

2017 VCE Studio Arts examination report

The 2017 Studio Arts examination offered a variety of questions to students. With the introduction of questions based on the studio process, the examination required students to consider the many areas required to produce the exploration proposal, the exploration and development of the potential directions, and the refinement and resolution of their final pieces of work. Students wrote at length in response to each question. Many responses followed a theme or idea and demonstrated how the student's ideas and concepts had developed into the resolution and presentation of their final artworks.

Section A of the examination included questions based on unseen images and required students to respond to specific areas of the study: art elements and principles, aesthetic qualities, aspects of the gallery system in terms of transportation and conservation, and materials, techniques and processes. Many students attempted all questions and had a very good knowledge of these areas. Overall, the responses were quite good. Many students selected to write about an art form with which they were unfamiliar; however, it is recommended that students select an art form with which they have had some experience in investigating as well as in exploring, trialling and manipulating materials and techniques. This would assist familiarity with and application of appropriate visual language associated with the materials, techniques and processes of the particular art form and the student's ideas and inspiration.

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 resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

For each of the questions in Section A, students were asked to select one artwork from the 15 artworks in the detachable insert and use this as the basis for their response. Students were able to select the same artwork or a different artwork for each question in Section A.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	7	19	25	21	17	9	3.4

Students were asked to discuss the artist's use of materials, techniques and processes in the production of the artwork. Students with higher-scoring responses clearly knew the way materials and techniques were applied by the artist. They could also define the steps in the process of creating an artwork and had an understanding of specific materials such as the use of rabbit-skin glue to seal a canvas.

Some students were able to write a response addressing the key words in the question – materials, techniques and processes – but many wrote about the artist’s use of art elements and principles. Sometimes ‘process’ was not addressed, and students needed to describe the sequential steps involved in the making of the artwork.

Students with lower-scoring responses frequently just copied the information from the detachable insert.

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

Hockney’s ipad artwork was done with the use of materials such as an ipad with the app titles ‘brushes’. Hockney decided to use a stylus instead of his finger to apply the paint as this created more even and gestured brush strokes which allowed him to develop his own technique of doing quick rapid flicking movements to create the sharp lines in the yellow amber trees and deep green foliage in the trees. Hockney was able to layer his paint very thinly as the app allowed him to change the opacity of the paint when applied allowing him to form many layers of paint. The app also allowed Hockney to use the process of airbrushing to get a larger coverage for the base of his artwork to map out the design and finally layer the defined brushstrokes on top.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	3	6	20	27	19	13	9	4	3.5

This question asked students to consider the transportation of an artwork from the artist’s studio to an exhibition space. Students with a high-scoring response discussed a number of ways an artwork could be transported from an artist’s studio to an exhibition space. They explained how an artwork could be wrapped, in bubble wrap or acid-free tissue paper, placed in a crate or solander box and transported either by a specialist removal truck or other form of transport. They also discussed how a condition report would be written prior to the artwork leaving the studio as well as when it arrived at the exhibition space. Many students assumed the transportation would be from a studio to a public gallery but the question was not specific about the gallery space and allowed for a more creative response to the question. Students with low-scoring responses tended to write more on conservation practices, which were not relevant to this question.

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

Due to this work being a silver gelatin print on paper, it is likely the artist or curator would have placed the work in a solander box, prior to transporting. This provides a total dark environment, acid-free and protecting from bugs and insects. The work inside the solander box would have been separated from the other works through Mylar, thin plastic sheets further avoiding damage, or pieces sticking together. When placed in a vehicle to be transported, the artist/curator may have used bubble wrap to protect the box from impact, for the works inside are fragile. This would be useful, for example, in the back of a truck, if a sculpture fell on the box it would have an extra layer of protection, avoiding damage. While the solander box provided a somewhat protected environment, the artist curator may further monitor the environment, to avoid any damage to the work through extreme conditions, such as a 45 degree day. To reduce this risk, they may use an aircon in the car/truck to keep temperature of an adequate level, to protect the work from expansion or shrinkage due to temperature – in conjunction with the environment the solander box provides. A condition report could be conducted at either end of the transportation, so if any damage was to occur, it can be identified.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	9	7	14	20	25	16	11	3.7

This question required students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of art elements and principles and how these can demonstrate the aesthetic qualities. Students generally responded well to this question. They understood the difference between art elements and principles, and they were able to address how art elements and principles were used to demonstrate the aesthetic qualities representing mood, emotion and feelings in their responses.

