

# 2018 VCE Studio Arts examination report

## General comments

The 2018 Studio Arts examination offered students the opportunity to respond to a variety of short- and extended-answer questions relating to selected artworks from the colour insert. The final two questions required an extended response relating to the artists students studied during the year and their experiences when visiting different exhibitions.

Many students took the opportunity to write at length about their exploration proposal, potential direction and finished artworks. Some students did not realise that Questions 5, 6 and 7 were a sequence and tended to repeat information throughout Section B rather than leading on from one question to the next. Higher-scoring responses linked each question and addressed the specific areas required, such as elements, principles, materials and techniques as Question 6 stipulated.

Generally, students responded very well to Section A, but some students did not display an understanding of the difference between storing artworks and exhibiting works when responding to questions about storage exhibition and curation. The highest-scoring answers for this question made particular and correct reference to the artwork selected.

Many students did not have a strong use of visual language. Terms such as making an artwork 'pop' or a 'pop' of colour do not adequately fit descriptions for artworks. Another word commonly misused was 'vibe'; the 'vibe' of an artwork is not a useful way to discuss aesthetic qualities. The term 'balayage', which was also used in some responses, is a hairdressing term; in artworks this would be 'tonal gradation'.

## 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	8	18	23	21	19	10	3.5

Students were asked to discuss the use of materials and techniques in their chosen artworks, and most students understood the question and addressed all the key words. Students who scored highly were well prepared and considered how the artist constructed the artwork. Some started with the initial drawings and progressed through a variety of processes, describing how the materials were used. Some students even mentioned the artist's intention and their choices of specific materials such as hot pressed paper and the layering of paint. Such responses related specifically to the artwork selected.

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

*Margaret Olley has employed various techniques in the production of the oil painting. By painting on to board, Olley had a flat hard surface to work on, which was initially very smooth. She would have applied paint using a chiselled or flat brush. Using the wet-on-wet technique so as to produce the dabbed-on impressionist appearance of the work. She created impastos in the painting by using less thinner (such as turpentine or linseed oil) in parts, allowing her to produce a textured appearance. The use of a palette knife to "smear" the paint on would aid in the texturing as well.*

**Question 2**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	3	5	14	20	20	17	13	8	3.9

This question asked students to discuss the methods and considerations of either artists or curators in both a public gallery and a commercial gallery when storing an artwork. The highest-scoring answers made particular and correct reference to the chosen artwork (for example, specifying that an unframed work on paper may be stored in a solander box) and demonstrated a clear understanding of the different roles of a curator in a public gallery and a commercial gallery, as well as considering the different contexts and resources available.

Most students were able to identify the primary environmental considerations of storing an artwork: temperature, light and humidity. Providing the correct levels of these was a feature of higher-scoring responses.

Some students confused the display of artworks with the storage of artworks in their response. Instead of answering the question asked, students wrote about the considerations when exhibiting an artwork in a gallery space.

Lower-scoring responses did not focus on the requirements of the chosen artwork.

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

*When storing Michael Zavros Debaser in a public gallery, the curator must ensure it is placed with white gloves in a solander box, layered in acid free paper in a myeler sleeve to protect it from pests and damage. To control for naturally occurring circumstances, such as flooding, Zavros work must be placed in a waterproof storage area with fire resistant doors high up in a building such as the top floor. There must be checks on the work and the temperature must stay at 20 C +- 2 C by a computer controlled air conditioning system. The commercial gallery, when storing this work, it will likely be placed on a moveable wall or stored in the private space at the back of the gallery. The artist and curator of the commercial gallery must ensure that Zavros's work is in a clean dry climate to control for pests and insects. The area must be checked to ensure the safety of the works before they are either sold, taken back to the artists space or transported to another warehouse for storage.*

**Question 3**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	4	15	27	24	19	9	3.6

In this question students were required to analyse the ways in which the artist has used art elements and principles to demonstrate aesthetic qualities in the selected artwork. Most students were able to write about the elements easily but had difficulty discussing the principles.

