: Nguyen Manh Hung, *Living Together in Paradise* (installation and detail view), mixed media installation, dimensions variable, 2009

Students were required to apply the cultural analytical framework and the personal analytical framework to discuss the different ways in which the two artists had responded to the depiction of the home in art. They were also required to reference both the illustrations and commentaries. There were several elements to be addressed and many students were unable to cover all requirements. It was also important that students gave an even-weighted response to both frameworks and both artworks.

Many students responded well to the personal analytical framework but struggled to apply the cultural analytical framework to draw connections to the depiction of the home in art. Low-scoring responses relied heavily on the commentaries and grappled with interpreting the work beyond merely describing it. Sophisticated responses expanded on the information given, with higher-scoring responses based on additional knowledge that students may have had on the relationships between time and culture. Alongside this, high-scoring responses conveyed an empathy and understanding for the artist's circumstance as portrayed through the artworks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Cultural analytical framework

There are clear contrasts to the lives of both artists; the household of 'The Dining Hall' contains fine crockery and tasselled curtains, which perfectly reflect a 'household typical in Paris'. A cultural emphasis on formality and decorum is highly evident within the piece as informed by the highly groomed figures and presence of the maid; it is a deeply serious depiction. 'Living Together in Paradise' is starkly more playful and light, despite the housing estate being of less grandiosity than the Paris house, it reflects how the cultural expectations of a good home are so varied between France and Vietnam. In a country which has progressed from 'an agricultural society, towards capitalist development' it is evident in the happier mood of this piece that there is overarching gratitude for this dwelling, despite how crude it may seem to others.

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Personal analytical framework

Signac's depiction of the home is a literal one, showing the viewers the interior of his home it is a representation of an individual life - his own - and cannot have been greatly applicable to all people. 'The Dining Room' makes use of a 'warm and calm' atmosphere through the use of a predominantly warm colour palette, yet the subject matter is inherently cold in a sense that each person is 'stiff and formal'. In contrast to this, Manh Hung's installation piece depicts the home from an exterior, conceptual perspective. The tall building is a reflection of an 'upbringing in a public housing apartment block' that many people could identify with and this is further shown through Manh Hung's comment that it was 'a place where people share everything'. The building, though using cool colour palette, has a warm inviting mood, as informed by the soft clouds below. 'Living together in paradise' invites the viewer to look upon their lives, despite being only the exterior of the painting, whereas 'The Dining Room' seems to exclude the viewer and gives me the feeling that I am not wanted to gaze upon their lives.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	1	5	6	10	18	20	13	11	6	5	5.7

Artwork presented

Hannah Bertram, *An Ordinary Kind of Ornament, Hong Kong* (detail and installation view), mixed media installation incorporating ash from an Australian bushfire, incense ash from the Man Mo temple and dust from a studio, dimensions variable, 2010

Students were required to refer to the work illustrated and to both commentaries. Students were also required to present their opinion on whether or not the artist should be invited to create a temporary artwork.

This question gave students the opportunity to present a passionate opinion as to whether the artist should or should not be invited to create a temporary artwork. High-scoring answers referred to both commentaries and the image of the artwork and engaged with them well to present a clear and compelling justification for their opinion. However, low-scoring responses simply reworded the commentaries rather than analysing the content and engaging with it. Many students simply agreed with one of the commentaries without exploring the other. Some students related the illustrated work to the contemporary analytical framework, drawing connections to new materials and challenging traditional values in art. They commented on the work as an ephemeral artwork and on the temporary nature of contemporary art. There were insightful observations about the conceptual nature of the artwork. These responses explained how Bertram would use the dust from the community hall to create an ephemeral artwork. Some students neglected to provide a personal opinion or made little reference to the artwork itself and gave no clear point of view as to whether the work should or should not go ahead. There were many components to this question and students needed to address all factors to score highly.

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

As a member of the community who values the complex thought and debate provoked by art, I am inclined to agree with commentary one and argue for the implementation of Bertram's work. In a public space such as a community centre, it is critical that we instigate public community discussion and this is where I would differ from commentary two, who states that 'most people will (not) even understand or appreciate' the work. Though the ephemeral nature of the piece does reflect, as commentary one suggests, an insight into the passing of time and cyclical nature of life, which is difficult to comprehend and maybe lost on members of the community, the fact the artwork is non traditional and even subversive in its nature would generate, at the very least, debate as to what role art would play in society. That is after all, the role art plays - to challenge the way people think. Furthermore, with regards to the concern over its posterity, as commentary one suggests, photographs can be taken of the work to remind the community of its aesthetic beauty. The works most powerful message lies however, in the fact its 'ideas will surely stay', even if it physically does not, hence it is a thought provoking piece that could certainly belong in a public forum such as our beloved community hall. Perhaps it will even encourage young people and children to involve themselves in interpreting the complex, intricate meanings of contemporary art.

