



**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2012 Studio Arts examination gave students an opportunity to respond to a range of questions that required either a short response of one or two lines or an extended response of a number of paragraphs. Most students answered all questions within the available time and many wrote highly articulate responses that demonstrated a deep level of engagement with the subject. The most successful students displayed a high degree of knowledge and a depth of understanding that showed how well teachers and students had addressed the content of the study design.

Although most students answered the examination questions very well, it must be stressed again that, to gain full marks, students need to address all parts of a question. Many of the questions contained pairs of words or phrases such as ‘materials and processes’, ‘aesthetic qualities and style’, ‘legal and ethical’, ‘influences, ideas and meanings’ and ‘presented and promoted’. Each of these words was important to the intention of the question and, if the student did not address both parts of the question equally, they were not awarded full marks.

High-scoring students

- used appropriate art terminology
- addressed all parts of the question
- discussed, in a detailed and insightful manner, examples of artworks to support their responses to questions
- demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Outcome 3 in Units 3 and 4 of the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design*
- demonstrated a sound understanding of the key knowledge required to respond to each question.

**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 the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

**Section A**

**Question 1**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	9	16	20	18	18	16	3.6

The more successful students wrote about the initial development of ideas and the application of materials, and explained the sequential steps of the artistic process. It was obvious that a number of students had problems with the terms ‘materials’ and ‘processes’.

Artwork number 1 was the most popular choice for Question 1. Few students mentioned that the artist may have been looking in a mirror or that an eraser had been used in the area behind the artist’s head. Natural willow charcoal and compressed charcoal were used together with a small amount of soft pastel, not oil pastel. The marks on the paper were made with a very light touch for the buildings outside the window and with a heavy and aggressive technique for the head and shoulders of the artist. The finished drawing would have been sprayed with fixative, not adhesive.

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

*Artwork number 7*

*This still from the film ‘Frida’ (2002) comes from a bio-pic based on the life of Frida Kahlo. We can see that director Julie Taymor uses a number of materials and processes to convey a realistic portrayal of Kahlo’s life. Taymor uses a birds-eye view shot in this still to convey the immobilisation of Kahlo after a bus accident left her bed-ridden for much of her life. By using this particular shot we also get a glimpse of how Taymor is trying to portray Kahlo to the audience as a helpless, lonely figure. Taymor has dressed Kahlo’s character in bright prints to convey her Spanish-Aztec ancestry, a common practice of Kahlo herself. Taymor has also reproduced a specially designed easel, made by Kahlo’s father, to allow her to paint in bed. By using this camera angle and these materials Taymor tries to express her portrayal of Frida Kahlo’s life to an audience.*

# 2012 Assessment Report



## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	3	8	18	15	17	36	4.3

This question asked for an explanation of three conservation methods an artist or curator could use to preserve the artwork. Most students were well prepared for this and had knowledge to suit the question. Common responses cited methods such as levels of illumination, temperature and humidity control, storage and pest control. It was clear that many students had studied the conservation requirements of a particular artform in an art gallery by conducting research or talking with a curator. These students gave accurate, detailed and technical information specific to the artform. They included correct measurements and the name of the measuring machine. These students discussed specific issues; for example, damage caused by light, humidity, handling, transportation and pests, together with appropriate methods of prevention. The more successful students also described the appropriate conservation methods for the artwork they had selected. Other students gave generic, rote learnt information that did not relate to the artwork selected from the insert. For example, oil paintings are not stored in solander boxes and natural light will not make the paint run.

The following is an excellent response to Question 2.

*Artwork number 9*

*LIGHT would need to be controlled when exhibiting this work as extreme light can cause fading and discolouration of the garment. To ensure the colours remain the same it would need to be exhibited at 50 lux as well as a 1:3 ratio for exhibiting and storage.*

*TEMPERATURE and HUMIDITY would need to be controlled by a thermohydragraph to ensure that due to extreme heat it didn't become brittle and due to high humidity, like 67%, mould did not grow. It would therefore need to be exhibited at around 20+2 degrees C and 50%+5% humidity.*

*INSECTS and VERMIN would need to be considered as insects feed on organic materials, rats gnaw at fabric and insect droppings stain fabric permanently. To ensure its conservation this garment would need to be protected by glass or damaging insects would need to be attracted by synthetic pheromones and killed.*

## Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	5	8	11	16	15	12	10	10	5	4	4.9

