

# Visual Arts Studies

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Arts Learning Area



Government  
of South Australia

**SACE**  
Board of SA

# **VISUAL ARTS STUDIES**

## **2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT**

### **ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: PRACTICAL STUDIES**

The moderator's role is to confirm the teacher's marks based on the standard and within a tolerance range.

Students who produced strong, impressive final artworks had experimented with a range of ideas, themes, and media, displaying freshness, personal engagement, and a sense of inquiry and sophistication in their work. These successful students displayed extensive image development and authentic idea development, clearly demonstrating conceptualisation and exploration through higher-level thinking skills. Extensive composition development was a feature of these developmental processes that led to higher levels of image resolution.

Students continued to find many different sources of inspiration, from personal issues through to the local environment. This resulted in extensive backup for both practical pieces, which clearly supported the ideas and processes leading to final works.

Students' ideas were varied and related to their personal interests, resulting in an accurately recorded 'journey' and authentic work. In many cases, exciting conceptual work was evident, as the ideas and concepts were thoroughly researched prior to processes and techniques being decided on. This indicated that a thorough intellectual understanding underpinned the decisions, trials, and experimentation.

Teachers are pivotal in monitoring student progress with feedback and support in their journey; they help to provide stimulus for ideas and advice about media and materials. Where this occurs, it is evident that students make wise and balanced decisions about the outcome of their work.

Many students rely on the Internet, images from magazines, commercially sourced images, or images from other artists. In cases where backup consisted of extensive collections of printed images with little evidence of attempts to meet the criteria, imagery was frequently irrelevant to the students' work. Where commercial or personal photographs are used, there should be immediate or linked evidence of idea or media/technique exploration. 'Cut and paste' images can be useful in the generation of ideas, but it is recommended that they be kept to a minimum, and the sources of all imagery should be acknowledged.

Written notation can be beneficial in reflecting on and recognising success and visually interesting accidental outcomes. Written notation needs to clearly link to the developmental support work to show how the ideas develop and it can include sketches, photographic evidence, and diagrams. Teachers should closely monitor the authenticity of students' work on a regular basis, as ownership must be clear throughout the backup folio.

When working with photography and Photoshop, it is important to ensure that the creative process is transparent, with documented evidence of concept development leading to final pieces. The evidence can be provided as a hard copy, or in a digital format which must be easy for moderators to access. When handled poorly, the dependence and reliance on technology can detract from the integrity and authenticity of the final artworks. Excessive use of Photoshop to produce a type of generic image should be avoided. Students are encouraged to use a balanced approach, combining both tactile and digital methods of producing art. The more successful folios contained many ideas and experiments with media and methods, and showed developments in skills and explorations of a variety of ideas and concepts.

Many folios consisted of a recount log of how the process was undertaken, rather than providing evidence of idea extension, development, or problem-solving. Students with these folios arrived at the end product very quickly with, in some cases, evidence of a preconceived idea. These students inevitably did not demonstrate a full and personal immersion in their work.

Students who choose to produce two unrelated practical pieces need to be able to manage their time well.

Cartooning and stencil-style imagery are valid forms of expression, but must be supported with sufficient evidence of concept, character, and idea development. Teachers should be aware of potential problems and challenges, and appreciate that students using these techniques require close monitoring.

There is no expectation of students to create an excessive amount of artworks. Smaller, high-quality works do not always translate successfully into large works, as they lose their freshness, quality, and sophistication. In such situations, teachers need to monitor, communicate, and explain the relevant performance criteria to students.

Teachers should note that hard work, effort, attendance, and personal progress will continue not to be the criteria for assessment, and cannot be used to justify a student's mark. Expensive materials and framed works are not part of the assessment criteria.

The consequences of plagiarism need to be explained to students, as this can be a serious issue for teachers, schools, and parents. The teacher needs to see all of the work in all its developmental stages to verify authenticity.

## **ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: EXAMINATION**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

In the examination, students are to write about the artworks in a critical, analytical manner and not rely on prepared answers. The most successful students were articulate and demonstrated sound literacy skills to show their knowledge and understanding. Artists' names were spelled correctly and the dates of artworks were indicated in brackets after the name of the work.

