



## GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2004 Studio Arts examination was specifically designed to draw upon the knowledge and skills required for Outcome 3 in Unit 3 and Outcome 3 in Unit 4. As indicated in the new Studio Arts Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design, all questions were compulsory. Questions 1, 2 and 3 required a short response, whereas Questions 4 and 5 required an extended response. Visual material was used in Question 1 and included a range of art forms. Advice about the nature of visual and written stimulus material that may be included on the examination paper was provided in the VCAA Bulletin March 2004 Supplement 2. A total of 50 marks were allocated for the paper. Ninety minutes were allowed for students to complete the examination.

The structure and format of the written examination in Studio Arts has been relatively consistent in recent years, and teachers and students are clearly taking notice of advice given in past Assessment Reports and improving their skills in responding to some question types on the exam. Broadly speaking, the general quality of responses provided by students was pleasing; however, a number of common problems were identified by examiners.

The 2004 Studio Arts written examination was structured specifically to test student's ability to **apply** the knowledge learnt from Outcome 3 in Units 3 and 4 in such a way that students could clearly demonstrate that knowledge.

Question 1 asked students to select an artwork and, from the images provided, discuss it in terms of two (out of a choice of three) designated areas. The student's ability to demonstrate their knowledge about a particular art form through accurate use of language and terminology is an important aspect of Question 1; however, it is one which few students spend time on perfecting.

By far the most popular factors discussed were the communication of ideas and meanings, and the artist's use of materials and techniques in the selected artwork. Very few students successfully discussed the selected artwork in terms of its aesthetic qualities; there was often little demonstration of an understanding of what aesthetics are, making it difficult for students to discuss the artwork's aesthetic qualities if they did not know what the term actually meant. The discussion of an artwork's aesthetic qualities should involve more than just providing a list of the design elements and principles; it requires students to discuss how the design elements and principles are used to achieve certain aesthetic qualities in the artwork. Many students chose an image with subject matter that was reasonably straightforward to interpret, but then did not elaborate on the artist's use of materials and techniques. Students also need to be aware that, as has been stated in past Assessment Reports, there is a big difference between merely describing what you see in an artwork and actually relating the ideas and meanings through accurate and correct discussion of the aesthetic qualities which shape the meanings and ideas of the artwork.

As a guide, students should look for the key words in the questions, which are often highlighted in bold text. These words indicate to students how they should apply their knowledge. In the 2004 examination, Question 1 asked students to **discuss** the selected artwork in terms of two factors, not describe. Through this discussion students should have been able to amply demonstrate their knowledge of the selected art form.

In Question 2, the key word was **explain**, not describe. Examiners were therefore looking for students to apply their knowledge, not merely repeat information that had been rote learnt. It was often the case that students were able to describe the roles of one of the venues, but not clearly explain the differences between their chosen examples.

Likewise in Question 3, the key word was **explain**; students were asked to '**explain** the methods used to conserve artwork in a specific artform'. Examiners were looking for students to apply their knowledge about how certain factors affect the conservation of artworks in a specific art form. Some students failed to read the question carefully enough, and although a large number of students had acquired a solid body of knowledge in this area, too often this was repeated verbatim without addressing the key areas of the question. Far too many students provided accurate descriptions of methods used to conserve artworks in general, but failed to clearly explain the methods used to conserve artworks in a specific art form. In other words, there was no real application of knowledge in how conservation methods can be used in relation to a specific art form such as painting, textiles, or any another art form the student may be familiar with.