Section C

This section gave students the opportunity to provide extended responses to two questions. Students had to compare the symbolism of artworks they had studied in Unit 3 and then discuss and debate an art issue they had studied in Unit 4. Students were also required to present their informed opinion with reference to the artworks and with the support of selected viewpoints and relevant aspects of the analytical frameworks.

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Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	8	1	2	4	7	11	12	13	13	10	9	6	6	6.7

Students were required to select artworks made pre- and post-1970 that they had studied during the year and compare and contrast the symbolism of the artworks. This question gave students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of their selected artists and artworks from Unit 3. It was critical that the student nominated pre- and post-1970 artworks to successfully answer this question. Insightful comparisons and interpretations of symbolism were made to convey the meanings and messages within their studied artworks. These students demonstrated the ability to identify and cite evidence within the artwork to support their interpretations. Symbolism is an integral component of all analytical frameworks; therefore, students could make links to the formal, personal, cultural and/or contemporary analytical frameworks. Some students ignored the requirements of the question and gave prepared responses. Specific examples from the artwork must be referred to when applying the frameworks for analysis and interpretation. Some students described the artworks as opposed to comparing and contrasting the symbolism within the artworks.

Artworks by a range of Australian and international artists were researched. Some of the popular artists studied this year were: Patrick Pound, Ricky Swallow, Hannah Höch, Guan Wei, Diane Arbus, Jenny Saville, Barbara Kruger, Gordon Bennett, Damien Hirst, Del Kathryn Barton, Rachel Whiteread, Pablo Picasso and Tracey Moffatt.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses to Question 7.

Example 1

Max Dupain, The Sunbaker, 1937

Anne Zahalka, The Sunbather, 1990

Max Dupain's 'The Sunbaker' depicts all we believe to be associated with the bronzed aussie man following war time. Through the symbolic landscape and composition of the work, Dupain creates a connection between Australian landscape and the culture of Australians. His work is symbolic of the cultural identity of Australian's at the time. Similarly Zahalka's appropriation of his work also reflects Australian identity, however her use of a androgynous, scrawny, pale skin, redhead subject is conversely symbolic of the contemporary Australian culture. Zahalka questions the veracity of Dupain's stereotypical interpretation of the 'true aussie'. Both artists have used a ground angle to emphasise an intimate relationship between the subject and the beach. The beach however is symbolised and expressed differently in both works. In Dupain's photograph the beach is symbolic of a simple, laid back, relaxed aussie lifestyle, in which the bronzed Australian is oblivious to anything but the heat on his back and the warmth of the sand beneath him. However, Zahalka uses symbolism of the beach in a way which expresses a more modern day, contemporary, democratic and inclusive space.

Example 2

Kathe Kollwitz, 'The Weaver's Rebellion: Poverty', 1895 - 1898

William Kentridge, 'Casspirs Full of Love', 1989 - 2000.

Kollwitz and Kentridge were both heavily influenced by the social conflicts that surrounded their era and as such universal symbols of death, loss and oppression are evident in their work.

Kentridge's piece, 'Casspirs Full of Love', is in itself intended to be oxymoronic. Casspirs were riot vehicles used to control crowds in South Africa and so the casspirs came to symbolise death and the stringent oppression of the government. Peace and 'love' were only facades for the grim and devastating aftermath of the apartheid as represented by the sever heads stacked inside the casspir. The indistinct features of the faces allude to the indiscriminate nature of death, symbolising how loss and injustice is universal and continues to prevail.

Similarly to Kentridge, Kollwitz creates a scene of despair but unlike the lack of individualism in Kentridge's hands, Kollwitz etches intricate details into her figures, symbolising how she has captured a moment in time that will always be remembered in haunting clarity. The child's sickly white countenance symbolises his illness, but the tribulations and anguish of the living. Like Kentridge, Kollwitz's heavy and dramatic use of shadow emphasises the devastating nature of death, but upon the living. There, Kollwitz implies that the living are the perpetual victims of oppression and poverty, symbolising the constant struggle of the proletariats, unlike Kentridge who only shows the ramifications through lives lost.

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Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	7	2	3	7	10	8	8	9	10	9	10	7	5	4	6.7

Most students responded well to this question; however, some students presented a prepared answer. There were many components to this question and all needed to be addressed to score highly. Students who clearly articulated the art issue for discussion and debate at the outset were able to fully address the question.

High-scoring responses discussed the statement with perceptive reference to an art issue, utilising informed and opposing points of view expressed in commentaries and responding to them. They effectively evaluated the artwork in relation to the art issue and presented an articulate response. The most common art issues were ‘Is graffiti art or vandalism?’ and ‘Should art be censored?’. Artists that were employed to illustrate these art issues included Bill Henson and Banksy. However, some new artists were studied this year in Unit 4, such as Paul Yore, Julie Dowling, Wim Delvoe and Ai Weiwei.

A number of students simply used commentaries without referencing an art issue, an artist or artworks. Some responses to this question used commentaries that were anonymous or from unreliable sources that carried little weight. It is important for students to attribute their commentaries from reliable, recognised and relevant sources. Some students struggled to apply their knowledge to the question and were unable to form an argument or present a viewpoint on the issue.

