VCE Studio Arts 2017–2022 Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between Art and Studio Arts?

VCE Art focuses on the role of art, in all forms, in contemporary and historical societies and cultures. Through research and investigation students build an understanding of how artists, through their practice and the artworks they produce, communicate ideas, values, beliefs and viewpoints. Whereas, VCE Studio Arts focuses more on role and practices of artists in society and develops an understanding of the way artists make artworks and their studio process. The study also explores the methods used by curators working in art galleries, museums and other art spaces to care for and present artworks in exhibitions.

Both studies have a theoretical component that supports either Art or Studio practice. The study of artworks and artists’ practice informs the student’s own art practice. This is a learning continuum from the Victorian Curriculum. When planning to teach the studies the relationship between ‘art making’ and ‘art theory’ should be considered holistically and not as independent Areas of Study.

VCE Art and Studio Arts have ‘Cross-study specifications’ (Page 10 – 11). These provide the structure for both studies and their individual qualities. In the Cross-study specifications of VCE Art and Studio Arts; the definition of ‘art elements and art principles’ and ‘visual language’ is identical.

1. What is the difference between ‘Studio Practice’ and ‘Studio Process’

Both ‘Studio Practice’ and ‘Studio Process’ are defined in the Cross-study specifications (Page 10 Studio Arts Study Design). They are the structure that governs all Areas of Study of the four units of the study. This indicates that the Cross-study specifications are assessed in the School Assessed Task, School Assessed Coursework and End of Year Examination.

‘Studio Practice’ is the way in which an artist works; their individual ideas, subject matter, conceptual possibilities, influences and inspiration and the style of their work dependent on the period of time and culture in which they are working. Studio practice also includes the materials, techniques, processes and artforms which the artist works with.

‘Studio process’ sits within ‘Studio Practice’ and for the purpose of the Studio Arts Study Design, consists of the five stages used when artists create artworks: explore, develop, refine, resolve and present. The studio process is also supported by the following: an exploration proposal, a work plan, visual diary, art forms, potential directions and presentation of final artworks.

‘Studio practice and Studio process are addressed specifically in each of the three areas of study, particularly in Units 3 and 4.

1. ‘Visual Language’

Visual language is integral to the Studio process in VCE Studio Arts. There is a description of ‘Visual Language’ in the Cross-study specifications on page 11 of the VCE Studio Arts study design. Visual language refers to the communication of ideas through experiences, images and objects. As the student develops their studio process their use of visual language becomes more refined and sophisticated to communicate their ideas. Visual language does not include photographs of the step by step process the student has undertaken to produce an artwork. Style, representation of ideas, beliefs and an understanding of historical and cultural contexts are communicated through Visual Language.

1. Can you explain the ‘Studio Process’ in Units 3 and 4? How are potential directions evaluated and then refined in Unit 4?

At the start of the studio process in Unit 3, students write an exploration proposal that determines the parameters of the process they wish to undertake. They explore, develop and refine sources of inspiration, ideas, materials, techniques and processes to present at least two potential directions. Potential directions are evaluated in Unit 3 to ensure the further development of artworks in Unit 4. Selected potential directions should effectively communicate concepts, ideas, and aesthetics defined in the exploration proposal and provide the scope to demonstrate the resolution of ideas and refinement of techniques and application of materials in Unit 4. Each stage of the studio process in Unit 3 must be documented in a visual diary.

In Unit 4 students focus on the refinement and presentation of artworks developed from the selected potential directions in Unit 3. There is no evaluation of potential directions at the commencement of Unit 4 as in the previous study design as this work has been completed in Unit 3. Students should focus on the refinement of artworks and their presentation. The presentation of at least two artworks should demonstrate cohesion and demonstrate a relationship to the evaluated potential directions and exploration proposal from Unit 3. The only need for a visual diary in Unit 4 is for authentication purposes; the focus is on the final artworks.

The student must consider the cohesive relationship and the presentation of the works. This includes consideration for the display of the works. Framing of artworks should not be a consideration of cohesion between works and students should be discouraged from expensive and unnecessary mounting and framing.

After the student has completed at least two final artworks that are cohesively related, the student prepares a written evaluation that draws upon written and visual documentation of the final artworks, with evidence of the potential directions and reflection about how each area of the exploration proposal has been achieved or not.

