Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Visual Arts 2024

Performance standard(s): 93306, 93307, 93308, 93309, 93310

Performance standard 93306: Painting

General commentary

In 2024, Scholarship Painting comprised a wide range of submissions demonstrating high levels of personal engagement and industry in well-researched areas of study. Candidates selected topics of personal interest and were able to draw on existing knowledge and experience as a starting point for their inquiry. Candidates made insightful links between concept and content, relating and synthesising aspects of a range of painting approaches in developing their proposition. Technical facility within diverse modes of practice demonstrated fluent and assured control, representative of time invested to command expertise, in their chosen ways of working. Developing and communicating underlying concepts varied between submissions, demonstrating individual strengths and nuances within different ways of seeing and thinking and application. Submissions were organised, intuitive, sequential, divergent, planned, iterative and exploratory, depending on the nature of the candidate's overarching approach and subject area. Scholarships awarded included approaches to digital painting, conceptual and material inquiry, formal and gestural abstraction, the surreal and absurd, autobiographic and narrative, etc. Approaches to media and materials included traditional and contemporary modalities.

Successful candidates continually switched between workbook and folio to expand their proposition. Regular review and analysis between phases of working allowed students to reflect, expand and extend into new work. Candidates identified what they perceived as strengths in their process and were often innovative in developing solutions as new concerns arose. Drawing as a means of close analysis and as a method towards developing new thinking was employed successfully in a number of ways both on the folio and in the workbook. Candidates were invested in the production of their particular aesthetic and produced sophisticated and expert media handling that included detailed rendering, trompe l'oeil and gestural expression. Evidence included considering materiality, analogous and harmonic palettes and effective and knowledgeable strategies in applying paint and developing surfaces.

Where candidates' practice extended beyond the folio, these works were generally integrated within the study as parallel pieces often presented in a "real world" context. Exploration into installation, assemblage or large-scale works for exhibition was documented clearly in the workbook, and extension work, generally featured on workbook page 8, fared best when it was supported by actual practice or maquettes. The generation of first-hand source material, in particular staged photographs, was central to critique and formed a vital part of the sketch/test process. Such works often demonstrated technical skill in the related field and offered other practice perspectives on the thinking. Workbooks offered a range of strategies to communicate and relate ideas. Extensive prose descriptions of the work on the folio, and how it was produced, were felt to be less successful by the marking panel as this did not allow candidates to show new or divergent thinking that supported the development of concepts or approaches. The workbook pages indicative of related investigative or experimental inquiry, supported by notes, thumbnail sketches, bullet points and tests were successful in relating candidates' processes of learning and production. Contextual studies and artist reference emulations were best exploited when students brought multiple strands of practice together. This was

most successful when the concepts and approaches aligned naturally with the candidate's motivation; tacit application of techniques and time spent understanding how and when to apply them allowed student voices and ideas to flourish.

Candidates were highly motivated to make art that conveyed personal insight or passion. Artworks functioned successfully as stand-alone pieces, sequences or modular works demonstrating a critical facility and consideration of the final layout as a means of communication.

Report on performance standard

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

- presented a comprehensive approach to research, showing critical analysis of meaningful links between art practice and the candidate's own work
- identified, understood and built upon their strengths by engaging in exploratory works, presented in the workbook in the form of sketches, annotations and test pieces
- developed and presented evidence of fluency and expertise in their particular mode of working.
- Showed painting practice grounded in a strong conceptual framework where processes are employed to achieve particular outcomes
- engaged in an innovative process of inquiry where the subject is meaningful to them, ways of working are sustained and has a clear sense of purpose in communicating or expressing their ideas
- made links between their work and wider contextual readings – for example, cinema, literature, pop culture, politics.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- developed their own visual resources for subject matter, test and trial options via smaller works and series of studies towards developing resolved works for the folio
- showed understanding by making links between their work and that of established painting practice in order to further their thinking
- considered the relationships between individual works, phases of production and the wider aesthetic of the folio board
- presented folio work that was consistent, well-made and supported by analysis and reflection in the workbook.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- described existing works on the folio at face-value only without links to wider practice
- provided superficial analysis only without integrating approaches or expanding practice
- did not identify or build upon existing strengths or relationships in initial works
- included limited evidence of a body of work or extended practice beyond the folio.

Performance standard 93307: Design

General commentary

This year saw a notable increase in both the quantity and quality of entries in Design Scholarship and a rise in the standard of research and critical reflection in the workbooks.

The diversity of project types and topics is to be commended, with submissions focused on imparting message and meaning cognisant of an audience, experience and or interaction. Candidates with the ability to communicate ideas informed by a command of visual language specific to their chosen media and clear storytelling tactics were a highlight of the scholarship award.