Less successful students did not heed words in the questions like 'critically analyse', as a lengthy, in-depth description is not a critical analysis.

A number of students interpreted the questions as an invitation to write all they knew about the topic.

Overall, it was clear that students were interested in the topics they decided to study in conjunction with their teacher. Teachers who supported their students by clearly identifying the key requirements provided them with strong scaffolding for achievement in the examination.

## **PART 1: HISTORICAL FOCUS**

### **Topic 1: The Roles of Visual Artists in Society**

#### ***Question 1 (298 students)***

The more successful responses were supported with relevant examples that linked the artist's views to society and discussed how they were identified in the works. These students

displayed knowledge of the views of the artists and of the society in which they lived.

A number of students misunderstood the intent of the question, demonstrating a limited understanding of the views of the artists, and instead attempted to discuss the expectations of the society.

The key phrase 'can be identified' was often ignored or given limited attention in the responses. In particular, students studying Australian colonial artists or artists accompanying exploratory voyages were the least successful, as the view of the society for those students became the view of the artist.

Those students who studied a small group of artists restricted their knowledge of art in the context of the society and therefore struggled to fully discuss the statement to the question, as did those students with a limited number of supporting examples and those who did not understand the relevance of the key items, in particular the artist's view of society. These less successful responses lacked discussion of the statement and the 'identified' aspect of the question.

### **Question 2 (216 students)**

Successful responses displayed a clear understanding of the roles that the artists played in their society. Many competent responses dealt with French Impressionism's artists and the role that they played within their society. Most made strong connections to the society and were clear in describing the various artists' roles.

A number of students expected that a narrative of the roles would answer this question sufficiently without the necessary link to the society. These responses described works, but failed to make a coherent discussion of the society, or had a limited understanding of the roles. These students often discussed only one artist in their response.

## **Topic 2: Methods and Media**

### **Question 3 (139 students)**

Successful responses showed a clear understanding of the techniques that artists used and the impact that the techniques had on their works.

Less successful answers displayed a lack of understanding of the techniques, occasionally confusing media with techniques. A lack of reference to significant impact was apparent in these responses, along with a limited reference to works and techniques.

Some responses appeared to be over prepared and predict answers, lacking connection to the question or reference to the techniques. Other responses did not demonstrate a clear understanding and lacked analysis of the examples in relation to the significant impact on the works.

### **Question 4 (52 students)**

This was an open question that presented students with many opportunities to display their knowledge and understanding of media and the influence of media on the works.

The more successful students made reference to the influence on the final works, referring to a range of works in their answer.

Less successful responses lacked conviction in explaining the influence of media on the works, and were unable to draw relationships to specific works. Rehearsed answers lacked cross-reference between the way the artists used media and the influence on the works. A

number of students used a limited number of examples to support their answer.

### **Topic 3: Form and Function**

#### ***Question 5 (46 students)***

A number of responses displayed good general knowledge, and were able to explain how technology influenced the development of design and also how technology influenced developments in the arts and crafts movement.

In some cases, students were distracted by explaining the development of a product, not its design. Those students who used prepared answers tended to give responses which were disjointed, contradictory, and poorly referenced, and ultimately did not address the question.

Several responses did address the influence of technology, but referenced design movements instead of individual designers and their works. Often the reference to the key examples was limited or lacking in detail, and there was a lack of understanding of technology as an influence.

#### ***Question 6 (6 students)***

Students who were successful showed a good understanding of the question and the ability to make sound reference to design works.

Some students used prepared answers that demonstrated limited understanding of the question. Students needed to discuss the relationship between form and function.

### **Topic 4: Visual Arts in a Social-cultural Context**

#### ***Question 7 (154 students)***

A number of successful responses deconstructed the question well and confidently discussed works in relation to those aspects of the society in which they were created. The Australian 'Angry Decade' and American 'Pop Art' were popular sources to support answers to this question.

Less successful responses ignored certain aspects of the question, notably the extent of agreement with the statement. Many answers did not demonstrate a broad knowledge of the society in which the artists lived and instead made generalisations.

#### ***Question 8 (337 students)***

This question prompted a number of very successful responses involving Indigenous art, 'Pop Art', and the 'Angry Decade'. These students discussed the expression of sociocultural traditions in the works.