Question 4 asked for students to identify an art industry issue from the current or previous year, and to discuss, with reference to two points of view, the key ideas and/or concerns relating to the issue. As an example, it would have been appropriate to discuss censorship as an art industry issue, but students could not refer to the Serrano exhibition at the NGV in 1997 as an example of censorship because it did not occur in the current or previous year. Whilst many



students were able to discuss an art industry issue in general, there were still a number of students who could not accurately identify an issue that had arisen in the current or previous year. This is a concern, as the Studio Arts Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design quite specifically defines “Current art industry issues” as occurring in the current and/or previous year. When similar issues have arisen in previous years, they may be used for the purposes of informing an understanding of the current issue.’ Students must be able to clearly identify what the art industry issue they have chosen to discuss is (whether it be censorship, the use of public money to purchase art works, or any number of other art related issues), and they must be able to relate it to a current context. Students are expected to clearly discuss two different points of view with reference to specific perspectives from people or groups who are involved in the issue. Students must demonstrate their knowledge of the key ideas and/or concerns relating to the issue, and articulate this in a way which clearly demonstrates this knowledge. As the Study Design indicates, ‘candidates should be able to develop and substantiate personal points of view about issue(s) involved in the production, presentation, public perception, promotion and/or marketing of art.’ Students should therefore be able to demonstrate this knowledge clearly, with insight into the ideas and/or concerns surrounding the issue.

Question 5 required students to respond in an extended format to the question ‘**Analyse** ways in which **two** artists from different historical and/or cultural contexts develop aesthetic qualities and communicate ideas and meanings in their artworks’. A number of important points need to be raised from the way students responded to this question in 2004.

- The artists discussed must be from either different cultural contexts or from different historical contexts. For instance, it would not be appropriate for a student to discuss Monet and Renoir, who shared the same historical period and cultural context. It would be appropriate, however, to discuss Monet and Tom Roberts, who shared the same historical period but had different cultural contexts. Equally, it would be appropriate to discuss Alfred Hitchcock and Paul Cox, who both worked in film but during different historical and cultural contexts. While most students were able to discuss the appropriate artists, there were some who could not. Students need to make sure that the artists they research work/did work in different historical and/or cultural contexts, as advised in Area of Study 3 on page 22 of the Studio Arts Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.
- Far too many students regurgitated learnt biographies of the artist’s life without actually answering the question. Some students fall into the trap of thinking that if they write a lot about an artist without actually answering the question it won’t matter as much; it will. Once again, the application of knowledge to the specifics of the question was required.
- The references in student’s answers to the ways artists developed aesthetic qualities and communicated ideas and meanings in their artworks were sometimes not clear or not provided at all. This question required students to use the knowledge that they had acquired about the artists they had studied and apply it to the question. Students must understand what the question is asking of them in order to achieve good marks. Often students required a more thorough knowledge of the artist and their works (not their biography), which can be achieved with improved research and understanding.

## Areas of strength and weakness

### Strengths

Students who were awarded high marks consistently:

- provided detailed responses which were appropriate and applicable to the questions
- demonstrated a solid grasp of appropriate terminology and language
- provided in depth answers that revealed a thorough understanding of the course content
- demonstrated that they could communicate effectively the body of knowledge that they had acquired
- included relevant examples and provided appropriate discussion on a personal level of involvement
- provided responses which clearly demonstrated that they understood the nature of the question
- applied their knowledge in an informative and creative manner.

### Weaknesses

Students who were awarded low marks consistently:

- did not comprehend what the question was asking
- did not demonstrate an understanding of a body of knowledge in relation to the key knowledge requirements in Outcome 3 of Units 3 and 4
- did not provide relevant information
- failed to use an appropriate level of language and terminology
- demonstrated a general lack of study and research skills in preparation for the exam
- repeated information in the hope of filling out the answer.



The most common faults observed throughout the 2004 Studio Arts examination paper were:

- a limited ability to read and understand the requirements of the question
- an inability to apply appropriate factual information to the specifics of the question
- believing that a discussion of aesthetic qualities can be provided through a visual description of the artist's use of the art elements and principles in Question 1
- providing a description of the visual image in Question 1 rather than discussing the way the artist communicated ideas and meanings or used materials and techniques
- pre-prepared answers that did not address the specifics of the question
- an inability to articulate the context that gave rise to the art industry issue selected in Question 4
- difficulty in demonstrating the relevance of the art industry issue in relation to the required time frame as stated in the Studio Arts Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design; that is, an issue which occurred in the current and/or previous year
- choosing to discuss visual images in Question 1 where the student was not familiar with the art form and so had difficulty in discussing the artist's use of materials and had little idea on the techniques the artist would use to create such works
- providing the student's own point of view in relation to Question 4 rather than the informed perspectives of others.

