

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Visual Arts 2023

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

Performance standard 93306: Painting

General commentary

The Scholarship Painting cohort in 2023 was exemplary: production qualities were extremely high, with a very strong cohort of candidates at the upper end achieving excellent outcomes. The marking panel felt that the field, overall, was made up of solid performances, due to the ‘jam-packed’ nature of the painting enquiries. Paint handling was polished, fluent, resolved, assured, and purposeful in terms of stylistic approach. Candidates were knowledgeable about the different constraints of media and, therefore, the parameters they needed to develop skills and work within.

More candidates were documenting their workbook process, utilising sketchbooks as an integral part of their making. This included taking their own photoshoots for subject matter / compositions to further practical work phases. They captured how they were putting things together, often faster and more immediate, evidencing genuine thinking processes with photographs of sketchbook pages in workbooks. Many mapped out the stages of the construction of the painting: how they made a draft first and then a second / finished work. Rather than a written description, they showed the various movements through images.

The workbook allows the marking panel the opportunity to understand what candidates draw from another artist’s practice and the field. It is recommended that candidates consider a more comprehensive range of artists’ practices to establish a neighbourhood for their making, as opposed to selecting just a few. Artistic reference must be integrated into the candidate’s thinking and conception of artworks. It is also essential to engage thinking skills first, in order to understand the knowledge they want to apply to their work, and then spend time thinking about that knowledge with / in relation to the developing paintings. Often, candidates engaged in lengthy processes but what they gained for their primary focus / proposition was invaluable, significant, and rewarding.

Candidates were thinking across different media (e.g. drawing, fluid, dry media) to draw together complex, multi-layered narratives and explorations of their selected subject matter, as well as ways to express an opinion, viewpoint, or emotion. Many made more artwork and experiments around the central ideas, which were often edited out of the folio. Candidates did a lot of working out, using these other processes to get as much learning as they could out of it, rather than just doing enough.

Candidates engaged in brave enquiries. Sometimes, they chose to run the risk of not knowing how ‘things may play out’ but followed through because the line of questioning was relevant. Lateral thinking was evident throughout all submissions. They were prepared to see the crossovers between other fields of creative practice, particularly in crafting (feltng, stitching, printmaking, sculpture, installation, ceramics, and papermaking), and utilising non-traditional

painting media such as dirt or natural materials. These media complement each other and contribute to the conceptual intent.

The marking panel encourages captions on the folio work as appropriate, outlining contextual information that is not evident and / or not easily recognisable factors, such as media, processes, scale, time, duration, place, and site.

Report on performance standard

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

- conveyed genuine ownership of their proposition and a clear understanding of how the folio layout might shape particular readings and understanding of processes
- intelligently applied critical reflection across the various making phases, ensuring the central inquiry was genuinely informed by the range of contexts explored
- integrated research, methods, media, and processes, allowing them to reposition their inquiry in new ways on the folio, supported by documentation in the workbook
- presented a highly sophisticated engagement with a well-thought-out proposition, establishing a clear and sustained relationship within the folio / workbook performance.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- documented painting approaches in the workbook that informed the proposition development and allowed new contexts or avenues for investigation
- used small developmental series to allow for deeper and often further options with an economy of speed, effectively communicating resolution and expansion of visual ideas
- considered and reflected upon a folio layout process where unexpected outcomes were able to be acted upon and integrated into ongoing developmental phases and the more finished folio work
- evidenced understanding of contemporary painting practice gained through exhibitions, studio context, or online curated digital experiences, creating rich primary learning opportunities.

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

- documented the thinking underpinning the making of artworks but lacked the depth of analysis to identify the best options for moving their proposition forward most effectively
- described the steps undertaken in the investigation rather than reflecting on how their engagement could open up new pathways to interact with or explore through making
- showed less ownership and prior knowledge of the subject matter, so were reliant on ongoing research, which wasn't always identified in time to move ideas forward
- lacked depth and range in the making, so the enquiry felt slow in their ability to develop an amount of work.