Prepared answers did not demonstrate knowledge of the forms of expression, but did relate examples to the society at the time. A number of the less successful responses did not refer to the aspects of the society in which the artists lived.

### **Topic 5: A Visual Artist and His or Her Work**

#### ***Question 9 (124 students)***

Successful students did make critical analysis of the work and were able to link the work and the context in which it was created. These responses provided evidence of knowledge of the artist, their work, and the time in which they lived.

A number of the less successful answers confused context and influence, used limited examples, and reverted to description instead of critical analysis. These answers were really just biographies or extensive introductions containing background information which were not relevant to the question.

#### ***Question 10 (488 students)***

Several very successful responses used Frank Lloyd Wright as the artist and demonstrated a variety of influences in a range of his works. A number of students who had studied Jeffrey Smart struggled to clearly state his influences, while some who were fully aware of his limitations regarding influences answered the question accordingly.

Students who struggled with this question could not differentiate between context and influences. Many well-rehearsed responses were presented, but failed to identify the significance of the influence to the works. Less successful responses did not use enough examples to support a full and detailed discussion.

### **Topic 6: Patronage**

#### ***Question 11 (0 students)***

#### ***Question 12 (2 students)***

### **Topic 7: Visual Arts and Politics**

#### ***Question 13 (120 students)***

The more successful students discussed European art and the connection with wartime, either 1914–18 or 1939–45. Students who were successful demonstrated knowledge of political events and their impact on the creation of the visual arts works.

Students who made vague references to political events struggled to make links to the related works. Many students did not discuss the statement, used a limited number of artists as examples, and did not provide titles and/or dates for the works. Students who responded with prepared answers did not answer the question fully.

#### ***Question 14 (50 students)***

There were many successful responses to this question, with a variety of visual arts works used to explain propaganda. Works by World War II German artists, Dadaists, and Futurists were important parts of these responses. This question demanded a broad understanding and a discussion of more than three or four works, as well as an understanding of propaganda and its use.

Less successful responses lacked an explanation about the extent to which the works had been used, and discussed a limited number of artists and works.

### **Topic 8: Visual Arts and Religion**

#### ***Question 15 (20 students)***

The more successful students were well informed and addressed the question using a variety of examples to appraise the significance of the works and why they may be considered masterworks.

Less successful responses were brief, lacked detail, and produced lists of works inferring the

significance of the works. These students also struggled to link their knowledge to the question requirements.

### **Question 16 (60 students)**

More successful responses demonstrated a clear understanding of symbols and iconography in visual arts works and were able explain how the works supported an understanding of the beliefs. A number of students chose Angkor Wat as the (sole) artist and were able to answer the question with success.

Those students who lacked a clear understanding of the use of symbols and icons struggled to make a comprehensive response. Less successful responses explained the icons and symbols used by the artists, but did not deal with the understanding of beliefs. Some essays assumed knowledge on behalf of the reader.

## **Topic 9: Ecologically Conscious Design**

### **Question 17 (0 students)**

### **Question 18 (20 students)**

Students provided evidence of knowledge of ecology and several case studies, but lacked a depth of understanding of the effect on lifestyles.

## **Topic 10: Visual Arts, Science, and Technology**

### **Question 19 (12 students)**

Several competently written responses addressed the inspirational aspects of scientific advances, such as those made during the Impressionist era.

Students who did not fully address the question missed points such as 'inspire', or discussed existing scientific findings instead of 'advances'.

### **Question 20 (14 students)**

The more successful essays discussed links between science and emerging technologies, relating them to changes in the making of visual arts works. A number of students responded at a high level by discussing in depth the scientific developments during the Impressionist era, including the camera.

Not all students addressed aspects of the question such as 'dramatic' and 'production' of visual arts works.

## **PART 2: CONTEMPORARY FOCUS**

### **Topic 1: The Roles of Visual Artists in Society**

### **Question 21 (160 students)**

Students used the example of a number of artists with different personal opinions or positions to confidently create an integrated discussion of visual arts works. These answers were well supported with reference to key works, clearly discussed the statement, and acknowledged the 'critical' aspect of the question.