Students who scored highly were able to link their chosen elements and principles to the aesthetic qualities that were evident in the artworks and discussed them in detail, which showed an excellent understanding of how they are applied. They used a good variation of art language and were not only able to describe the work in detail but also provided insight into why the artist made certain aesthetic choices and how this contributed to the overall feeling of the work.

A number of low-scoring responses did not discuss aesthetic qualities. Many only listed the elements and principles, which highlighted a lack of understanding.

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

*The artist of this stoneware sculpture has used elements such as line and shape to separate the black and white areas painted on the sculpture. The reoccurring use of the same fluid and organic squiggly lines creates a sense of movement and rhythm within the piece whilst the repetitive sharp contrast of the white against the black creates a pattern and bold asthetic effect. The symmetrical 3 Dimensional form of the sculpture further contributes to the sense of equilibrium created by the repetition of colour, line and shape enhancing the principles of balance and making it prominent overall. The sharp contrast of the black & white creates a bold asthetic effect whilst the equilibrium and balance mediated to viewers creates a calming effect through the structure and order of the work provoke feelings of relaxing. Some areas of the sculpture the line has been disrupted through the dripping of the paint creating an asthetic effect of sadness provoke dismall emotions as it appears as though the sculpture is crying.*

**Question 4**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	7	19	26	21	15	6	3.2

Students were asked to discuss the methods and intentions of exhibition spaces when exhibiting their artworks. Students selected an artwork from the colour insert and were asked to select a public gallery, an alternative art space or an online gallery. The specific medium/media, dimensions and subject matter were points to cover in an answer discussing the exhibition. Students could have also used in their discussion the nature and purpose of the exhibition space, pricing, commission, collection policy, funding, in-house publications/magazines and promotion materials. The question did not require an in-depth discussion of conservation.

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

*A key role of a public gallery is to ensure protection of works. Particularly more vulnerable works on paper such as this photograph. The curator of the exhibition would ensure regulation of light intensity, kept at no higher than 50lux. It should always be kept in a space away from unregulated natural light (particularly strong UV light) as this causes irreversible damage such as the tones fading. Temperature and humidity must also be regulated, kept at 20 C and 50%, as fluctuating temperature and humidity will cause the paper to become brittle, warp or potentially grow mould. When exhibited, the public must also be informed about the artwork, artist and any important information relating to it. This is often achieved through the use of didactic panels, wall text and sometimes materials such as brochures often provided before entering the exhibition.*

## Section B

### Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	2	3	9	22	25	22	13	4	4.1

In this question students were asked to discuss the conceptual possibilities and ideas used in their exploration proposal. Many students interpreted this question as requiring discussion of not only what they identified in their exploration proposal but also how they developed it further into a potential direction, which was not what the question required. Higher-scoring responses focused on what the student explored, which often included not only ideas and concepts (sub-themes and conceptual possibilities) but also how these could be represented through exploration of subject matter, materials, techniques, inspiration and aesthetic qualities.

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

*My first conceptual possibility is 'A collage of Generation Z' where I want to explore the identity and perception society has on adolescents. I imagine to represent the discrimination Gen Z faces who are the current adolescents of society and face discrimination by older generations. Thus I wanted to portray these stereotypes in a manner that would reflect the modern age of teenagers such as in street art style portrait of adolescents who are covered by flyposting imagery of text and symbols relating to their stereotypes. Whereas in my second conceptual possibility 'My own identity in Society' aims to explore my own experience in society growing as an adolescent into adulthood. Hence I had ideas of using Perspex layers to represent a portrait of my identity truly is through layers and utilise collage like composition and imagery to represent my emotions...*

### Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	2	6	14	21	21	18	12	5	4.8

This question built on the ideas and concepts from Question 5 and moved on to the development of one potential direction through the use of elements, principles, materials and techniques. In some responses students described their final artworks rather than elaborating on the develop and refine stage of the process. Higher-scoring answers explained the exploration of the process of experimentation and trials of materials, techniques and aesthetics, which led to a potential direction. These responses used clear and accurate descriptions of materials and techniques using art terminology, for example, trialling using impasto oil paint in bright colours in order to achieve a vibrant textural effect. Some lower-scoring answers listed their materials, art elements and principles in an unsophisticated manner that often did not explain how they related to the aesthetic of the artwork. Some students elaborated on their use of art elements and principles but forgot to describe their materials, or vice versa so that their answers were incomplete or confusing.

