



## GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2010 Studio Arts examination was based on the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design 2010–2014*.

Consistent with the current study design, this year there was a question on the examination that asked about the various tasks and considerations associated with the presentation of artworks in a variety of exhibition spaces. Most students wrote enthusiastically about art exhibitions they had visited during the year, with some students demonstrating a high degree of interest and involvement in the procedures and processes of displaying art. Some responses suggested students had not attended any exhibitions during the year. It is a requirement of the current study design that students visit a variety of art exhibition spaces in the year of study. Students must review at least two different exhibition spaces to address Outcome 3 in Unit 4.

The questions on this year's examination assessed students' ability to apply the knowledge and understanding they had developed throughout the year to unseen images provided in the examination's insert. Some students performed exceedingly well, but many struggled to fulfil question requirements.

Each question on the examination began with a key instructional verb, including 'suggest', 'describe', 'explain', 'discuss', 'analyse' and 'compare'. Students must understand the meaning of these words in order to develop an appropriate response. If a question requires an analysis of one artwork and no artwork is nominated, no marks will be awarded. If the key instructional verb is neglected it is difficult for assessors to award marks.

In general, students who were awarded high marks:

- used appropriate art terminology that was applicable to the question
- demonstrated a sound understanding of the knowledge required for each question
- responded appropriately to the instruction of the question and applied their knowledge accordingly
- discussed specific examples of artworks where appropriate..

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

### Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	17	21	19	17	13	3.4

Students needed to select one artwork from the detachable insert and suggest art practices and working methods that the artist may have used to make the artwork. The dimensions of the work, the title of the work and the materials used were listed under each image, and students needed to suggest ways in which the artist may have used those materials to make the work. Some students had a very good understanding of artistic procedures and processes and could logically outline the specific ways in which the artwork was most likely to have been made. Other students were unable to say how the artwork was made and didn't appear to know about the specific artistic practice. Unit 3 of the study design focuses on professional art practices in relation to particular artform(s) and, given that each image in the insert corresponded with the list of artforms published in the examination specifications, it was disappointing that for some students this question was the least well done.

Art practices means the practice of art – the processes and procedures of making art, such as painting with acrylic paint on canvas or carving stone. Working methods are the artist's individual approach to art practice – the artist's way of making art, such as the use of thick or thin paint, application with a broad or fine brush or palette knife, easel painting or floor painting, canvas or paper support, large or small scale. Students should not refer to a painting or a print as a 'piece', but should identify the type of artform they are discussing.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response (Artwork 4).

*In order to achieve the desired dimensions and characteristics of the canvas the artist has probably stretched their own canvas. This involves the canvas-which could be linen or cotton, as cotton is sometimes used for acrylic works due to its even weave and stretch-being pulled over and attached to a wooden frame called a stretcher with pliers. The canvas would first have been primed using several coats of gesso, a white undercoat containing calcium carbonate and other fillers, applied over rabbit skin glue. This ensures a smooth working surface and means that the paint does not come into contact with the canvas, which can cause*



*decay. The acrylic would then have been applied to the canvas, most likely beginning with a solid undercoat for the blue background colour. The basic shapes and areas of the painting would have been sketched onto the canvas using pencil or charcoal. The artist has used the aerosol enamel to outline the figure and probably applied this before adding layers of acrylic over the top, using thick brushes for larger block areas and thin brushes for detail...Acrylic is a quick drying paint so layers could be built up frequently to produce finished result. A varnish or other material may have been applied to add sheen to the work although acrylic can have a natural sheen.*

**Question 2**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	2	5	14	12	11	13	12	12	18	5.7

Question 2 required students to select one artwork from the insert and give a description of three different considerations a public gallery could respond to when protecting the artwork from damage. Most students were well prepared for this question and answered it appropriately. They understood a consideration to be a thought or reflection taken, or about to be taken, into account. The majority of students understood that damage is harm that directly impairs the appearance, value, usefulness or soundness of the artwork. Most students understood that an artwork can be damaged by such things as temperature, humidity, light, air pollution, water, fire, vandalism, insects and mishandling.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response (Artwork 2).

*TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY would be closely monitored as both can cause fading, discolouration or decaying to works on paper. Temperature would be kept within 20-22 degrees C range and humidity between 55 and 65 percent. At 67 percent mould is prone to grow. Both temperature and humidity would be measured by a thermohydrograph and controlled using sophisticated and precise air conditioning systems*

*PEST, INSECT, BUG CONTROL When in storage the piece would be kept in Solander boxes-airtight controlled boxes to prevent pests from feeding on or causing damage to the paper, for example, droppings can mark the paper. The piece would be kept in cool dry areas and regular cleans and checks would take place to ensure no pests had done damage.*

*LIGHT can cause damage particularly to delicate paper. Both natural and artificial light would be monitored. The piece should be displayed at no more than 50 lux as paper has a high sensitivity to light energy. The light would be measured by a lux meter. The piece would be on a 1:3 ratio-1 month on display, 3 months off. In the period of no display it would be kept in darkness. Ultraviolet light would be filtered, for example with the use of special windows and light bulbs - tungsten light bulbs would prevent damage.*

**Question 3**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	3	6	12	16	16	13	14	10	8	5.2

Question 3 required students to select one artwork from the insert and explain how the artist communicated ideas and meanings. Many of the less successful students could not say how the artist had done this and merely listed all they could see in the artwork, particularly in responses to Image 1. As the question required an explanation of **how** the artist had communicated ideas and meanings, this type of response was not satisfactory.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response (Artwork 1).

*Eamon Donnelly has used many iconic Australian images to portray a summer like atmosphere in his work. The main focus of the piece is a 'typical' Australian male; blonde, chiselled and friendly. Donnelly bombards the viewer with very typically Australian images such as sausages in bread, southern cross tattoos, thongs and many other subtle, and not so subtle, references to the Australian way of life and attitude. To complement this loving, care-free and friendly depiction of Australian youth culture, Donnelly uses a palette of bright colours. Green and gold feature predominantly evoking a sense of patriotism from viewers. Other colours however compliment these two yet stay in the same vein, as bright pink and vivid blue adorn the central figure. Overall, Donnelly has approached this image in almost collage-like manner as he brings together everything he loves about Australia, summer and youth.*

**Question 4**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	3	7	9	16	15	16	10	10	5	5	5.1

Question 4 asked students to select an artwork not previously selected from the insert, to identify two art elements and to explain how these elements had been used to develop aesthetic qualities and style in the artwork. Many students had little idea of what constitutes an art element, despite this knowledge being integral to the study. These students were unable to explain how a work of art is constructed by using the elements and principles of art to successfully make the



artwork. It would be to the students' advantage to refer to the principles of art and composition as many students did not adequately explain what is meant by aesthetic qualities, composition or style. Aesthetic qualities are developed by the artist using the elements and principles of art in conjunction with materials and techniques to create a desired effect. A sense of beauty, ugliness, harmony or discord can be achieved by the artist working intuitively or intentionally with the elements and principles of art. The concept of style was again not well handled by many students. It is important that 'style' is understood to be the personal and distinguishing characteristics of an artwork or group of artworks. Many students chose not to address this part of the question and consequently were awarded few marks.

The elements of art – such as line, colour, texture, tone, form, shape, movement, sound and light – are basic units of the visual language of art. The principles of art are the means by which the art elements are successfully organised into a composition and include such things as emphasis, balance, harmony, proportion, rhythm, variety and unity. A comprehensive list of art elements and principles is found in the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design 2010–2014* (page 32). When students are fully conversant with the elements and principles of art they will have developed an appropriate art vocabulary with which to write about art. This will fulfil the requirement in both Units 3 and 4 to employ appropriate art language and terminology.

The following are two examples of high-scoring responses.

*Vivid, complementary and brilliant colours- attributed to cartoons- evidently have been used to add a playful comic appeal to the illustration. In combination with sketchy crosshatching lines to heighten the style of the image which is a caricature. In some areas such as the head lines are more directional and straight to assist the proportion which alludes to the viewer its humorous and youthful nature. Contrasting flurescent colours add a visual interest and heighten the emphasised areas. A shade of the flesh hue has been added in areas of shadows to create a three-dimensional appeal. Line has also been used to create tone by crosshatching. It is evident that both line and colour have been dominantly used to emphasise the cartoon nature of the piece.*

*The platinum cover and the feminine eyes on Sieguhr's cover of 'Renderosity magazine' express imagery of glamour and beauty. The warm orange flesh of the model is complimented by the blue allure of her feminine eyes. This beauty is contrasted by the bright sheen of the platinum overlay, yet this isolates the features and aids in accentuating their appeal. The lines that are scratched upon the platinum appear to be frantic and manical at first glance, yet closer inspection reveals that these collision of lines provide a jewellery-like form. The sharp lines are also juxtaposed with the human, delicate lines that form the model's face, once again accentuating her appearance.*

### Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	5	9	11	13	11	11	9	9	7	10	5.2

Question 5 asked students to discuss a legal obligation and an ethical consideration that an artist might consider when using another artist's work to make a new artwork. Many students were well prepared for this question. They were able to cite the *Australian Copyright Act 1968*, which was designed to protect intellectual property, and the *Moral Rights Act 2000*, which establishes the artist's right of attribution and right of integrity. Some students illustrated their response with a current example. Sam Leach's winning painting in the Wynne Prize was a popular choice, as he appropriated a Dutch painting of an Italian landscape and presented it as an Australian landscape.