At the top end of performances it was clear that candidates had interrogated and gained confidence with specific media, showcasing outcomes that fluently engaged with media types ranging from branding and illustration for board game design to social interest campaigns and graphic novel storybooks.

A significant trend this year was the rise in scholarship candidates submitting digital moving image that were underscored by well-constructed narratives with fluent management of the technical skills required to communicate and execute ideas. This resulted in time based media outcomes that synthesised, integrated and edited a final sequence that was informed by testing, writing, producing and critical thinking. These submissions primarily focused on digital animation, exploring character development and world-building / scenarios exploiting storytelling (filmic and graphic) conventions for stories that heralded emotional or humorous impact. These moving image submissions showed story based concepts that did not labour over technical development, highlighting the synthesis of ideas, context and process in the final outcome.

Overall, the workbooks submitted were well-presented and edited, demonstrating a solid understanding of how research informs and shapes the design process. In this context we witnessed candidates drawing from a wide range of political, social, cultural and historical sources to inform their practical investigations. A hallmark signature of scholarship were performances that used reflective thinking to reform ideas and foster original lines of inquiry into topics of personal significance.

There was an increase in the exploitation and understanding of communication strategies for a range of audiences and this factor advanced conceptual inquiry. The panel witnessed ideational explorations fuelled by tactics such as; humour, exaggeration, irony, metaphor, nostalgia, technical interventions and propaganda. It was rewarding to see ideational thinking informing methods for making. These candidates sustained and edited ideas pertinent to topic consistently throughout their submission.

Successful performances took time to articulate a personal connection to the topic they were investigating and we witnessed a reduction in workbooks that merely described what the folio or three-minute sequence delivered. Candidates that used the workbooks to reveal new insights, unpack experimental processes or lateral avenues of inquiry revealed an understanding of the criteria – these performances prioritised the testing out of ideas and were underpinned by thoughtful writing and annotations that made you want to learn more about the way the candidate had approached the topic, and analysed ideas.

There is a visual fluency and high level of crafting required in the production of graphic outcomes in Design scholarship. Candidates entering this award are encouraged to analyse production values to ensure that ideas are delivered with confident employment of contemporary conventions and command over composition principles. Scholarship performances operate at a consistent high level because candidates recognise the importance of editing and subtracting material to ensure a consistent calibre of visual and conceptual fluency is achieved.

Report on performance standard

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

- developed their proposition and created sections to extrapolate and explore subject matter, audience relevance, context, research, process, methods and findings supporting a compelling and cohesive relationship between the practical work and the documentation in their workbook

- demonstrated through contextual annotations a personal connection to their project, ensuring their ideas and intent was clearly owned and supported by a genuine creative angle linked to the topic

- showed their ability to extract ideas from a variety of contexts to leverage and link knowledge of the circumstances that form concepts and research extracted from historical, environmental, cultural, political and contemporary contexts

- showed a deep understanding of how the arrangement and visual flow of their folio / moving image sequence guide viewers' interpretations of the work, with notably a high acumen of editing, selection and synthesis

- applied and documented analysis during all phases of creation, using feedback and observations to refine and align their work with the central inquiry across the workbook and practical submission with research and practical experimentation being seamlessly incorporated into highly resolved outcomes

- demonstrated an ability to craft and finesse a visual language and graphic treatment that was distinctive to their topic and creative angle by producing and completing final artworks integral to media and formats

- tested and controlled application of ideas through media application, exploiting and controlling design conventions and technical fluency

- engaged in an iterative process to ensure only high-level outputs were included in the submission, and that critical and experimental phases of working were incorporated to refrom and refine ideas towards unexpected outcomes

- authored all aspects of contents, ensuring full ownership of narratives, graphic novels, dialogue, slogans, titles, body copy, quotes, data and information graphics across digital and folio submissions.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- started with a proposal that provided scope for inquiry and used the workbook to position their practical work within a design context, such as a graphic narrative for story telling in motion or print, a real-world problem, campaign, or branding project

- were in command of media resulting in produced outputs that show fluent command of visual conventions and processes pertinent to the proposition

- demonstrated knowledge of research skills, drawing from a range of contemporary approaches to practice, which resulted in tactics that aligned formal and conceptual conventions

- extracted and made meaningful links between phases of research to extend ideas

- employed a variety of strategies to self-generate imagery and ideas, exploiting drawing and making to; test, expand and refine media processes