This question asked for a discussion of how aesthetic qualities contribute to the style of an artwork selected from the detachable insert. There were two parts to this question: a discussion of aesthetic qualities and a discussion of style; students were asked to find a link between the two. The majority of students had difficulty in addressing both parts of the question and making the link between aesthetic qualities and style. Many students selected Pam Hallandal's *Self portrait* for this question and wrote at length about the emotional response this image evoked but without very much justification. They responded to the artwork emotionally but couldn't say why. Other popular choices for this question were artwork 2, Deborah Klein's *Pirate Jenny at Luna Park*, and artwork 6, *Dali Atomicus*. The dramatic contrast of black and white in the linocut and the suspension of time and movement in the photograph were mostly overlooked by students and so they missed the strongest aesthetic qualities.

Many students confused aesthetic qualities with art elements. Art elements such as line, shape and colour are what an artist uses, together with materials and techniques, to make the artwork. Aesthetic qualities are what the viewer sees in the artwork. Style relates to distinctive artistic qualities within the artwork or a group of artworks. For example, an artist might use the art elements of colour, shape, texture and line, together with the materials of oil painting and a technique of short brushstrokes to make their paintings. When viewing the paintings we, the spectator, may see the aesthetic qualities of vibrant colour, clearly delineated shapes, thick textured paint and strong outlines. These are characteristics of the painting that we identify, and can classify with other paintings displaying similar characteristics as expressionist, emotional, painterly, colourful, post-impressionist or some other label. These labels we call style. Therefore, we might say that the aesthetic qualities of strong colour, thick paint and expressive brushstrokes that we see in paintings contribute to the colourful, textural and expressionist style of an artist's painting.

Many students were unable to address the question in terms of style. Style is a way of describing, grouping and cross-referencing artworks.

Students should learn the appropriate meaning and use of the word 'abstract'. Students must be careful to choose the right words to describe an artwork. When writing about art, the word 'abstract' usually means non-representational, in the sense that it does not reproduce anything in the physical world, and that was clearly not the case with artwork number 11.



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

*Artwork number 6*

*Halsman's photograph of Dali is surreal in its style. Halsman has manipulated proportion within the aesthetic qualities of his photo, the chair scaled up larger than Dali himself, creating a dream-like composition typical of surrealism. Photography has enabled Halsman to juxtapose real forms within an imagined composition. The monochromatic black and white palette emphasises the large tonal range giving the 2 dimensional work a 3 dimensional aspect that tricks the eye because of its absurd composition. Halsman appears to be paying homage to Dali, a renowned surrealist painter, by alluding to the aesthetic qualities of Dali's paintings. Three-dimensional form, which is an aesthetic quality of surrealism, is created through use of line within the room that gives the image perspective. Photography enabled Halsman to produce realistic simulated texture within the composition, as well as capture movement. The movement adds to the surreal style of the photograph as it is un-natural and fantastical.*

## Section B

### Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	3	5	9	13	12	17	18	21	5.5

This question, which asked for a description of the role of different art exhibition spaces, was generally well answered. Most students understood that each art exhibition space presented artworks to an audience, but a description of their inherent differences was needed to fully answer this question. Most students were clear about the role or purpose of these spaces but there were still some students who could not describe the characteristics of these art exhibition spaces.

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

*Public gallery*

*The role of a public gallery is to promote, display and preserve artworks. A public gallery generally has a permanent collection of artworks as well as displaying touring exhibitions. Another role of a public gallery is to educate the public about art and expand their knowledge.*

*Commercial gallery*

*The role of a commercial gallery is to operate as a business that actively promotes, exhibits and displays artist's work. Their aim is to sell artworks and provide a profit for the gallery and artists.*

*Artist-run space*

*The role of artist-run spaces is to sell the artist's works for a profit. These spaces are run by actual artists meaning they do not pay a commission like in the commercial galleries but they may need to pay for hiring the space.*

*Curated online exhibition space*

*A curated online exhibition space is a website that displays artworks in digital format which is not owned by the artist but is regulated and controlled by an online curator.*

### Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	5	9	10	14	15	12	10	9	5	5	5.0

This question required students to discuss the legal and ethical considerations that may have arisen from Imants Tillers' appropriation of Giorgio de Chirico's painting *The Painter's Family*. Most students were prepared for such a question, had a definition-based understanding of legal and moral considerations and were able to reference the *Copyright Act 1968* and the *Moral Rights Act 2000*. Students who scored very high marks incorporated both the *Copyright Act* legislation and the *Moral Rights Act* into their discussion of the two paintings, within the context of legal and ethical issues that may have arisen. They wrote logically and included all the necessary information in their responses. However, some students didn't apply this knowledge to the nominated artworks. Some students were challenged by this question, due to the appropriated artwork being created within the time between the death of the original artist and 70 years after his death.

