



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 Studio Arts written examination assessed students’ ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to artworks reproduced in the examination insert and to respond to carefully worded questions. The range of questions required either a short response of one or two lines or an extended response of a number of paragraphs.

Most students answered all questions in the available time and some wrote highly articulate responses that displayed a deep level of engagement with the subject. These students did very well, and wrote with detailed knowledge and great eloquence. However, students must ensure that they read and answer the question that is asked, as many students missed out on marks because they simply did not address a question appropriately. For example, if the question asks students to compare and contrast two exhibition spaces, there must be a comparison in the response. Just writing about each exhibition space does not answer the question. Students who did focus on the question tended to use the key words of the question in their answers.

Some questions had pairs of words, such as ‘conservation and preservation’, ‘techniques and processes’, ‘historical or cultural’ and ‘materials and techniques’. In these questions each word is put there for a reason, and students need to distinguish between the meanings and intentions of these words. There is a difference in meaning between techniques and processes, and students who were awarded high marks understood the differences and wrote clearly and intelligently about each one.

High-scoring students

- responded to each part of the question
- addressed the intention of the question
- used appropriate art language and terminology
- used the key words of the questions in their responses
- met the assessment criteria
- referred to works of art where appropriate
- wrote clearly, legibly and to the point
- answered all questions.

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 errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	5	16	20	18	18	21	3.8

This question asked students to explain the methods a curator would use to ensure the conservation and preservation of an artwork when it is on display to the public. Artwork numbers 1, 3 and 9 were the most popular choices for this question.

Many students answered the question very well and gave detailed and technical information in relation to the art form selected to support their responses. The question allowed students to recall information learnt during the year and apply it to the selected artwork. Weaker students tended to simply state lux and humidity levels, while more successful students related their answer to the selected medium and gave an explanation of what would happen to the artwork if these methods were not implemented. Very high-scoring students related their answer specifically to public galleries, with some writing about what they had seen in public galleries during the year.



Some students wrote about storage in solander boxes and methods of handling and transportation that are not at issue 'when it is on display to the public' and so were not awarded marks for these comments.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 1.

Artwork number 3

LIGHT As artwork 3 is a work on paper it is extremely susceptible to light damage. It should be exhibited at no more than 50 lux of tungsten lights measured by a luxometer. The light should not shine directly on the work but rather around it or reflected off another wall. All natural light should be avoided. For extra protection work can be framed behind Perspex.

TEMPERATURE Artwork 3 must be exhibited in a stable environment to avoid mould growth (RH above 65%) or becoming dry (RH below 30%) or distorting. It should be displayed at 20 plus or minus 2 degrees centigrade and an RH level plus or minus 3% measured by a thermohygrograph. To maintain this the gallery should install a state-of-the-art sophisticated air-conditioning system, humidifier and dehumidifiers. The gallery should be designed in a way to counteract external weather factors. Silica gel can be placed in frames to absorb excess moisture.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	17	21	19	17	14	3.5

This question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and to describe the techniques and processes that were used in the production of the artwork. Artwork number 9 was the most popular choice for this question.

It was hoped that students would draw upon their own knowledge of making artworks to answer this question. Students should know that 'processes' are the sequential actions or steps used to make the artwork and that 'techniques' refers to the individual artist's use of materials. For example, stretching and priming canvas, drawing, underpainting, glazing and varnishing are all processes of oil painting. The use of thin or thick paint, wet in wet, alla prima, impasto, texture or gestural brushstrokes are techniques of the individual artist. The word 'processes' relates to the artform, while the word 'techniques' relates to the artist. Few students understood this distinction and many did not address both parts of the question. Most students were able to describe the processes that were used to produce the artwork, but very few went on to describe the artist's techniques.

High-scoring students described processes and techniques relative to the specific art form. Weaker students found it difficult to describe either techniques or processes and wrote mainly about art elements and principles.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 2.

Artwork number 1

This artwork produced by Miller is a black and white photographic print. Although photography nowadays is somewhat easy to produce this artwork would have gone through a long process. Firstly, Miller would have used an analogue SLR camera. This means he would have had a limited amount of shots he could take. The artist would evaluate the lighting situation adjusting the aperture and exposure accordingly. This work looks like a double exposure; a technique which involves rolling back the film slightly merging the two photographs as one. This is a technique which is difficult to master. After Miller shot the image he would then develop the negatives in a dark room using developer. The negatives would be hung to dry for a day or two and then Miller could begin printing. Miller would have used an enlarger, perhaps dodging and burning the image by admitting more or less light to an area. Finally Miller would have printed the images using the appropriate chemicals. Overall the process is a long one but rewarding.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	22	39	22	7	2

The question asked students to select an artwork from the insert and outline considerations needed when presenting the artwork in a curated online art gallery. Artwork number 8 was the most popular choice for this question.