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

*My potential direction, 'the flower pot' was inspired by the digital paintings of David Hockney of many flower pots and still-life drawings of fruit and flowers. This potential direction was created by choosing a number of successful trials of using digital techniques and tools of different flower pots. David Hockney inspired me to explore different brush tools, settings, layer modes and opacity levels. The use of cross-hatching techniques was used on the tables and walls of the potential direction. The elements of tone, line and colour was most evident when creating my high contrast work. I used a monochromatic colour scheme on the pot and used line to define edges, shading and tonal value. The art elements used mostly was balanced and emphasis, to create a lonely or sad aesthetic and mood I used asymmetrical balance to draw the eyes on*

*the left side of painting which was the pot, to make it the focal point of the piece. I used blurring tool techniques to isolate the pot by the blurring the background.*

### Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	2	4	10	15	16	16	13	12	7	4	5.6

Discussion of two finished artworks was required for this question. Students needed to demonstrate the cohesive relationships between these works in terms of theme, ideas, subject matter, materials, techniques and aesthetic qualities. Higher-scoring responses were able to describe clearly the student's final artworks in relation to one another. They were able to clearly communicate the similarities and differences between the themes, ideas, subject matter, materials, techniques and aesthetic qualities while focusing on what created the cohesive relationships.

Lower-scoring responses simply described each final artwork without clearly drawing a comparison of the cohesive relationships between both artworks. There was evidence of similarities; however, students were not able to communicate these connections in a clear and coherent manner.

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

*My first artwork was an instillation where colour, texture, sound, light, space, unity and contrast were captured in a walk through room, similar to artist Pipilotti Rist. The work generated an immersive secluded area for visitors to touch, smell, hear and see the atmosphere around them. This work used similar tones to my second artwork and used extensive embroidery and glass beading to characterise frames within the hanging objects. The second body of work established a cohesive link to the first body as it used a similar colour pallet, had many layered elements, used texture in a circular embroidery hoop and allowed for a visual engagement to the audience. Both artworks generated an aura of what is considered visual. My second body of work used four layered grounds to project a literal visual of my concept synaesthesia. The artwork had a background of Blue, yellow and green and pink colours which contrasted to establish a heightened colour stimulation. The foreground was a fine liner drawing of my cousin which used refined line to communicate personality.*

## Section C

### Question 8

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

This question required students to discuss two artists they had studied during the year and the ways the artists developed and refined their use of materials, techniques and processes to communicate ideas and meanings in the chosen artworks.

Higher-scoring responses soundly discussed the ideas and meanings explored within the artist's works, making detailed reference to how specific processes, techniques and materials were used in the development and refinement of artworks. These students were able to make relevant and insightful references to how this was reflected in the artworks. Higher-scoring responses drew on a range of artworks in order to support their discussion.

Lower-scoring responses tended to rewrite the artist's personal situation and historical and cultural context and found it hard to adapt this to fit the question. Some students did not reference artworks in their analysis or, if artworks were mentioned, only a brief reference and description were given as a response. Very few students wrote in depth about each artist's processes, techniques or use of materials.