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

*Legal obligation: Copyright law is set out in the Copyright Act 1968 and is a type of legal protection to people who produce things like artwork. It lasts for the creator's life plus 70 years after death. Gordon Bennett was influenced by African American Jean-Michel Basquiat as you see in 'Notes to Basquiat: Culture Bag 1999. In this case copyright would still exist as it has not been more than 70 years since Basquiat's death. Bennett would have checked the details of copyright before using his work and would have sought permission. Copyright is a legal right to prevent others from doing certain things such as copying and making available online. Bennett pays homage to Basquiat by adopting elements of his style through his graffiti like approach to text.*

*Ethical consideration: In December 2000 the Federal Government passed legislation that awarded artists 'moral rights' over their work. These are the rights to be attributed as the creator of the work. Despite his work being produced in 1999 Bennett pays homage to Basquiat by attributing to him in the title of his artwork 'Notes to Basquiat: Culture Bag'. Artists must not treat or distort the artwork in a way that is prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the artist. Bennett clearly shows his admiration towards Basquiat as he wrote a letter after his death stating 'my intention is in keeping with the integrity of the artwork in which appropriation, sampling and citing are an integral part of as we (are) attempting to communicate the basic underlying humanity of perception to 'blackness.'*



**Question 6**

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

Question 6 asked students to analyse one artwork to show how it reflects the historical and/or cultural context in which it was made. To respond well to this question students needed to reference the time and place in which the artwork was made and/or the cultural context of the artwork. An artwork cannot be understood in isolation, and this question assessed the key knowledge in Unit 3 that requires knowledge of ‘artworks from different historical and/or cultural contexts’. Many students were unable to date artworks and did not understand or refer to the social, political, religious or artistic climate in which the artwork was made.

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

*Caravaggio's 'The Death of the Virgin', 1595, was rejected by religious bodies at its time of production. Caravaggio was emerging from a long tradition of painting religious scenes in classical idealistic ways. Christianity was extremely influential during these times therefore it was important to the governing bodies that figures such as the Virgin Mary be portrayed in absolute perfection. Caravaggio stepped away from these techniques and painted the Virgin Mary in dull natural light, lying slumped and lifeless across a dingy platform, crowded and half hidden by those that surround her. Her face is dirty as are her legs. The church for which the painting was produced was outraged as the painting disputed the 'Assumption of Mary' - the proposal that Mary did not die an earthly, regular death, but was simply assumed into heaven. Therefore, Caravaggio challenged the thinking of his time, making observations between the physical and the spiritual. By depicting the Virgin Mary this way he humanised her, commenting on the fragility of the human form, communicating that the idealistic perspectives formed by religion were challengeable, in his naturalistic approach. The model was said to be a local prostitute, sparking further outrage from the church, as Caravaggio continued to disagree and earn immense credibility.*

**Question 7**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	7	4	12	16	18	16	13	14	3.9

The requirement to visit art exhibition spaces was the major change to the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design*, and many students wrote enthusiastically about what they had discovered and learned from visiting various art exhibition spaces. For these students, it was clearly beneficial to see artworks presented in a variety of venues and to gain insight into the processes associated with the production, presentation, promotion and marketing of art.

Some students discussed objects recovered from the Titanic; however, this was not appropriate as these objects were not art objects or part of an exhibition of artworks. All students and teachers must make arrangements to visit art galleries and review appropriate exhibition spaces throughout the year, as visiting these exhibition spaces is integral to the study of Studio Arts. Information regarding visiting art spaces can be found in the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design* (page 51) and on the VCAA website on the Studio Arts study page.

Question 7a. asked for a comparison of the roles and characteristics of each exhibition space and an explicit comparison was important to this response. With reference to exhibition spaces, the word ‘role’ refers to the usual or customary function of the art gallery or exhibition space, and the characteristics of each space refer not to the artworks on display but to the space itself. Unfortunately, some students did not compare the particular exhibition spaces they had visited but instead gave pre-prepared and generic information about public and commercial galleries without referencing the specific exhibition spaces visited. This did not address the question as asked.

