

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Art History 2017

Standard 93301

Part A: Commentary

There were changes to the choices and format of the Art History exam this year. Candidates coped extremely well with the change; overall the exam worked well. There was an even spread of responses this year – no single question seemed to be preferred over any other.

In general, there was less analysis in answers to questions in Sections A and B this year than there has been in past papers. This is undoubtedly a reflection of the change to the requirement to answer three rather than two questions. However, candidates appeared to have been well-prepared for the new format of the examination, and most candidates managed three evenly-treated responses.

Overall there was a wider variety of artists and works referenced this year although some candidates were limited by the narrow range of works they had to offer. It is essential that candidates have a clear understanding of the criteria for each Section in the exam paper and the importance of detailed visual analysis in an answer.

Reading each question very carefully and addressing any qualifying words / phrases, is essential. Beyond this, understanding how and why art works reflect their contexts is important. So too is accuracy and specific detail in the information offered.

Part B: Report on performance standard

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with **Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- demonstrated a high level of depth and breadth in their knowledge of stylistic features, processes and technical aspects of specific art works
- engaged with each selected question paying attention to qualifying words and phrases such as 'own individual way', 'established styles', 'range of functions'
- provided specific and detailed visual analysis of relevant art works to support their argument
- demonstrated a high level of critical response to contexts and ideas
- demonstrated originality and independence in their discussion of works pertinent to the question and their own stance
- showed highly developed interpretation and perceptive evaluation of key ideas in the Section C text
- demonstrated clarity, maturity and confidence in their communication skills.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- understood and responded to the requirements of the question
- established a clear point of view on the question and maintained that focus
- analysed specific art works closely to provide supporting information for their argument
- demonstrated depth and breadth of relevant knowledge of the specific contexts and ideas referenced
- discussed and responded to key ideas in Section C
- demonstrated clarity and coherence in their communication skills.

Other candidates

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship commonly:

- demonstrated little evidence of visual analysis
- did not have full understanding of what the question was asking and/or did not address all parts of the question
- made generalised statements which were not supported by specific detailed evidence
- wrote mainly on the artist rather than the art works
- made little or no reference to the text and its key ideas in Section C
- attempted to apply pre-prepared works/essay to an unsuitable question.

Standard specific comments

Overall, responses would be strengthened by closer attention to visual analysis. There is a tendency for some candidates to explain ideas and /or contexts and then make reference – often scant – to an artwork. Turning around this approach and acknowledging that the primary focus of Art History is the artworks themselves, should be encouraged. The most common barrier to success remains the lack of developed critical analysis i.e. explaining where, how and why an art work supports points made.

Section C. There was a real variety in response to this question. Some answers did not mention the author by name. Some just launched into visual analysis or an account of a work's context. In their answers to this question candidates need to take care to analyse the text, discuss the ideas in it and relate these to art works. The best answers focused on addressing the text at the outset and periodically returning to it, 'touching base' by quoting the text, making mention of the author and her stance, outlining principal ideas in the text and relating these to art works. Specific art works should be analysed to either support or refute the author's stance and explain the student's ideas. Candidates need to have plenty of practice in analysing, interpreting and responding to key ideas in text.

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Previous years' reports

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