It is clear that there remains a lack of clarity regarding what an art issue entails. An art issue must have at least two clear different points of view and be supported by attributed commentaries and artworks. The student should be able to apply the relevant aspects of the analytical frameworks to enhance their debate and discussion, and clearly present their own viewpoint. Additionally, the study requires students to analyse their own viewpoint as well as that of others and link their thinking to a broader conceptual understanding, including the role of art in society. Teachers and students should refer to the unit outline on page 25 of the study design to seek clarification of the requirements of this aspect of the study.

The following are high-scoring responses that show the students working to draw the connections between ‘discussion and debate’ (VCE Art Study Design, page 25) of an art issue, of an artwork and of commentaries.

Example 1

‘The template for stereotypes is established early in Australian visual culture’, according to curator Juliana Engberg. Indeed such a statement reflects the emergence of the pervading ‘bushman’ archetype in white Australian art, and the slow but inexorable formation of a rigid masculine stereotype in our artistic culture that worships physical prowess and brute force above all else. Yet such an ideal serves to pose the question; does this stereotype truly represent the male experience of Australia?

The so called ‘gravel rash culture’ (Engberg) can perhaps be seen emerging early within the Australian impressionist movement, with Tom Roberts’ ‘Shearing the rams’ (1820) pedalling an idealised stockman motif that served at the time, to symbolize the masculine power of white man ‘conquering the continent’ of Australia. The idea of the developing ‘bloke culture’ is clearly apparent here – Roberts has created an artwork where ‘singular identification is subsumed into fists and knuckles...logs that are triangulated to deliver strength and control; the composition’ (Engberg) with a deliberately masculinised name that seeks to accentuate the culture of work, itinerancy and physical brawn. While many continue to see this work as ‘an archetypal vision of Australian pastoral life’ (Leigh Astbury, Fine Arts Department, Melbourne University, 1978), it is crucial to consider the future of his iconic work to truly encompass the varying forms of male gender expression in the ‘late 1800’s let alone in today’s society’.

In this regard, performance and video artist Liam Benson, in his artwork ‘The Pioneers’ (2011) seeks to challenge traditional notions of masculinity developed in works of Robert’s like, subverting the limited ‘bushman’ archetype notions that continue to pervade a contemporary society, especially in rural culture. Benson’s vibrantly coloured, heavily costumed works bend notions of gender, ‘turning sexual and racial stereotypes on their head with politicized commentary’ (Daniel Cunningham, Artbank curator) that places pressure upon traditional and limiting expectations surrounding gender expression. Indeed, Benson here visually comments upon negative effects of the heavily masculinised ideals of today’s ockerism ‘expanding notions of Australian culture identity through a type of drug’ (Stella McDonald, video artist) that brings forth, a refreshing counterpoint to the typical ideal of the Australian made. Ultimately, while some vestiges of the initial bushman/stockman ideal remain, Benson’s progressive, dynamic work is one of many that argues a new era of gender expression and burgeoning acceptance of the multifaceted nature of the construct of gender itself.

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Example 2

As art continues to strive to challenge conventions and perceptions controversy continues to rage regarding whether animals should be killed for art.

Often utilising a real animal in art is able to create impact and foster emotional responses that cannot be replicated otherwise. Damien Hirst upheld such beliefs in his infamous piece 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living' (2004). The tiger shark floating ominously in its vitrine, appears poised to attack, evoking a strong primal sense of terror in viewers, aided by the knowledge that the artwork is real. Hirst deliberately requested a shark that was, in his words 'big enough to eat you' as only a genuine specimen of such immensity could carry the symbolism of mortality, death and terror Hirst desired. As Gary Tinteron, curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art asserted 'It's an amazingly powerful work of art...it taps right into our fear of death'. Indeed, the shark symbolises the ultimate predator, and so in killing a shark, only then is Hirst able to allude to humankind's dominance over nature.

Similarly to the symbolism evident in animals for art, artists often kill animals for art as a political statement and to highlight societal hypocrisy. Nathalia Edenmont challenged society to realise their hypocrisy through her piece 'Star' (2002), where five white-gutted mice are positioned like finger puppets upon a hand. The mice are symbolic of the Soviet Union who killed Edenmont's mother, as Edenmont argues, 'photography is able to contain and mimic the same hypocrisy that coloured my childhood'. Indeed, as animals are killed for meat, leather and other industries, artists argue that their use in art is justified. Moreover, Edenmont recognised that society harboured more outrage towards the death of rodents than the murders of innocent people by government. Animals in art thus highlight society's double standards and injustice.

However, many also question the morality of killing animals for art. Even if the artists believe the act is justified and necessary, often killing animals is seen as a superfluous consideration of murder, a sadistic practice even. As spokesperson for the People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals asserted '[Edenmont] kills animals in order to exercise the ultimate power over those weaker than herself'. Hence, perhaps the death and murder in this manner becomes acceptable, even beautiful, through its concept and expression when art just conceals the lack of morality in killing animals for the sake of art.