It was pleasing to note that many students took the advice provided in the 2003 Assessment Report and had visited galleries first hand to view exhibitions and develop a greater appreciation of the way the art industry operates. It is important that students spend time becoming familiar with the language and terminology used across the art industry, as this will assist them in responding to examination questions in a more informed and knowledgeable manner.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

The assessment criteria published by the VCAA were used as a basis for setting the examination and as a guide to developing a marking scheme. Current examination assessment criteria can be located at [www.vcaa.gov.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.gov.edu.au)

### Question 1

|              |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |
|--------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|
| Work Selecte | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| %            | 1 | 2 | 15 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 10 | 17 | 1 | 6 | 5  |

#### Part 1

|       |   |   |    |    |    |    |         |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|---------|
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | Average |
| %     | 1 | 8 | 21 | 34 | 24 | 13 | 3.1     |

#### Part 2

|       |   |    |    |    |    |    |         |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | Average |
| %     | 4 | 10 | 24 | 32 | 19 | 11 | 2.9     |

Question 1 required a discussion of one of the artworks illustrated in terms of any two of the following:

- aesthetic qualities
- communication of ideas and meanings
- materials and techniques.

Students were therefore required to demonstrate the following in Question 1:

- an awareness and understanding of the methods used to develop distinctive styles and approaches to subject matter
- an ability to discuss the use of identified techniques and the qualities of specific materials
- a comprehensive and relevant discussion of the chosen example
- an ability to discuss the methods used to communicate ideas and meanings in the artwork based on the information provided
- an ability to offer an informed interpretation of the artwork rather than a more general description of the work
- a capacity to apply a fundamental level of visual literacy in the interpretation of the chosen example.

The following are excerpts from responses where students achieved a high grade.



### Sample 1- Aesthetic qualities

Whiteley's use of line in his self portrait is expressive and an important factor in communicating the artwork's aesthetic qualities. Ink is applied in dramatic bold lines and in delicate more subtle lines. The combination of both creates an intriguing and dominating beauty to the composition. For example, the bold dark lines make up the centre of the portrait, drawing the viewers attention to the focal point of the artwork. Balance and harmony is achieved in the artist's use of line and additional his use of colour, shape and tone. The artwork is drawn in black ink rather than colour which is simplistic and creates additional contrast between the centre of the image and the white background. Little use of tone is visible in this artwork, however the application of ink; whether applied thick and vividly or light and more delicately helps to form shapes and in this way inventing tone.

### Sample 2 – Communication of ideas and meanings

The self portrait of Brett Whiteley is quite unusual in comparison to other artists self portraits. There is not one but several faces within this composition. This may be a statement by the artist in that there is much more to his personality than face value. It may be also to communicate the idea that the artist has more than one person ability, or represent various moods or feelings that artist was feeling or experiencing at the time. The confused jumble of lines and shapes juxtaposed on top of one another may also be a symbol of the inner turbulence, chaos and confusion within the mind of the artist. The way all the facial features seem to be all on one face at a first glance is almost menacing and may appear as a sort of many eyed monster. Perhaps the artist wants the viewer to know what he is actually like underneath and that he is capable of being menacing, almost evil and inhumane.

### Sample 3 – Materials and techniques

The sculpture is made from solid white marble. The material was considered pure and rich for sculptures in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Bernini designed thousands of sculptures and fountains which would have taken him centuries to carve if he had done them all himself. Bernini would design an artwork through sketches then create it on a much smaller scale. He would then commission a junior artist(s) to complete the large scale depiction. The extensive detail in the angel and saints robes almost create movement for the viewer. You almost feel her ecstasy through the invisible breath from her lips and the power of the angels arrow.