The following is an excellent response to Question 5.

*Before Tillers was able to appropriate de Chirico's work 'The Painter's Family' he would have had to adhere to de Chirico's legal rights; the Copyright Act 1968. Copyright ensures that an artist's work is not plagiarised, exploited or reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner. In Australia, copyright lasts for the artist's life plus 70 years and is automatic once a work has been produced. It doesn't, however, protect ideas, information, styles or techniques. This means that before Tillers appropriated 'The Painter's Family' he would have had to receive permission to do so from whoever owns the artwork's copyright. Ethical considerations that may arise refer to de Chirico's own, personal moral rights. These rights always belong to*

# 2012 Assessment Report



*de Chirico even if the copyright is owned by someone else. They allow him to demand that he is the attributed creator of the original work, the work is not falsely attributed to anyone else and that it is not used in a way that is prejudicial to his honour or reputation. Tillers would have had to adhere to all of de Chirico's legal and moral rights in order to successfully appropriate his work.*

## Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	3	5	7	10	12	12	13	14	12	12	6.3

This question asked students to give a short explanation of art terms found in the study design.

Most students handled this question very well.

### Art elements

Many students simply listed art elements such as line, shape, colour, texture, tone and movement, without providing an explanation, while others attempted to explain the term, usually as the 'building blocks of art'. The more successful students attempted to expand their explanation in terms of how an artist can manipulate elements for a desired effect on the viewer and how they are 'visual tools' used to create the whole artwork.

The following is a good response.

*Art elements include shape, colour, tone, texture line and more and are used in harmony or juxtaposition to create an artwork. Art elements create the visual and aesthetic appeal of an artwork.*

### Historical context

Most students correctly referred to historical context as the time or era in which an artwork was created. Other responses included political, social, cultural, artistic and technological contexts, the artist's personal history and local or world events such as war.

The following is a very good response.

*Historical context refers to the time, situation, and other external influencing factors that are present at the time an artwork is created.*

### Aesthetic qualities

Aesthetic qualities were usually explained as the way in which art elements and principles, materials and techniques work together to influence the mood, feeling or meaning of an artwork. Some students explained how the term refers to the visual appeal and beauty of an artwork and how aesthetic qualities evoke an emotional response within the viewer.

The following are accepted explanations.

*Aesthetic qualities refer to the way an artwork looks.*

*An aesthetic quality is a feeling the artist wants the audience to feel, for example unease, eeriness, wonder, intrigue. An aesthetic quality allows the artist to convey a certain mood and make the viewer 'feel' something.*

*Aesthetic qualities are the qualities of an artwork that speak to the overall feeling or mood of the artwork.*

*Aesthetic qualities are qualities seen by the viewer when looking at the artwork.*

*Aesthetic qualities are when art elements and principles come together to create a certain feel to the image, such as warm colours which create a sense of beauty and harmony.*

*Aesthetic qualities are the feelings and ideas that an artwork gives due to the art elements and principles coming together to create these qualities.*

### Subject matter

Many students explained this term as that which is seen in an artwork, such as an object or feature. For example, *if the artwork is a portrait then the sitter is the subject matter*. Some students extended this explanation to say how the subject matter gives meaning and expression to an artwork.

# 2012 Assessment Report



The following are good responses.

*The object or image within an artwork that has a powerful emphasis that holds some meaning or idea in an artwork.*

*Subject matter refers to objects, ideas or information that is displayed in an artwork. It can also be deduced from the intended meaning displayed in an artwork.*

## Style

Many students explained style as the ways in which an artist develops an individual way of creating an artwork through their use of art elements and principles, and materials and techniques, in ways which make their work distinctive or unique, as belonging to them and linked by a similar aesthetic, technical attributes or shared ideas.

The following are excellent responses.