- demonstrated critical analysis by annotating and linking phases of making

- discussing the intentionality and purpose of specific formats, such as world-building double-page spreads, interactive gameplay, graphic novels, or campaigns

- provided workbooks that were coherent, well-structured and labelled to track the development of ideas

- provided logged decision-making in the workbook in alignment with the practical performance as well as after phases of development have occurred

- presented a design practice that demonstrates confidence with visual skills and knowledge of conventions; for instance, character designs include detail, technical control, and ability to convey personality, mood and emotion effectively
- showed a strong development and integration of narrative with the knowledge of storytelling and world building characteristics and strategy informing the design outcomes
- discussed constraints and knowledge of media tropes clarify their narrative and author content
- juggled and managed multiple pictorial and conceptual ideas to strive for original ideas and have the confidence to take risk, exploring and probing for new ideas to communicate message and meaning cognisant of viewer
- took full authorship (with graphic novel illustrations) creating original content and addressing copywriting relevant to propositions
- engaged in animation world building stories evaluate propositions and produce a clear and structured narrative underpinned by technical skill level and time constraints
- rendered outcomes that were completed (in motion formats), and included a story telling arc highlighted how sequences communicate a meaningful narrative in relationship to the scholarship criteria. These digital submissions are technically proficient and outcomes are aligned to the purpose of the game, narrative or user interaction experience.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- did not utilise the workbook to elevate and discuss strategies they were deploying to engage audience
- produced workbooks that lacked coherence, legibility, or a balance of imagery and text making it difficult to track the development and depth of ideas
- presented skeletal briefs with limited explanatory information introducing their work within a design context, and positioning relationship of topic and subject matter to media, processes and graphic treatment
- relied on a small phase of research resulting in a shallow understanding of formal and conceptual conventions and could not form new links between a range of contexts and insights from contemporary practice
- did not generate and refine ideas purposeful to the brief, media and audience, and often were juggling to many formats
- produced a limited amount of self-generated imagery failing to explore a variety of ideational and design strategies to test and expand their ideas
- revealed a lack of critical questioning and documentation of phases of analysis to challenge ideas and provide avenues for new connections and synthesis within the submission
- did not manage a deep enough phase of visual iteration and testing, to gain ownership of media processes and visual conventions, resulting in final artworks that were not fluently executed and edited
- demonstrated basic or underdeveloped skills in their chosen design areas, such as. character designs being disconnected from the narrative, with little consideration for costuming, accessories, body language, or emotional expression, limiting the depth of storytelling
- presented incomplete authorship in which storylines were overly reliant on pre-existing narratives or overly complex and too difficult to communicate.

Performance standard 93308: Sculpture

General commentary

In 2024, Sculpture Scholarship saw candidates demonstrate a strong understanding of sculptural concepts, a willingness to experiment, and a commitment to exploring personally meaningful propositions. Effective candidates engaged in in-depth investigations of their chosen proposition, pushing the boundaries of materials and demonstrating a strong understanding of sculptural language. Candidates explored topics with personal relevance, often drawing on their own experiences and perspectives that allowed them to present authentic sculptural inquiries embedded in topics of personal interest and relevance. Working with subject matters of close interest and passion allowed candidates to explore and express new perspectives and knowledge.

Enquiries were strategic, pertinent and well researched. Techniques were thoroughly tested and technical difficulties overcome to produce highly resolved objects and elements for installation. Numerous candidates displayed a playful approach to object and installation making innovative links to established practice and popular culture. Every submission operated differently with a vast array of different modes of sculptural practice presented. Successful candidates demonstrated a nuanced understanding of visual language and materiality within sculptural practice.

Documentation of sculptural work was effectively used to drive and augment the sculptural practice. Frequently candidates understood how objects were best installed so that they could add to sculptural intention and outcome. Folio submissions were augmented by well edited and sequenced workbooks. Successful candidates grouped pages that operated in tandem with the folio work unpacking ideas and giving greater context in the significance of decisions made. Many of these candidates used their workbook submission to show evidence of a parallel body of work, documentation, and analysis of less successful outcomes or results that shifted from the work on the folio. Workbooks also provided appropriate research into artistic reference and related contexts that expanded the work on the folio boards.

Candidates were robust in making work, taking risks with how they tested different processes and materials or objects. Commonly candidates knew when a particular object required a high degree of finish and when it was appropriate to make it in a more provisional or temporary manner. High level submissions engaged in criticality regarding the visual language used to expand propositions. For example they understood strategically how to use material-as-metaphor, site specificity, scale, projection, staging, performative and ephemeral making to enhance the central proposition.