### Sample 4 – Aesthetic qualities

This artwork, entitled Madam Butterfly, is designed in the shape of a Japanese Kimono. It is more fitted from the waist down and more organic in form, however it fits the traditional description of a kimono, with large square sleeves, a cummerbund waist and the cross over neckline. The large sleeves extend the form of the body, giving the arms a winged look, like a butterfly and the long narrow body helps to enhance the butterfly shape. The textured look of the design is also interesting. A butterfly's wings are made up of little layers, just as this design is intricate and detailed. The colours in the design are dulled and limited, using soft pink and dirty purple to contrast the cummerbund. And the line of the piece is curved and accentuated by the bottom of the dress.

## Question 2

### Explanation 1

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 4 | 22 | 38 | 35 | 2.1     |

### Explanation 2

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 7 | 23 | 38 | 32 | 2.0     |

Students were required to demonstrate the following in Question 2:

- an ability to distinguish between public and commercial galleries and other art spaces, and explain the specific roles of each
- use of relevant terminology and vocabulary
- a clear insight and knowledge of the different methods used by public and commercial galleries and other art spaces when presenting artworks to an audience
- an ability to use relevant examples to help explain the different roles of each venue.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark for their clear ability to demonstrate the qualities indicated above.

### Public Galleries

Public Galleries are funded by the government, donations and sponsors. They are there to educate the public and present works of different medium, style, nationality and theme. Because they are using tax payers money, the galleries must take this into account when choosing themes, because they may be controversial or upsetting. The artworks must be managed and conserved with constant control of temperature, humidity, light, UV, security, pests and movement. Sponsors also may pay the insurance on traveling shows because it can be very expensive. Eg House Mix at the Victorian National Gallery was sponsored by Myer and contained fashion throughout the ages. The Gallery must also present a full report of every exhibition to the government and curate all works on display, in the holding house, to and from other galleries or traveling works and private security and interpretation plates next to all works to educate viewers on the meaning of the artists work.



**Other Art Spaces**

The role of other art spaces differ to that of the role of a Public Gallery because their main purpose is not educate the public but to display the artwork of new and upcoming artists in places such as restaurants, shops and other public spaces that can be offered to artists on a much cheaper basis than a commercial gallery. Sometimes other artspace include parks and gardens that have been allowed to have special viewings of the artists work. Other art spaces give the artist the chance to expose their artwork to an audience who may buy their work if it is for sale, or just appreciate in a more informal and sometimes more friendly environment than a commercial gallery. The operators of the artspace may or may not charge the artist a small commission for selling their work, which helps to offset costs such as rental and rates.

**Question 3**

**Factor 1**

|       |   |    |    |    |         |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
| %     | 3 | 22 | 42 | 33 | 2.1     |

**Factor 2**

|       |   |    |    |    |         |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
| %     | 5 | 24 | 41 | 30 | 2.0     |

Students were required to demonstrate the following in Question 3:

- an ability to explain the methods used in the conservation of artworks in a specific art form
- an accurate explanation as to the best ways to preserve artworks in a specific art form
- an understanding of the importance of the conservation of artworks, and why each of the chosen factors plays a critical role in the conservation process
- relevant terminology and factual information applicable to the conservation of artworks in a specific art form.

The following response, in reference to lighting, received a good mark; however, it fails to clearly explain what methods would be employed to conserve artworks in a **specific art form**.