1. Can you clarify what is required in the Exploration Proposal in Unit 3 and the Evaluation Document in Unit 4?

The Exploration Proposal creates the framework for the Studio Process in Unit 3 and supports art making in Unit 4. It is written at the start of the start of the Studio Process in Unit 3. The Exploration Proposal is assessed and a score entered into VASS in Unit 3. The Exploration proposal is a document that has written and visual material and includes a plan for the Studio Process. The Exploration proposal is 750 – 1000 words (not including the plan). The exploration proposal should be word processed and presented in essay form. All secondary written and visual information sources should be appropriately cited.

The Evaluation Document is written at the completion of Unit 4 when the student has presented at least two cohesive and refined artworks. Students provide visual and written documentation of selected potential directions and identify the development, refinement and production of artworks and reflect on the communication of ideas. The written component of the Evaluation Document is 500 – 750 words. Visual material collated at the commencement of Unit 4 can be included for reference.

1. Can you clarify what is defined as a ‘Visual Diary?’

A description of the Visual Diary is provided in the Cross-study specifications on page 10 of the Studio Arts study design. The annotations and visual information in the visual diary can be progressively presented digitally or in a book. The Visual Diary is evidence of the student’s studio practice and process that is documented progressively. It is not a ‘curated’ folio of work. The visual diary is a workbook that should capture all stages of the student’s studio practice. Students can present their visual diary in plastic pockets but these are to be dated, signed and recorded by the teacher at different points in time throughout the School Assessed Task. A student record document is provided in the School Based Assessment Administration each year along with the Authentication Record Form. Visual Diaries presented for exhibition in Top Arts at the National Gallery of Victoria are often presented in plastic pockets for conservation and protection purposes and may not replicate the full student School Assessed Task.

1. How many artists do the students study in Unit 3 Area of Study 3: Artists and Studio Practice?

Students are required to study at least two artists and two artworks by each artist in a range of historical and cultural contexts. Students can compare the artists and artworks but the focus of the Outcome for this Area of Study is to examine the practice of the artists. The comparison must cover all aspects of the key knowledge and skills for Unit 3, Outcome 3 for the artists and artworks selected.

1. What exhibitions do the students study in Unit 4 Area of Study 3: Art industry contexts?

Students must visit at least two exhibitions in their current year of study either in Unit 3 or Unit 4. However, it is mandatory that the School Assessed Coursework Task should be completed in Unit 4. They research and examine a range of exhibitions and compare the preparation, presentation, conservation and promotion of specific art works in at least two exhibitions. Exhibitions of artworks include those in public art galleries and museums, commercial and private galleries, university art galleries and artist run spaces. Other examples include alternative art spaces such as cafes or community run spaces, outdoor spaces such as public parks or festivals and online galleries such as those selling artworks or those curated by public galleries such as the National Gallery of Victoria.

Students can analyse two exhibitions in the one gallery such as a public gallery but they must be aware that they need to describe and compare the exhibition of artworks in all listed exhibition spaces in the key knowledge and skills of Unit 4, Outcome 3.

The Outcome for this Area of Study focuses on the methods used by artists and the considerations used by curators in the preparation, presentation, conservation and promotion of artworks in at least two exhibitions. If the artist is deceased, the intentions of the artist still need to be discussed as well as the consideration of the curator of the exhibition discussed by the student.

1. Copyright, appropriation and referencing.

Copyright, appropriation and moral rights has been moved from Unit 3, Area of Study 3 to Unit 2, Area of Study 2. This allows for more connections to be made with the study of artists’ practice to the student’s own art practice. Teachers can still cover ‘appropriation’ as a topic in Unit 3, Area of Study 3. It will not be included as a specific question in the end of year examination.

Students are also reminded that they must include references to source and inspiration imagery in their Exploration Proposal and Studio Process. This includes the name of the artist and direct webpage link. This should be placed as an annotation next to the image in the Visual Diary and not as a bibliography. If imagery is not sourced or referenced it cannot be authenticated or assessed by the teacher as the student’s original work.

Students should be mindful of copyright requirements for entry into the Season of Excellence. Information regarding Copyright and Top Arts can be found on the Season of Excellence webpage.

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/excellenceawards/seasonofexcellence/index.aspx>