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

*The National Gallery of Victoria is a public gallery and so operates as a means of collecting, preserving and conserving historical and contemporary art and aims to educate the public. It is funded by the government (taxes) and also receives funds from donations, grants, bequests and sponsorships. This differs from Flinders Lane Gallery which is a commercial gallery and so operates as a business in order to make a profit from selling or lending of artworks. The gallery charges a 15% commission on work sold. The funds go towards the running of the gallery and exhibitions as well as promotions. ... While the NGV runs educational tours, programs and lectures, FLG is not concerned with these processes, unless it aims to inform or educate potential buyers about possible purchases.*

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

*The role of Top Shots, being in a public gallery, would be to offer easy access to art, while promoting and encouraging as well as educating the public on art in their community. However they would have to do so while still adhering to international agreements on the preservation of the work.*



*The characteristics shown through this aim of a public gallery was a very intimate experience, encouraging the viewer to explore the space. This was achieved through the low ceiling and relatively small size of the exhibition area. Furthermore the viewers are encouraged to move around the space, seen in the current wall leading into the space, as well as the partition wall in the centre of the room. In contrast the Private Gallery, Metro Gallery has a role to generate a profit through the sale of artwork, while promoting the artist's they are showing. Their exhibition space for 'On the Wall' was vibrant canvas artwork, set against a very sparse space of white walls. Not only did this assist in emphasising the work to be sold, it also created a very professional appearing space. The Metro Gallery Space is also unique, as it gradually grows thinner in width as the viewer progresses down the space, drawing them in.*

### Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	15	6	13	16	16	13	10	10	3.4

Question 7b. asked students to discuss the intention of the curator or artist in displaying the artwork in each exhibition space. Students who had fully researched a variety of exhibition spaces were able to refer to a curator or artist by name and were familiar with that person's aims and intentions. Many students, however, could only provide pre-prepared, generic information about the role of a curator in a public gallery and consequently did not answer the question adequately.

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

*For the Ron Mueck exhibition curator David Hunston and Ron Mueck (artist) worked closely together to determine the display in the exhibition space. They were constricted by the size of the display area and the number and positioning of the partitions. Hunston and Mueck came to the decision to section off the exhibition space by using four partitions. This was partly because Mueck's intention was that each work would stand alone in their own right - he didn't want the sculptures making eye contact with each other. Whereas at the Sam Jinks exhibition Jinks (artist) and Gallery owner/director and curator Karen Woodbury worked together in deciding to display the works. Due to the small size of the space no barricades or partitions were used in displaying. Jinks and Woodbury instead faced the sculptures away from each other on their plinths to be in line with the intention that they were to be seen as not linked to each other. The work 'Embrace 2010' was the first sculpture spotted as you walk into the exhibition space - what Jinks intended.*

The following is an example of an appropriate response.

*The intention of the curator at the Monash Gallery of Art was focused on promoting the artwork of young photographers to the public with no admission fee. When displaying the work, the curator ensured that all works were displayed equally, representing the interest of each artist. This maintained the viewing flow of one work to another and created a pleasant experience for the viewer. The curator of On the Wall at Metro Gallery aimed to create a stimulating and professional showcase of the artwork on display. Works by the prominent artist Banksy were placed in the front of the exhibition to entice as many people into the space as possible.*

### Question 7c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	10	6	15	20	18	12	10	9	3.4

Question 7c. asked students to discuss methods and/or considerations involved in preparing and promoting the artwork in each exhibition space. For example, exhibition design, wall colour, framing, hanging, wall text and catalogues could have been considered, along with promotional methods such as advertising, sponsorship, guest lists, official opening and associated merchandise. Well-prepared students managed this part of the question well.

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

*For the Ron Mueck Exhibition at the NGV much needed to be considered in terms of preparation. The placement of the sculptures needed to be decided, the colour of the walls and if cameras would be allowed in the space. One thing done in preparation was the set up of the first small room where 'Dead Dad' was displayed, and the positioning of 'In Bed' as well as 'Drift'. Such methods of preparation involved creating scaled dioramas to decide on the display. 'Dead Dad' was placed isolated in a room alone, dimmed lights and on a low raised plinth to create a clinical feel. 'In Bed' was prepared so that a glint would appear in her eye due to the lighting, and the wall behind 'Drift' was painted blue to resemble the sky/water. For promotion it was decided that 'Wild Man' would be used on the promotional material. Posters and pamphlets displayed this image with red and white writing to attract viewers attention. For Sam Jinks, at the Karen Woodbury Gallery, in preparation the wall colours were considered but left white so viewers were not distracted...*

The following is an example of an appropriate response.

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*The exhibition On the Wall displayed multiple artists, and for a private gallery such as Metro Gallery it required detailed planning. In the planning, the gallery considered the best date to hold the exhibition and contacted all artists involved to gain their consent and permission to place their works in the gallery. Promoting the exhibition required multiple methods, such as the use of the gallery's mailing list and website to contact the exhibition's desired demographic. A graphic artist was used to create invitations and posters to promote the gallery and exhibition. The Monash Gallery of Art's methods of promotion included their website and mailing list, advertising in the local newspaper and the use of local radio to generate interest in the exhibition.*