The question gave students an opportunity to write about things such as the digital design of the site, careful photography of the artwork, documenting the artwork, display and promotion, and providing security for the artwork.

High-scoring responses displayed a very good understanding of a wide range of curatorial needs for the online presentation of the artwork. Weaker responses showed that students had not considered this type of exhibition space. Some students wrote about copyright or the legal and ethical considerations associated with using the internet but many students did not answer this question.



The following is a high-scoring response to Question 3.

Artwork number 8

'The Mower' is a digital print so it ideal for online presentation as no depth or texture is lost. Ideally the online gallery would have a mouse-over zoom capability with panning functions as the work featured high levels of detail otherwise lost. The site should also display the details of the work (artists, size, title) somewhere below or beside the work. It is part of a series (The Domestic Gods) so links or thumbnails of the other works in the series would be important.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	4	8	10	15	18	15	11	9	4	3	5

This question asked the students to select an artwork from the insert and to discuss how art elements had been used to achieve aesthetic qualities. Artwork number 9 was the most popular choice for this question.

High-scoring responses displayed a clear grasp of the meaning of aesthetic qualities and art elements and showed an excellent understanding of the ways art elements contributed to the aesthetic qualities of the artwork. On the other hand, low-scoring responses simply presented a list of art elements, with no discussion of aesthetic qualities. It was clear that many students avoided using the word 'aesthetic' in any context, suggesting that they did not understand what it means. An understanding of what is meant by aesthetic qualities, and style, is a significant part of the key knowledge and key skills of Unit 3 in the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design*.

Some students tried to discuss aesthetic qualities with phrases like 'line and colour create an aesthetically strong artwork' but without saying what the aesthetic qualities are. Other students confused aesthetic qualities with art elements: 'the aesthetic qualities in the artwork are line and colour'. Some students confused aesthetic qualities with the communication of meaning but without using adjectives to describe the feeling, mood or expressive visual characteristics of the artwork.

Past exam reports also dealt with aesthetic qualities, and students and teachers are strongly encouraged to consult these reports on the VCAA website.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 4.

Artwork number 9

Aesthetic qualities can be defined as the characteristics of the artwork. In this painting Matisse has used the art elements of colour, shape and line to create aesthetic qualities of joyousness, wellbeing, and abundance. Matisse has used complementary tones of red and green to heighten the intensity of the colour, which gives a feeling of richness to the work. He has used rounded shapes in the pattern on the tablecloth and wall and in the shape of the trees and the woman's hair. The curved lines of the trees are echoed in the outline of the woman's skirt and hair and in the shapes of the fruit and decanter. In this painting colour, shape and line work together to achieve aesthetic qualities of peacefulness and harmony.

Section B

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	7	19	28	21	15	7	3.3

The question asked students to choose an artwork from the insert, then imagine themselves as the owner of a commercial exhibition space and explain how they would present and promote the artwork in that space.

High-scoring students understood the importance of the word 'commercial' and framed their response accordingly. They explained the need for appropriate display, lighting, photography, biographical information, prices, security and the identification of likely buyers. In this question, they had to assume the role of the owner of a commercial exhibition space and were obliged to write according to that position.



The following is a high-scoring response to Question 5.

Michelangelo and Moses are two big names in the Art History world so in promotion of the work some shameless name-dropping is a must. Large posters and flyers/brochures could feature Michelangelo's name as well as pictures of the work maybe just a detail to keep some mystery and allure. A simple design would suffice as the name speaks for itself. As for presenting the work it is a powerful imposing depiction of an important historical figure and the raw strength of the marble statue commands respect. It would be best displayed alone in a white high-ceilinged room; the less distraction the better since it is a work of great magnitude and significance. High lux lighting around 800 lux would be non-damaging to marble, and display the work appropriately, emphasising highlights and allowing the full display of Michelangelo's hand. Offers above 200 million would be considered.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	6	10	10	13	15	13	12	9	4	4	4.9

This question asked students to refer to artworks 12 and 13 from the insert and discuss the legal considerations and moral rights that should be considered before Morimura's appropriation of Kahlo's painting could be exhibited or published. High-scoring responses cited such things as copyright law, the concept of fair use, homage, post-modernism, artistic integrity and the right of attribution. Low-scoring responses did not cite any of these things and revealed little or no understanding of legal considerations and moral rights under Australian copyright law.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 6.