Less successful responses were brief, lacking in reference to the statement or ignoring

aspects of the statement such as 'critical' and 'change'. Such responses referred to only one or two artists, or provided information not related to the question.

### **Question 22 (183 students)**

More successful students were able to discuss works from several artists and demonstrated how the artists' views are apparent in their works. A number of students used examples of contemporary Indigenous artists and their works, and made links to the question.

A number of students were aware of the artists' views, but lacked the capacity to relate them to specific aspects of their works. Less successful responses referenced one artist, and discussed ideas instead of views. These responses were lacking in depth of knowledge.

## **Topic 2: Methods and Media**

### **Question 23 (92 students)**

Many students misread the question and chose to write about techniques, these successful responses made sweeping generalisations or were unable to demonstrate developments in media and the influence on the creation of the works. Often the explanation was about developments in techniques and not media. Several responses attempted to use the development of the camera, yet a focus on digital camera development was more appropriate here.

A number of answers appeared to be rote-learned answers, lacking in reference to the key points of the question and tending to be lengthy descriptions of works.

### **Question 24 (58 students)**

Some responses demonstrated a competent understanding of both the emerging technologies and the artists' techniques, and were able to use a variety of examples to support the answers.

Some responses had limited evidence of an understanding of the emerging technologies. A number of students wrote about artists' techniques, but did not relate them to the emerging technologies, demonstrate knowledge of processes, or address the question.

## **Topic 3: Form and Function**

### **Question 25 (12 students)**

Successful responses indicated a good understanding of a variety of influences on design, and more successful answers were able to identify the significance of the influences in a knowledgeable and competent manner. These responses used a variety of different types of design as examples.

### **Question 26 (6 students)**

Although this question posed a challenge, several competent responses used a cross-section of examples to debate the statement and relate it to the impact of developments in technology.

Less successful responses tended to be brief, limited in the variety of examples, and with limited relationship to the question.

## **Topic 4: Visual Arts in a Social-cultural Context**

### ***Question 27 (149 students)***

Many students had studied contemporary Australian Indigenous artists and were able to respond to this question successfully with a variety of examples.

A number of students again attempted to use historical artists or works, and some made little reference to the forms of expression and made poor attempts to relate them to the society.

### ***Question 28 (84 students)***

A number of students provided well-constructed responses, many of which used contemporary Australian Indigenous artists and their works. Some confident students rebutted the question and discussed a variety of works to support their position.

Less successful responses did not discuss the statement, did not address diversity, misinterpreted the context in which diversity was discussed (taken as diversity of the artists' expression), and/or did not discuss.

A number of students provided detailed biographical information that was largely irrelevant and, unfortunately, some students also provided historical information for this contemporary question.

## **Topic 5: A Visual Artist and His or Her Work**

### ***Question 29 (240 students)***

This question encouraged some very competent and creative responses, the most successful of which were fully prepared to critically analyse examples of visual arts in the context in which they were created. These responses also looked beyond the superficiality of the artist's life and chronology, and instead fully addressed the points of the question.

Less successful responses appeared to be prepared answers and took this question as the best fit. Some students seemed to think that context and influences were interchangeable. A number of responses confused context and interpretation (meaning) of works.

Teachers are encouraged to explicitly teach critical analysis, as many students relied on description or simple analysis of works.

### ***Question 30 (768 students)***

The responses to this question were very successful and discussed influences on the artists and identified evidence of those influences in cited examples of their works. The most successful responses referenced six or seven works of art, discussed the influences in detail, and confidently commented on the significance of the influences.

Less successful answers did not comment on the significance of the influences, relying on relating knowledge of influences and works. Many responses were simply essays of memorised facts, often opening with irrelevant biographical details. Unfortunately, many students referred to pre-1985 works. A number of answers confused inspiration or motivating issues with influences, and therefore did not fully address the question. These essays tended to provide superficial discussion of ideas, inspirations, or issues, and attempted to relate them to the works.

## **Topic 6: Patronage**

### ***Question 31 (148 students)***

There were a number of competent responses, with some excellent essays addressing the question by making reference to 'new and exciting' works and showing a good knowledge of patronage.

Less successful responses tended to refer to the support of patronage in a vague or tentative way. Many of these responses were brief and lacked sufficient examples of both patronage and works.

