

2023 NZ Scholarship Assessment Report

Subject: Art History

Achievement standard(s): 93301

General commentary

The assessment included a wide range of questions, each of which was answered by a significant number of candidates. The questions were worded clearly, and the instructions were straightforward, causing no ambiguity for candidates. The questions engaged with a variety of elements and ideas, and all proved accessible to candidates. No question was significantly more (or less) popular than others.

Overall, in Section A, Question Three was favoured, followed by Question Two on the use of line in art works. In Section B, Question Five was the most popular, with Question Six also attracting many candidates.

There were competent answers to all the questions, including Question Seven in Section C. In this question, candidates were asked to analyse the short piece of text and to refer to specific art works to demonstrate the ideas presented by the author, Martin Gayford. The text selected for this paper was intellectually accessible to candidates and the ideas were outlined clearly.

In general, candidates demonstrated a sound visual memory of the works they wrote about and were strong on context.

Candidates should take care to answer every part of a question. As an example, Question Two stated 'Line has many functions' – a key word here is 'functions'. Candidates needed to go beyond describing the use of line in a number of works. It is necessary to explain what function line serves in the works which are used as examples. Does it, for example, create depth or spatial areas in a work? Does it delineate the principal figures to indicate their importance? Is it an integral part of a process such as woodcut?

Question Three asked about colour 'and the way it is used'. It is important for candidates to move beyond description and engage in analysis and explain the effect that the use of specific areas of colour has on the viewer. Do blocks of colour highlight certain figures? Do small patches of the same colour interspersed throughout a composition unify the composition? How is colour used in a pointillist work?

It is also necessary to make sure that a clear stance is evident when it is asked for in a question. This was integral to Question Four where candidates were asked to either support or refute the given statement.

In Question Five, responses needed to go beyond describing figures and style in a work, and offer an explanation of how these features generate emotion in a viewer. Similarly, in Question Six it was necessary to explain how various features weaponised art works, rather than simply describing works.

Overall, it is attention to detailed visual analysis that requires ongoing attention. Many candidates who have excellent visual recollection of an art work demonstrate this by writing a detailed description of the work but do not explain how such details are important. There is a distinct difference between description and analysis of an art work. Analysis requires an explanation of the effect that specific features of an art work have on a viewer, why the artist may have incorporated these features, and how they convey meaning to viewers.

It should be noted that in Section C, Question Seven, it is important to read the instructions carefully. This included explaining the ideas 'in your own words'. It is good practice to mention the author of the text by name, and, as well as doing so at the outset, to 'touch base' regularly by quoting a relevant piece of the text reminding of the author's stance.

Report on performance standard

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

- displayed highly developed visual analysis of the stylistic features, process and technical aspects of specific art works in their responses in Sections A and B
- demonstrated a high level of critical response to contexts and ideas
- showed perception and insight in their discussions
- presented evidence of originality and independent thought through their choice of art works, and approach to the questions
- engaged with and responded to the author's arguments and ideas in Section C.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- demonstrated high level visual analysis of appropriately selected examples
- communicated well by presenting ideas clearly
- addressed the question that was asked
- showed breadth of knowledge and understanding
- demonstrated, in Section C, a high level of understanding of the text supported by relevant examples.

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

- responded with uneven levels of visual analysis
 - wrote answers characterised by generalisations
 - offered little appropriate evidence to support statements
 - wrote answers which did not have the required detail to show depth of understanding
 - did not answer the question asked.
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