*Style is a way that allows you to identify a particular artist's work just by looking at it. It is how the artist uses the same techniques or ideas in more than one of their artworks so it is easily recognised as their own.*

*Style is comprised of mannerisms or details particular to an artist and their work or a set of works.*

*Style is the artist's unique way of creating artworks which makes them differ from other artists. Every artist has a unique style.*

*The style of an artwork refers to the personal and distinguishing characteristics of an artwork. This can be particular traits or techniques or it can refer to a broader style shared by different artists with similar characteristics.*

*Style is a recognisable combination of particular art elements and principles to create a constant feel and appearance in an artwork, series or even an artist's entire collection.*

*An artist creates their own distinctive style when they come up with their own way of creating something original and may identify who they are.*

*Style is the overall feel or characteristic that an artwork portrays. It could also be a certain technique used by an artist eg: Jackson Pollock's drip-style paintings.*

## Section C

### Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	6	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	8	9	7	8	6	5	5	8.1

This question asked for an analysis of artworks with reference to influences and ideas and meanings. Students were able to display their knowledge and understanding of two artworks they had studied during the year. Many students did this very well. Students interpreted the word 'influences' to include such things as artistic, personal, intellectual, emotional and spiritual influences. Responses that cited such influences were appropriate, but the best responses by far were by students who wrote about the influence of one artist on another or of an art movement or style influencing a particular artist.

The following is a good response.

*Artwork 1 Resistless, oil on canvas, 2008*

*Artist 1 Andy Denzler*

*Andy Denzler is a Swiss contemporary artist who lives and works in Zurich. His work is influenced by contemporary culture and technology and sourced imagery from video, film and his own photography. 'Resistless' is a portrait of a young girl whose face has been distorted by the horizontal smear of paint applied across the canvas. This smeared, blurred effect is used to reference the aesthetic effect produced when a VHS tape is paused, something Denzler employs in almost all his works. This paused aesthetic alludes to time being stilled and is, perhaps, intended to invoke nostalgia for the ever-evasive past. Perhaps Denzler, using a traditional artform to create the illusion of a contemporary one, uses imagery referenced from contemporary film technology as a forum by which to examine the narrative of human character and emotion. The colours used in this work are monochromatic – yet another way of invoking a sense of stilled time. The image appears as if it was a still from a black and white film, creating a sense of retrospect and enhancing a feeling of nostalgia.*

# 2012 Assessment Report



## Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	3	6	7	13	12	15	10	12	7	10	5.7

This question asked for a discussion of how artworks were presented and promoted in different exhibition spaces students had visited. Many students had clearly been to view artworks in a range of spaces and had excellent knowledge and understanding of how the artworks were presented. The more successful responses used appropriate terminology to discuss how exhibitions were displayed; the less successful responses simply described what could be seen. For example, some students had visited the Napoleon: Revolution to Empire exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria and discussed presentation at a high level, giving intricate details of, and explaining the focus of, each room. These students often referred to the aim of the exhibition and how this was reflected in the presentation of the artworks.

Discussion of presentation was attempted by most students, but often with minimal discussion of the details of each space. Comments such as *the walls were all white and the works were presented at eye level* gave little insight into a specific exhibition space. Some students discussed wall colour but provided no clear sense of a room or purpose-built space, positioning or grouping of artworks, curatorial intention, exhibition design, lighting or ambience of the space at the time of their visit. Terminology relating to framing, spacing, salon style, museum style, and thematic, chronological or medium-based hanging was rarely encountered.

Discussion of promotion was often limited to a one-sentence generic response mentioning things such as flyers, brochures, banners, websites, social media, TV or word-of-mouth. Very few students mentioned the role of a publicist, gallery budgets or sponsors in relation to the promotion of large exhibitions. High-scoring responses came from students who gave more details and discussed methods that were unique to the exhibition they visited. Naming the newspaper or art magazine that carried advertisements, mentioning where brochures were displayed or giving details of a radio program that reviewed or advertised an exhibition were often mentioned in high-scoring responses. A few students named an artwork from the exhibition and explained how the image was used for promotional purposes.

It is a requirement of the *VCE Studio Arts Study Design* that students visit at least two art exhibition spaces during their current year of study.

The following is a good response.

*Glasson's Art World, Shepparton, Vic.*

*Glasson's Art World is a commercial gallery that sells a variety of art works and forms. Shelves are used in the middle of the space for textiles and homewares while artworks like paintings are hung on the walls. No consideration is given to the placing of artworks and they are put 'wherever they fit'. Hung works are not hung at the same height with nails in the walls put in at random. Jewelleries are displayed on racks and sometimes in cases. The space itself is cramped and careful navigation is needed. Promotion is done by email, newsletter and word of mouth and the owner sometimes 'piggybacks' on other exhibitions in the area.*