### ***Question 32 (14 students)***

Competent responses referred to a variety of commissions and wrote about influences on the artist and resulting works.

Some responses were unable to comment on their agreement towards the statement, and instead simply addressed types of commissions without any commentary on the influences.

## **Topic 7: Visual Arts and Politics**

### ***Question 33 (16 students)***

Several excellent responses used a number of different artists and their visual arts works to substantiate the student's position and referenced them well to the issues of the conflict.

A numbers of students used pre-1985 works, failed to cite the works correctly, or ignored the point of the question entirely.

### ***Question 34 (24 students)***

Political purpose was invariably interpreted as war, ignoring opportunities to refer to other aspects of social conflict in Australia or overseas. A wide range of artists and works need to be addressed to respond fully to questions in this topic, and many answers referenced only one or two artists and their works.

Less successful responses were brief, often lacking knowledge of the topic, or failing to adapt and apply knowledge to formulate a response to this question.

## **Topic 8: Visual Arts and Religion**

### ***Question 35 (28 students)***

Responses that discussed why contemporary pieces of work may be considered an expression of belief and detailed those beliefs produced successful answers. The most successful responses acknowledged the issue of 'narrative' from the statement.

Several responses unsuccessfully attempted to refer to several religions, while a number ignored the point of the question and produced answers discussing beliefs as a form of expression. Other less successful responses did not provide evidence of an understanding of religious beliefs.

### ***Question 36 (42 students)***

A number of responses did not differentiate between symbols and icons. Less successful responses described the icons and symbols, but did not discuss how the artists used them.

## **Topic 9: Ecologically Conscious Design**

### ***Question 37 (30 students)***

The key items for the topic (as outlined in the curriculum statement) indicate the need for a broad exploration, but evidence in the responses suggest that ecology was limited mainly to recycled materials, or that students chose to use only those examples. Other responses were supported by reference to the smart car, the wind-up radio, and one house.

There was limited evidence of depth of research for the examples, understanding of ecology, and ability to analyse examples of design. For many students, analysis was understood as description, but a broad description did little to support answers to this question.

### ***Question 38 (16 students)***

The more successful answers were able to discuss examples to support responses to this statement, linking works to the resourceful use of materials.

Less successful responses failed to deal with the second part of the statement regarding any restriction on the designer. A number of students limited supporting examples to one home, thereby providing little evidence of a full understanding of ecology and the resourceful use of materials.

## **Topic 10: Visual Arts, Science, and Technology**

### ***Question 39 (28 students)***

The successful responses used a variety of visual arts works and were able to confidently discuss the link with science and the innovative aspect of the works.

Other students attempted to respond to the statement but produced shallow discussion through a limited number of examples, brief reference to the works, and little or no reference to the innovative quality of the works.

### ***Question 40 (44 students)***

The more successful responses were well-constructed essays that referred to a number of examples in their explanation of the new technologies and their use in the production of visual arts works.

Students needed to use a variety of examples to support their answer, and needed to demonstrate an understanding of the new technologies and their relationship to the works.

## **ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: STUDENT CHOICE TOPIC (PRESENTATION)**

The student choice topic is student driven and it is expected that the research reflects growth and discovery for students. It is expected that research generates further research, thus opening up a journey of discovery for the student. These topics often pursue a question or statement and it is evident that the students were engaged deeply in the process. The discussions need to return to the key items frequently. In the most successful presentations, the bibliographies were extensive and revealed a wide range of research.

It is a requirement that students develop research skills and, therefore, students should investigate a variety of research options, both primary and secondary. Quotations are

acceptable, but not at the expense of personal voice or the opportunity to express conclusions appropriately.

Some students linked their student choice topics with their practical studies, and this is acceptable as a springboard to the study.

It is important that teachers encourage the drafting process and monitor drafts to keep the question or statement in focus.

Successful students chose a topic that engaged them personally; key items were addressed sequentially or embedded in the final presentation. These students' final presentations were conclusive in that they reflected authentic learning, personal engagement, and reflection.

It was evident that some students relied solely on the Internet for their information. This meant the responses lacked a depth of understanding about the topic being investigated. These project-like presentations tended to be short, with generalised research and a limited bibliography.

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