Captions on the folio work, as appropriate, outlined contextual information that is not evident and/or not easily recognisable such as media, processes, scale, time, duration, place, site, etc.

Report on performance standard

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

- considered every step critically to advance the central proposition both laterally and inventively into highly resolved outcomes
- utilised personal experiences / issues to drive a sculptural practice with authenticity and confidence
- effectively used the workbook to expand and clarify the conceptual context of the sculptural activity on the folio
- demonstrated a command of modes of sculptural practice to articulate rich and complex sculptural ideas / thinking.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- analysed appropriate established sculptural practice to inform the work's proposition in an aligned range of modes of practice
- investigated personal observations about the world in which they inhabit through a range of sculptural activity and research
- expanded the conceptual richness of the work by exploiting site, scale, or material qualities in the production of work
- used the workbook to expand the conceptual context of the sculptural activity on the folio.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- wrote statements in workbooks about the intention of folio work that were not evident or actioned in the sculptural work
- did not recognise the potential of ideas to inform new phases of working within the central proposition
- made work that was highly derivative of established sculptural practice
- had intermittent success with technical processes or utilised inappropriate methods in the production of work.

Performance standard 93309: Printmaking

General commentary

In 2024, Scholarship Printmaking submissions effectively established authentic propositions, often of personal relevance, showed an investigative and considered approach to picture making and demonstrated very well understood use of printmaking media. Candidates' fluent use of technical skills ensured the pictorial or conceptual enquiry was able to be communicated clearly. Drawing skills were exemplary and explorative and often showed flair across a range of media. Printmaking processes were selected strategically through analysing strengths and potential, thus helping move forward ideas.

The ability to manipulate plate tone was well understood with wiping back used purposefully to create mood and atmosphere or to produce high contrast, pristine imagery. Surface textures were created through embossing, the use of collagraphs or by building up imagery in many layers. Some prints appeared to have been through the press at least ten times, building up subtle shifts of tone or deep, velvety blacks.

Candidates intelligently combined a range of printmaking media, processes and materials to produce sophisticated outcomes. They understood the characteristics and constraints of each process and selected the most appropriate media to produce the desired effect. Many submissions explored thin and transparent veils of ink alongside opaque tones, demonstrating understanding and sensitivity in the use of ink.

There was refined and considered use of colour, with candidates effectively integrating, exploring and managing vibrant, harmonious or monochromatic colour investigations. Colour selection was purposeful in relation to the individual visual or conceptual inquiry.

Most candidates took their own photographs or constructed their own source imagery to work from to produce their compositions or narratives. This allowed the candidate to create works exploring their subject from different perspectives, proximity, and viewpoints, or to explore scale and depth of field, thus enabling many pictorial options and compositional ideas to develop. This process helps advance the inquiry with thinking and decision making seen through small passages and sequences.

Both physical and digital collage was used as a drawing tool, to enable the development of a range of options. These provide quick ways to test various compositions and show thinking and decision making. Refining ideas through small studies towards a significant series or larger work was a key characteristic of candidates who gained Scholarship.

Some candidates chose to dive deeply into exploring one process, while others seamlessly wove together a range of printmaking processes demonstrating an openness to discovery. Candidates within both approaches engaged in innovative exploration of conventions and meaningful decisions were made in relation to ideas they wished to communicate.

References to researched artists were noted in the workbook, with candidates identifying specific aspects, such as subject, colour, abstraction or mark-making, to analyse and apply to their own artmaking. Candidates who combined one small aspect from a range of sources to create their own original outcomes, were successful, as opposed to less innovative approaches where works simply mimic an artist's work. Applying small snippets of ideas from a range of artist exemplars helps open new possibilities and extend ideas.

The ordering of works and placement of sequences is crucial to the reading of a submission. Extending printmaking into installation, books, holograms, screen-printed clothing and projections was seen in some Scholarship submissions, adding depth and range and helping integrate and re-position the line of inquiry into new phases.

Together the folio and workbook revealed the thinking between individual prints and phases of works. The ability to have intent, try out ideas, take risks, test, and to be iterative, then to evaluate and

critically reflect on findings are key ingredients seen in Scholarship Printmaking. This approach enables the candidate to produce resolved works as well as opening new avenues to explore.