Given that Frida Kahlo was dead at the time of Morimura's work consent would have to be sought from Kahlo's estate, whoever own the rights to her work, prior to Morimura's appropriation. This is the only real legal consideration; the moral considerations are more difficult. Kahlo (and her husband) were beloved Mexican artists and, given the appropriation by a Japanese man, depicting himself as the image of Mexican art and culture, the patriotic uproar and potential backlash may have been an important consideration. The original Kahlo image is a self-portrait so it has an inherent significance to the artist. It is an intensely personal painting, especially given that it is dedicated to someone presumably close to Kahlo. In order not to be seen as having tarnished or defaced the original Morimura's work should have treated the original with respect and not corrupted its integrity or that of Kahlo. Some may argue that the Louis Vuitton shawl is a highly commercial addition and is disrespectful but it is largely respectful to the original.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	11	6	9	11	14	12	15	12	10	4.3

Question 7 asked for a discussion of how an artwork studied this year reflects the artist's interpretation of a historical or cultural context. Artworks by Frida Kahlo were a popular choice for this question.

High-scoring responses were able to locate an artwork in time and place by the appellation of dates or other indicators of time such as 'early- to mid-twentieth century', 'World War II' or even phrases like '73 years ago'. Students writing about a cultural context used phrases like 'Mexican modernism', 'surrealism' and 'early feminist art' to locate the artwork in a cultural context. Students who used these words responded well to the question but many students became confused, relating stories about the artist's life (such as her accident or husband) and trying to fit them into a historical or cultural framework. It is almost impossible to discuss a historical or cultural context without referring to dates. If students have studied a particular artist or artwork, they must know when and where the artist lived and when and where the artwork was created. They must consider what influence these have on the meanings of the artwork. Poor responses often described the artwork as reflecting the artist's interpretation of the subject matter without any reference to history or culture.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 7.

Artist: Felix Nussbaum

Artwork: Jewish Identity Card

The artwork Jewish Identity Card by Felix Nussbaum embodies the cultural and historical context in which he worked as it depicts the plight of a Jewish man during the time of the Nazi regime during WWII. Felix Nussbaum (1904–1944) is an artist who belongs to the 'lost generation', whose artistic development was hindered by the circumstances of his time. Nussbaum in the prime of his artistic career was forced to focus on his own survival and the cause of his death was the subject of his work. His Jewish identity thereby fuelled yet hindered his work, as he was not permitted to work as an artist under Nazi doctrine. The artwork Jewish Identity Card epitomises what Nussbaum felt about the circumstances around him, the fear of internment camp, threat of war, isolation in hiding and the annihilation of the Jewish people during the holocaust which he was much a part of. In the artwork he professes his Judaism to the viewer with symbols such as a yellow star on the band of his coat and an identity



card which he holds asking the viewer, with a bewildered gaze, to keep his Jewish identity a secret. There is a window beyond the walls of a ghetto in the work to symbolise the onlookers who witnessed the persecution and inhumanity yet stayed silent which represents the German bystanders during the holocaust and there is a half-bare tree in the background which represents life cut short and the impending death however there are blossoms to represent hope.

Section C

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	2	7	7	12	15	15	14	12	5	5	5.4

The question asked students to compare and contrast particular characteristics of two exhibition spaces they had visited during the year. Most students had visited two exhibition spaces and were able to write about them, but very few managed to frame their response into a workable comparative structure. Some students wrote two separate pieces of text without any comparative links such as ‘similarly’, ‘conversely’, ‘in contrast to’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘alternatively’, ‘unlike’ or ‘however’. Students must know that to ‘compare and contrast’ means to explain what is similar to and what is different from something.

The words in the question ‘you have visited’ required students to compare the characteristics of two spaces based on their personal viewing of the space. Poor responses were very general and did not suggest a personal viewing or experience of an exhibition space. Better responses gave a firsthand account of the spaces and provided specific details of the spaces. Students must observe and note what it is that makes one exhibition space different from another space. It was also apparent that some students defined the term ‘exhibition spaces’ to be institutions such as the NGV (public) or private businesses such as Gilligan Grant Gallery (commercial). They compared the characteristics of these institutions, including such things as the role of the gallery and differences in perseveration, personnel and promotion.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 8.

Exhibition space 1: MoNA Hobart

Exhibition space 2: Heide Heidelberg

MoNA is a particular art space in that it is huge with a large range of work on rotation but it is underground. There is no natural lighting and a lot of the excavated space has been left unrefined so the raw ‘cave’ walls are a reminder of the setting. The rough-hewn organic environment contrasts the large array of contemporary work on display.