**Example 1: Lighting**

*Lighting is an important factor in displaying artwork but it can be damaging, especially the ultraviolet rays. It can discolour and make brittle paper and cause organic materials (textiles and leather) to break down. To conserve artworks, one must reduce the amount of light, especially UV the art is exposed to, rotate artworks between display and storage, make sure they are in areas where not much or no outside light comes in. Light is measured in Lux and it is important when conserving artworks to display them at the correct light intensity. 50 Lux is appropriate for the display of artworks made from paper and textiles, 150 for wood and 300 lux for display of ceramic, glass and metal artworks. The damage can be minimized but not eliminated.*

The following responses, in reference to temperature and storage, are better quality answers because they provide clearer explanations as to the methods used to conserve a specific art form, in this case paintings.

**Example 2: Temperature**

*In a Gallery, artworks, especially period works require special attention and conservation. The temperature in which the artwork is stored or shown must be carefully monitored. Some materials such as acrylic paints and waxes can have low melting points and a temperature increase may distort the images. Changes in temperature from hot to cold or vice versa may cause wood (eg. frames) or paint to become brittle and crack due to expansion and change in atmospheric pressure. A temperature that is too warm may also increase humidity, and may also encourage insects to either infest, or awaken from a dormant state. As such temperature is usually kept constant, ideally at 18-19 degrees C by climate control systems which act as air conditioners and heaters, as well as humidifiers which don't allow too much moisture in the air. This can be a challenge when transporting art works, as trucks and planes need to have a climate controlled cargo area (note these references are applied specifically to painted works).*

**Example 3: Storage**

*Storage can be very complicated for artworks for a number of reasons: space (room for work), temperature, humidity, insects, handling, cost. Paintings for example can have very old and fragile layers of paint and material that was woven hundreds of years ago. To manage climate control they use methods listed in Factor 2 (above), to control insects the conservation team would first check the paintings and frames for organic material which may be insects and burn or treat (then replace) any frame which has been infested. They then store the paintings in an environment unfriendly to bugs (temp, humidity etc) and try to limit the potential for insects to access them. Paintings are usually stored in a gallery's warehouse, wrapped in protective non reactive materials and then placed on metal shelves or in wooden (treated pine usually) crates and sealed shut.*

Students who were able to clearly refer to the conservation of artworks in a specific art form, as well as provide a clear explanation as to the methods used in relation to one of the factors, were usually able to achieve a high mark. These types of responses, however, were in the minority, as most responses tended to be of a more general response to the factor, rather than specific to a particular art form.

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## Question 4

### Point of view 1

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 9 | 15 | 29 | 27 | 20 | 2.3     |

### Point of view 2

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | Average |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 14 | 18 | 29 | 24 | 15 | 2.1     |

Students were required to demonstrate the following in Question 4:

- an understanding of and ability to demonstrate sound research and knowledge of a contemporary art industry issue
- a knowledge of the context that gave rise to the issue
- an ability to clearly express a response displaying knowledge and understanding of such ethical issues as appropriation, copyright, plagiarism, licencing and/or cultural considerations governing the ownership and use of images
- use of terminology and vocabulary that is specific and correctly used
- clear reference to different points of view relating to the specific chosen
- an ability to distinguish between the context, the issue and two different points of view.

The following are excerpts from responses from students who achieved high marks.

### Issue: The use of fur in the fashion industry

#### Point of view 1

*In March 2004 Dan Matthews, a model/activist for 'People for Ethical Treatment of Animals' stormed a runway show in Milan wearing anti-fur signs and creating a scene in the fashion industry. He uses his good looks and past modeling career to enter shows and after parties and spread his knowledge of animal fur in fashion. Pamela Anderson has joined PETA and has spread his influence to the role models of the fashion industry: the movie/singing stars. 170 designs worldwide use fur including Dolce and Gabbana and Matthews claims it is not only the wearers choice, the whole of society has to look at this murder. This long running issue began in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century when Henry IV attempted to outlaw fur in fashion through the Courts due to the depleted numbers of animals, but was unsuccessful. Activists claim that 2 million cats and dogs are killed annually for garments.*