Report on performance standard

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

- showed innovative thinking and ownership of their inquiry by establishing a complex proposition and inventively exploring a wide range of approaches
- developed many different passages of prints through deep engagement of a conceptual investigation, and independent thinking and informed decision-making
- demonstrate exceptional drawing and sophisticated printmaking skills and a high level of technical fluency and intuition relevant to their stylistic interests
- experimented, took risks and trialled possibilities to ask and answer questions, expand ideas and critically analyse findings through self-reflection and making, to build on strengths and inform next steps.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- developed a clear proposition, often of personal significance that was broad enough to sustain the ongoing development of ideas
- researched a range of options and wove together / synthesised elements from contemporary and tradition practices to inform their own ideas
- explored and experimented with printmaking processes and built on findings to keep building momentum by developing and expanding on ideas
- included unsuccessful works and reflections in their workbook.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- had propositions that were not broad enough to sustain an in-depth inquiry
- analysed or described artists' works with little reference or relevance as to what aspect of the work informed their thinking
- described 'what' they did in their workbook, rather than explaining 'why' they made decisions
- repeat similar compositions or reuse the same plate, rather than pushing forward to explore new compositions / ideas.

Performance standard 93310: Photography

General commentary

In 2024 Scholarship Photography saw many candidates present authentic, ambitious and rich submissions. Enquiries were deep, wide-ranging and explorative in concept, camera usage and techniques employed. Candidates invested the time required into photographing subject matter and valuing the art of seeing and framing while demonstrating a willingness to be experimental and take risks to see what could transpire and play out. They gave themselves plenty to work from without predetermined outcomes, providing multiple directions and possibilities to navigate different pathways.

Candidates embedded themselves in topics of personal interest, thus presenting authentic propositions, paying attention to relevancy and specificity of place, site, and whanau connections. Workbooks shared the hidden production of behind the scenes processes where candidates asked questions about what process could do for them. At the higher end this was particularly rich and seen as a genuine inquiry. An example being the ISO was shifted to witness different effects in images, or experimentation with scanography, cyanotypes, film or printing on different paper stocks. Outstanding Scholarship submissions, candidates manipulated and critiqued the results, and how it affected the ideas and messages in their work.

Propositions were guided by artistic references, contemporary practice and contextual material such as politics, books and films, ancestry and science. Critical synthesis and reflection were apparent throughout the workbook and many candidates articulated their thinking through significant bodies of images that sought different and experimental outcomes. Those candidates that gained Scholarship provided an excellent understanding of photographic conventions and contemporary art practice including camera functionality and fluency, lighting effects and pictorial devices. High degrees of criticality were visible in workbooks with candidates providing notations, research, experimentation and written responses. Altogether candidates engaged in genuine enquires that formed a strong relationship between workbook and portfolio

Acknowledgement to the reception of an audience was given and candidates are reminded that they should provide captions on the portfolio, as appropriate, outlining contextual information that is not evident or are not easily recognisable factors such as location, ritual / cultural statement, scale, media and duration. It is not necessary for candidates to include an over-explanatory description of each passage of work on their portfolio or filling pages in the workbook with work from earlier years or 'where to next' explanations. It is important that contemporary art practice is relevant to the proposition with explanations about artists who have impacted the work that has been made and avoid pages of artist model research that is descriptive. The nature of the fourth panel is irrelevant as scholarship does not need to be a place to discuss future work unless it's genuine and contextual.

Candidates are encouraged to research and analyse a range of photographic practice and printing value to ensure confident employment of ideas and conventions are delivered. Scholarship requires rigour and a highly consistent level of editing to ensure conceptual and technical fluency is presented in both portfolio and workbook.

Report on performance standard

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

- presented a rich visual and research-based inquiry that came from a unique but relevant photographic proposition sharing personal interests, and interests where there was genuine curiosity
- pushed their propositions further by taking ambitious risks to form a deep enquiry and avoid predictability in their practice

- demonstrated a high degree of fluency with specific processes and technical understanding of camera functionality to support innovative outcomes
- synthesised ideas through contemporary practice and critically analysed decisions to shape the direction of their practice through presenting a portfolio and workbook that was reciprocal to one another.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- developed a proposition that included references of contextual relevance that made links to ideas and processes
- invested time to encapsulate their behind-the-scenes practice to making work which allowed for learning to be shown through experimentation, and the testing of many photographic conventions to produce large quantities of work
- demonstrated technical fluency on the portfolio and reflected on their practice using evidence from processes to draw outcomes in the workbook
- employed a variety of strategies to form an authentic relationship between workbook and portfolio for both physical and digital submissions with meaningful and contemporary outcomes.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- lacked clear communication and output of ideas and processes between portfolio and workbook
- presented limited research that did not provide the depth and breadth required to expand the proposition and allow for experimentation to occur
- provided a workbook that was simply process based and showed little evidence of critical thinking and analysis
- did not show realisation of opportunities and successes within their practice due to limited photoshoots and poor decision making around sequencing and editing of the portfolio.