Heide, on the other hand, is spread out over a range of houses and buildings in the countryside. It is less modern, more homely and quaint. It relies a lot on natural lighting with a sprawling estate of meadow and bushland displaying outdoor sculptural works dotted around the grounds. Heide has a few permanent collections but also uses the main buildings as a high-rotation exhibition space which caters to different artists, for example a room is cleared out for a huge Louise Bourgeois spider.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	10	3	6	6	9	8	8	8	8	7	7	6	5	4	2	3	6.5

This question required an analysis of two artworks by each of two artists to show how they used materials and techniques to develop individual styles. The question gave students an opportunity to display their knowledge of the artists and artworks they had studied during the year and give specialised information about how materials and techniques had been used to develop the artists’ styles.

Students must have studied two artists and their artworks during the year, but some students did not answer this question well. Some gave memorised information about an artist without tailoring the information to suit the question, thus producing responses that did not address the question. These students often seemed to have an overwhelming need to discuss the artworks in terms of influences or the communication of messages but not what was actually asked of them – that is, how the artists used materials and techniques to develop individual styles.

A student studying Units 3 and 4 Studio Arts must have some specialised knowledge about materials and techniques, especially those used in their own art production, and this knowledge, coupled with the study of artworks and artists, should have provided a sound basis for such a question. But this was not the case. Sometimes materials, techniques and styles were discussed in a general way without showing how these related to the nominated artworks.

A number of students only nominated one artist they had studied and a large number of students only wrote about one artwork for each artist. Those students who did write about two artworks often wrote about them together as if they



were one artwork. Some students were able to write about the artists' use of materials and techniques but had difficulty analysing how this contributed to the artist's individual style. Other students listed materials used but did not demonstrate any knowledge of the techniques used by the artist. Students did not know how to discuss the artist's individual style, with many students writing such things as, 'the artist's style was unique' and 'so the artist had an individual style'.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 9.

Artist 1: Pablo Picasso

Artwork 1: *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)* (1907)

Artwork 2: *Guitar* (1912)

As a child Picasso displayed prodigious talent with such refined artistic capability that heavily resembled the masters of art such as Michelangelo and da Vinci. But in these two artworks there is a heavy exploration of using materials and techniques in an unconventional and almost kitsch-like manner. In Les Femmes d'Alger which is an oil on canvas application of paint is extremely roughly drawn with an almost painterly aesthetic that is deliberately made to confuse and distort the viewers perception. The use of angular rough brushstrokes contributes to the style of Cubism, where objects and subject matter are violently fragmented and deconstructed. Using wide flat brushes and a concentrated mixture of oil paint Picasso was able to develop this radical style that rejected conventions and traditional techniques of the past. In conjunction, his sculptural work Guitar also uses unconventional materials and techniques. Using metal sheets, cardboard and wire the heavily deconstructed and distorted depiction of a classical guitar explores non-traditional materials and uses an unconventional and distasteful selection of materials to further develop the radical style of Cubism. It is almost animalistic the way the metal sheets and cardboard have been attached and glued. The metal wire, for example, is just simply bent with no attention to detail or precision very much like the aesthetics and style of Cubism.

Artist 2: Andy Warhol

Artwork 1: *Campbell Soup Can Series* (1962)

Artwork 2: *Gold Marilyn* (1962)

Andy Warhol once described himself as an anti-artist. Previously a commercial artist his individual style, attitudes and influences seem to transcend in the materials and techniques he uses in both artworks. Campbell's Soup Can utilises very unconventional methods of art making such as silk-screening. The image of a soup can multiple times to build a series assisted Warhol in developing a very industrialised, mechanical style of making artworks. It was almost like a factory the way he produced this artwork. An example is the gold, rough Baroque detailing at the bottom where he used stamps and dabbed the stamp in gold paint and mechanically stamped multiple times on each image of the soup can. The equipment, materials and techniques he used heavily depends on the notion of mass-produced art that can be described as Pop Art as it took influences from the commercialised nature of the 1960's. In conjunction, the practice of making 'Gold Marilyn' was similar, as he did not paint the image of Marilyn Monroe's face on to the canvas, it was silk-screened by Warhol himself. He also took the image of her face from a newspaper article, blown it up and printed it giving it an almost vulgar appearance that looks distasteful as the lines blur and the tonal variation and balance is completely off. This anti-art approach of Warhol's art is extremely significant to the style of his works, which is heavily mass-produced, and over the top with little or no detail. His common selection of materials in both artworks involved silk-screening, ink and oil paint for the stamping detailing.