Students who did not score highly ably discussed the aesthetic qualities of their selected artwork but struggled to explain the properties of art elements and principles. In some responses there was discussion of flat, bold, contrasting colours creating a vibrant aesthetic/happy mood but specific terminology such as 'complementary colour scheme or analogous colours' was not evident.

A number of students identified two art elements, which resulted in them not being awarded any marks for the second part of the question. Some students' choice of artwork was not well made; for example, a number of students selected colour as an element and chose artwork 5, which was a black-and-white photograph or artwork 2, which was a black-and-white print.

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

Art element – Tone

Tone is used within this painting to give the bowls, fruit and other objects dimension and form. Subtle gradation and variation in hue create the soft, seamless tones in the work. Darker blue tones are used to represent the shadowing, aiding the soft, calming aesthetic of the piece. The watercolour technique of pooling of colour has been used to create the tonal background grey. Creating a darker rim at the edge, fading into the centre.

Art principle – Balance

Balance has been produced by the neat symmetry of this work, in the placement of the still life objects. The even spacing and balancing of cool warmer hues produces a sense of order and precision within the work. Vibrant orange colours are balanced by deeper plum, leading the eye through a calming spectrum of gently layering of colour.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	5	15	26	22	19	9	3.6

Students were asked to explain conservation methods when considering an artwork for display in a public gallery. Students with higher-scoring responses were able to identify organic or inorganic materials and were able to discuss this in detail. They were also able to state an appropriate and detailed presentation method for the selected art form, such as framing a two-dimensional work with an acid-free mount board or placing an artwork behind a barrier to protect the artwork from people touching it.

Most students discussed safe climate conditions and conservation methods and were able to give levels and temperatures accurately. The types of lighting such as tungsten, LED or halogen lights were also mentioned in responses.

Students who did not score well wrote vaguely about display only, without consideration of the environment or the climate in the space, or their relevance to the materials of the artwork selected. They needed to discuss conservation methods more fully; for example, artwork 14, the silk

ensemble by Prada, would have been displayed in a glass cabinet with low light levels to protect the fabric from fading.

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

Photographic prints are considered to be highly sensitive, meaning that they need to be protected. Light is a major problem for this work, it must be displayed at a maximum of 50 lux to prevent photochemical destruction causing fading. The gallery space needs to be monitored with a thermohygrograph to keep the relative humidity at 50% + - 5%, and the temperature at 20°C + - 2°C. Intergrated Pest Management must be implemented, laying traps and keeping the gallery clean to prevent pest from eating or defecating on the artwork. Fluctuating temperature and high humidity will lead to warping and mould growth at 70% RH. Tungsten bulbs and glazed frames must be used to prevent UV damage.

Section B

This section of the examination required students to respond by referring to their own studio practice.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	1	1	5	15	22	21	19	11	5	4.8

Students were expected to write about their sources of inspiration in the development of their exploration proposal. Many students described the inspiration artists brought to their works and the ideas they gleaned from the artists' practice. Other sources of inspiration and ideas were discussed, including cultural issues, music, film and personal experiences. High-scoring responses were explicit and discussed how they responded to these sources and how ideas evolved throughout the exploration proposal. Students who scored highly for this question used visual language extremely well and constructed an articulate response.

Students who did not score well struggled to make deliberate connections to the artist's work(s) and their idea development became tenuous in many cases. The question did not stipulate 'artistic inspiration', enabling students to discuss other sources of inspiration, such as films, video games, materials, etc.

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

The overall idea I was exploring throughout my design process was the complexity of human emotion. To further explore and represent my ideas, I wanted to search for many more ways in which I could both convey and embody particular emotions within a work of art/ The works of William Turner were a great source of inspiration for me when I was landscape painting, as I was using interpretive landscape as a means to convey particular emotions to the viewer. Turner's directional brushstrokes, evocative use of colour and vivid tone allowed for a 'definitive mood' to be conveyed through the painting. I practiced this impressionistic, more free style of painting in my own works by using rags, brushes and even fingers to apply the oil paint quickly and create textural, sweeping strokes of colour. I found this method was far more effective for conveying moods than my previous, more detailed explorations. I was also inspired by the portraits of Harding Meyer. Meyer paints realistic faces using fragmented brushstrokes and enlarges the eyes of the subject so that a deep connection can be built between the viewer and the subject. Meyer believes that 'the eyes are the windows to the soul' and are key to understanding and interpreting the person being painted. When exploring emotion through portraiture, I gave a greater effect to portraying emotion by using Meyer's method of having the person I was either photographing or painting to look directly at the person.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	6	1	6	10	20	18	18	12	8	4.7