#### Point of view 2

*Designers who use fur in their designs believe it is a natural substance of nature and represents the true epitome of glamour. Fur has been denoted as a rank position in a tribe, in society and now in a position of wealth and popularity. Pro fur wearers claim they adopt the power or instinct of the animal when they wear the fur. Others derive sexual connotations of the feeling and people always want to touch you and your coat. Wayne Cooper recently (27<sup>th</sup> Oct) used possum fur in his show in Melbourne. Activists protested outside about the use of possum fur, but Cooper said the possum fur he used was a pest and was going to be killed anyway and that at least it was used for a positive fashion statement. Many designers claim the activists are uneducated and use unnecessary terrorist tactics.*

### Issue: Censorship and the use of public money to create art

#### Point of View 1

*Censorship (For) This year the issue of censorship has been raised because of one in particular incidence in Flinders Street there is a shop front artspace that is available for artists to display their work. This space is funded by the Melbourne City Council, that is ultimately funded by rate payers. The artwork was by Azlan McLennan and his work was entitled "Fifty Six" and was of a flag of Palestine and in front of it was writing about "facts" of other countries misdoings. This piece was taken down almost immediately and rightly so. The space can be seen by anyone walking down the street and it is not appropriate for everyone to see, especially when the "facts" are not all true. It is also offensive to the people who have different religions and beliefs to Azlan McLennan. McLennan can voice his opinions, but not just in public, nor in a space that is funded by rate payers. As the AGE said "Claims by the works supporters that the artists have been censored and free speech suppressed conveniently over looks the fact that they still have every right to display their work and express a political opinion in public. A right to free speech is not a right to publicly funded speech".*

#### Point of View 2

*(Against) Everyone should have a right to express their point of view. To suppress one voice is to suppress the voice of thousands and in doing so have ultimately turned from all of the people. Art evokes emotions, whether it be joy, hatred or sorrow. Art is a forum where notions, ideas, philosophies are challenged to open the minds to new possibilities, to evoke depths. "Art is not valium. One of the legitimate roles of art is to stimulate public reflection and debate about the key issues of our time" Winikoff.*

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*We are a democracy and therefore we have the right to a freedom of speech, and we should be happy to pay for people to express their views and beliefs, even if we disagree with what they say. As Voltaire says "I may disagree with what you say, but I shall defend to the death your right to say it."*

## Question 5

### Artist 1

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|---------|
| %     | 8 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 13 | 8 | 3 | 2  | 4.8     |

### Artist 2

| Marks | 0  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|---------|
| %     | 14 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 1  | 4.2     |

This question was worth a total of 20 marks. The marks for the question were broken down into two parts, which required students to discuss two artists from different historical and/or cultural contexts. Students who chose to discuss only one artist could not score more than 10 marks.

This question required students to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the methods artists use to develop aesthetic qualities in the artworks, which in turn helps to develop a distinctive style and approach to their subject matter
- an ability to analyse ways in which artists communicate ideas and meanings in their artworks
- an understanding and knowledge of the art forms they are referring to when discussing the artists of their choice
- an ability to analyse ways (beyond discussion and biographical information) and methods used to create distinctive styles
- an ability to make reference to specific examples of the artists' work, using correct factual information
- the use of relevant vocabulary and terminology
- an ability to analyse the ways in which two artists develop aesthetic qualities and communicate ideas and meanings with the same degree of depth
- a capacity to provide personal interpretations and opinions that reflect knowledge of artists' work.

In conclusion, it must be stated that there are no short cuts when it comes to preparing for the examinations. Students must have a thorough knowledge of the course content as advised in the Studio Arts Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design for 2004-2007. It is also important that careful attention is paid to the wording of each question on the examination paper. Students must demonstrate their abilities by applying their knowledge to the specifics of the question, making sure that they read the question carefully and that they understand exactly how their knowledge should be applied to answer the question correctly. A thorough knowledge that has been achieved through consistent application will offer good preparation for the final examination.