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

*Leonardo da Vinci from a young age was a member of an artist guild which allowed him to develop his 'realistic' skill through the use of the oil medium which at the time was expanding in complexity. The development of Leonardo's works are very strong in comparison of his early and late works such as the Mona Lisa 1503-1506 which contains accurate anatomy and perspective. Leonardo also often completed private anatomical studies which extended his ability and lead way to his developed technique 'sfumato' which represents the smooth gradient between tone rather than the use of line and harsh contrasts. The development and refinement of his craft lead Leonardo to achieve 'realism' in his works whilst also communicating a 'beauty' aesthetic seen within his piece 'The lady with an ermine' 1490 which depicts Cecilia Gallerani with smooth clear skin in vibrant clothing. This piece also contains further meaning through the ermine representing the Duke of Milan (as his nickname was the white ermine) which represents how the 'realistic' skill allows Leonardo to effectively add complexity and meaning to his pieces. Leonardo's work are created on a traditional process of sketching and then slowly layering the oil paint to build depth and realism.*

*Gregory Crewdson draws inspiration from the film world often creating a cinematic presentation to his photographs, which he achieves through his eye to detail which resembles that of Gustav Gray a French photographer of the 1800's. This eye for detail allows Crewdson to create stories within his work such as 'Untitled (The Madison) 2007 in which he portrays post industrial boom town and the working class through the empty streets and lone figure smoking cigarettes, These themes and ideas are common in the majority of his works. Crewdson utilises a Hasselbald film camera in a 8 x10 format to achieve these detailed shots and cinematic looks. Crewdson mostly shot during twilight or the golden hour to have smooth and soft lighting which reflects his often 'time of thought' moments in his figures, Crewdson also a crew to help the process of designing sets and instructing actors on how they should be positioned or looked.*

### Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	12	3	4	5	7	9	9	8	9	8	9	8	5	4	6.5

Students were asked to analyse how two artworks presented in different exhibitions reflect the intentions of the artist and the intention of the creator.

Overall this question was answered well and gave students the opportunity to apply their understanding of selected artworks and curatorial decisions made in exhibitions they had visited during the year. Most answers were well structured and considered all aspects of the question. They included detailed descriptions of the layout, placement and relationship of the artworks to the overall exhibition and the intentions of the curator and/or artist. Higher-scoring answers gave the details of the artworks and stated the names of the curators. They were able to give details about the layout and the curatorial decisions made in relation to the selected artworks and the exhibitions as a whole.

Lower-scoring responses did not address the intentions of either the artist or the curator. The students tended to analyse the exhibition in general terms without discussing how the placement of the works reflected the intentions of both the artist and curator.

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

*MONA's exhibit 'ZERO' and the Anna Schwarz galleries 'John Nixon EPW: selected works' each communicates through both the artist and the curator the depth of works. Tijs Visser curator of MONA's ZERO seeked to rediscover the forgotten movement of 'ZERO' exploring the experimental era of German artists alongside a (broader?) international influence. Within the exhibiti Visser chose to exhibit 'Piroutten' a large scale light installation by Otto Piene. Piene as one of the founding fathers of the ZERO movement is paid tribute to within this work. 'Piroutten' was designed to bend the realism of light and explore a more experiential approach to art.*

*Visser deliberately displayed the work in a secluded room to create a fairly immersive experience. In creating the work Piene intended to challenge the concept of art and reduce it, Visser through the black walls and his choice to slightly suspend the sculptural installation transports the viewer into an alternate world of manipulated light. Visser pays tribute to Piene through displaying piece and captures the pure meaning of the Zero movement. John Nixon as an active artist worked as a curator for his own exhibition. Nixon's work 'Untitled (Black Colour Rhythm)' was deliberately displayed within the mass? Of Nixon's works to capture the beauty of minimalism. Nixon's readymade art was displayed within the singular, dull lit, room of the Anna Schwarz gallery. Nixon has three major series within the exhibit chose to mix them together. As a reflection on his entire practice. 'Untitled (Black Colour Rhythm) features coloured wooden blocks on black canvas. Nixon displayed the works side by side the Untitled piece to create and irregularity and add emphasis for the viewers experience. The work is simply hung with nails to ensure that the coherence of readymade and readiness and there vertical connections is further enforced. Nixon as both curator and the artist of his exhibition in the commercial gallery of Anna Schwarz evokes the purest form of presentation as depicted in the exhibition.*