In responding to this question, students were required to demonstrate their knowledge of the studio process outlined in the cross-study specifications in the study design. High-scoring responses included accurate information regarding the use of materials, techniques and processes and the way these were manipulated and refined to create potential solutions. These responses were clear and structured, and directly addressed the three components of the question: identify, develop and evaluate. Low-scoring responses were often quite general and did not address how or why the student had selected a particular process or show how it was developed, so there was insufficient evidence to evaluate the outcome.

Some students discussed their work in detail or influences associated with the potential directions, which was a repeat of information given in response to Questions 5 and 7.

Some students made little differentiation between each potential direction, opting to discuss very similar ones, which indicated an inability to recognise that potential directions can be similar but should have a clear and distinct direction from each other.

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

Potential direction 1

My exploration and development of layering mediums on top of each other, helped me to create my semi-impasto and painterly potential direction, 'Mixture' (2017). By first using my developed technique of swiping the paint on canvas with my hands, I was able to produce the underpaint of 'mixture' which consisted of mulberry, scarlet, leaf green, sapphire and yellow. Moreover, my evaluation that charcoal is better on top of other mediums helped me to develop 'Mixture' by smudging and layering the compressed charcoal on top of the dry acrylic paint so that they wouldn't mix together.

Potential direction 2

Beastmans graffiti murals also helped me to develop my potential direction titled 'Beastman appropriation' (2017). By exploring the (his) smooth finished texture of spraypaint, I decided to replicate the texture using gouache. In doing so, my potential direction turned out smooth and clearly visible of all multi-coloured patterns and curvaceous shapes. Added to this, my development of outlining patterns in black, along with Beastman's inspiration, further encouraged me to outline this smooth potential direction in fineliner to make the elements and principles clearly noticeable as shape, line colour and repetition.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	3	2	5	12	18	18	15	14	9	4	5

This question was the least well answered in this section. Many students repeated what they had written in response to Questions 5 and 6. However, some students answered this question well, discussing the materials and processes they used in the creation of their final artworks and how these contributed to the communication of ideas. Quite a few students wrote about issues that they had encountered during the production of their work, and most students reflected on their finished artworks.

Generally, there was an overall lack of analysis in the answers and many students' answers were just a description of their final artwork and how they produced it, which is a requirement of Unit 4, Outcome 2.

Very few students commented on how the artworks would be presented.

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

My first artwork, titled 'Lost objects' is a 6B graphite illustration of still life, depicting a range of everyday objects. Each of my final artworks represents a different aspect of my theme, 'Lost things'. 'Lost Objects' addresses the concept of losing objects such as keys, wallets, shoes in everyday life. To communicate this I used 6B graphite to produce high contrast, greyscale depictions of objects. I used greyscale colour scheme to produce an overwhelming aesthetic, as my finished work is of A1 size and contains realistic depictions of full scale objects. Additionally, the objects I included were all drawn directly from life and to collect them I consulted friends and family. This creates a deeper personal attachment and meaning to the work. My second artwork addresses my theme of 'Lost Places'. Again using greyscale graphite illustration. I have created highly detailed and intimate work, to communicate the idea of a place untouched and 'lost to humanity'. The intricate detail of the vegetation communicates the wild energy and essence of untamed nature. Finally, my third artwork is a 'Lost Creature'. Inspired by Shaun Tan's 2000 book the 'Lost Thing', this creature represents the surreal and emotional ideas of loss, such as the feeling of being lost. I have used symbolism such as keys and a light bulb to communicate loss of ideas and thoughts within the piece.

Section C

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	10	2	3	7	9	10	13	11	10	8	7	5	4	2	6.2

Students were asked to compare and evaluate the presentation and promotion of two specific artworks they had seen in two different exhibition spaces visited this year.

Many students described what it was like viewing the exhibition and they used explicit detail about how the work was displayed and the presentation of the gallery space. They also related their analysis of the promotional material to the artworks discussed.

The evaluation in this question was best when the student used language that reflected curatorial concerns to establish the theme of an exhibition. How was emphasis on one object or artwork achieved through the use of the available space, lighting and wall colour? How were the artworks arranged to show the idea of inclusion among groups of artworks and individual contrasts between artworks? The responses that showed a clear understanding did not list items used in typical gallery marketing and promotion strategies, but rather explored one aspect in more depth, for example the artist's statement that was most appropriate to the artwork or exhibition. Some students did not write about the promotion of the exhibition or if they did it was limited to one sentence or a mention of social media or word-of-mouth.

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

The Hokusai exhibition ran from July – October 2017 and displayed works over Katsushika Hokusai's lifetime including two prints of his famous 'The Great Wave' (c1832). It was presented window mounted and single hung on rich blue walls echoing the Prussian blue of the 'Great Wave'. The labels were also the same colour, attached to 'floating' walls reflecting the flowing nature of the water. As a public gallery, the NGV was able to change the space to fit the exhibition curated by Wayne Crothers. The exhibition was promoted using 'The Great Wave' as the hero image which was on billboards, trams, social media and the NGV newsletter.

New Seasons ran at Station Gallery from July-August 2017, displaying works by Peter Lundberg. 'Untitled' (2017) a painted shoelace was an artwork on display. Station is a commercial gallery that aims to sell the artworks so the space is minimalistic with fluorescent lighting and fixed walls. Unlike the NGV with the Hokusai exhibition, Station does not have access to large amounts of funding to change the space. Station also does not have a full-time curator, with four directors such a Jock Willet who worked with the artist as curator. Like the NGV, station advertises with social media and newsletters, but do not have the funds for billboards. Unlike the NGV, Station does not have any labels next to artworks in keeping with the minimalist look.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	7	2	4	5	8	10	13	11	11	10	9	5	4	6.4

This question asked for two separate areas of analysis: how the art elements and principles have been used to demonstrate aesthetic qualities and how the two artists have communicated ideas and meanings. Students needed analyse the two aspects of the question succinctly.

Low-scoring responses reiterated the artist’s historical and cultural context, which the student had clearly studied, but neglected to adapt this to the question. Many students soundly discussed the ideas and meanings explored within the artist’s studio practice but often did not discuss the aesthetics or ideas in specific artworks. Very often students did not reference artworks in their analysis. Some students combined their analysis on their two artists and others responded on both artists separately. Van Gogh was a popular choice. Students discussed some relevant information in regard to his aesthetics but found it difficult to articulate the ideas and meanings behind his artworks. Overall, students appeared well prepared for this question.

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

Bill Henson uses various art elements and principles in his work to create the emotional, dramatic aesthetic and communicate these romantic ideals. Henson uses light in creating a contrast – inspired by the Baroque movement (Carravaggio and Rembrandt in particular) Henson portrays a chiaroscuro techniques in the illumination of the bodily figures, contrasting on the shadowed background, he does so to create an emphasis on focal point on the subject matter, exploring the complexities of the human condition, but also to create a highly dramatic and staged idea within the work, further enhancing this theatrical, emotional aesthetic. His use of mellow and dull colours gives little life and vibrancy of the work, with ??? yellows subtly appearing through the largely monotonal appearance – the icon of significant colour additionally enhances this highly emotional feel, perhaps indicating a sombre or lifeless state. ... Conversely Dupain also uses various art elements and art principles to communicate ideas and meanings whilst demonstrating aesthetic qualities. Reflect the modernism style, Dupain relies on simple tones, textures and shapes to make up his composition the shapes of the triangular torso of the figure in one of his most significant pieces, Sunbaker, and the oval shaped head of the male reflects the idea of simplicity and minimalism in design, moving beyond complex narrative artworks to simply visual interest. Dupain often intends to communicate messages of Australian culture within his work, he does so through the use of form, for example, in Sunbaker, the males muscular torso, attempts to reference the health, vitality and beach culture of the Australian life style – further his use of emphasis creates an eye-catching piece that attracts the eye of the viewer, a like the way the sun beams down upon the figure in Sunbaker to portray minimalistic values of modernism and create a highly aesthetically pleasing piece of artwork.