Performance standard 93307: Design

General commentary

The Scholarship Design cohort in 2023 was buoyant, emphasising the overall high performances across the field. Candidates established a clear rationale for their propositions through provocation, personal connection, and self-directed, real-life issues or problems, placing them in context (cultural, autobiographical, social, environmental, political, and

ethical). They backed themselves with their own ideas / thinking to enable clear communication and demonstrate perspectives and understanding of the storyline arc and conceptual frameworks.

The marking panel commented on the high level of engagement evident in Scholarship Visual Arts, noting an improvement in workbooks across the board. There was much more ownership. Sometimes, it is helpful to state the obvious in the workbook, especially when stepping through the critical phases of practice. Multiple references to the field of art and design introduced a broad range of contexts to the investigation.

Selected topics were meaningful and relatable. By committing to proposals / issues they are passionate about, candidates established context and content such as copywriting, imagery, and photography, with fewer candidates using Lorem Ipsum. Production values (typography, different collateral, publication) heightened the readability of the proposition and revealed candidate engagement with crafting, integrity to the object, and editorial decision-making. Audience was also a central consideration, making the reading of their work far more poised and relevant.

There was a rise in candidates' self-managed learning around technical facility to enhance skills through additional educational avenues, such as online tutorials and YouTube videos. Candidates understand the media they use and the production requirements for completing that artefact. They work to the full conventions of each media / process and brief type, choosing formats applicable in context. The work is not repeating; it is always moving into new territory and continuously resets because the enquiry is cyclic, always responding to aspects learnt practically and conceptually.

Candidates were cognisant of various contexts, such as brand values and advertorial strategies, character emotions and archetypes, timelines, histories, and futuristic projections to ensure stories were rich in context, information, and attributes. Individually, there was a strong work ethic / project engagement. If they worked with narrative, they were constructing and editing. They were in control of storylines with genuine character developments, presenting a package around the character and linking conceptual thinking with the 'why'. Candidates were rewarded for ideational strength and their quest to formulate a message, story, and meaning, which was recognised through the practice and workbook analysis and notations.

Workbooks were substantive and full; they communicated a deeper understanding of candidates' thinking and analysis, and accounted for the high levels of making as research, offering a rich resource for the folio. Candidates individually defined a format for their workbook pages, aligned with their selected processes. Workbooks were pertinent to the holistic understanding of the learning / developments and showed what the candidate valued and learnt from testing, trialling, and experimentation.

The marking panel encourages captions on the folio work, as appropriate, outlining contextual information that is not evident and / or not easily recognisable factors such as media, processes, scale, time, duration, place, and site.

Report on performance standard

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

- revealed higher levels of critical thinking and reflection in workbooks to extend ideas and work as it unfolded in real-time

- extended the third folio board or second phase of motion / animation into new territory, with a greater synthesis of ideas and making to reset or establish a further push into new ideas, promoting unanticipated concepts and communication
- delivered projects that responded to real-life issues, environmental issues, and social problems, including many operating with autobiographical matters / issues that appeared to ignite their interest and genuinely promote experimentation, curiosity, and lateral avenues for new thinking
- constructed ideas and narratives within brand design, character development, world-building, games, and environmental design that understood the contexts and tropes that operate within the genre.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- provided a clear rationale and relevance for the provocation / topic with well-positioned subjects, so were able to mine from a deep well of research and generate resources that were continually updated and fed
- expanded on their knowledge of media and worked appropriately within the constraints of genre to deepen solutions and gain command of conventions, media, and technologies
- curated their workbook by creating headings, sections, and a system for signposting research, process, and reflections, providing invaluable annotations for a holistic submission
- dedicated time to thinking about content and context, gathering and inventing the information / imagery needed to communicate and produce the artifacts across appropriate collateral and format types.

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

- wrote in their workbook with illegible handwriting, and did not create a systematic categorisation of sections and phases of practice that were cognisant of the connection to the folio / moving image process and presentation
- lacked reflective insights, literally describing steps undertaken in the thinking / making and not taking advantage of the workbook to analyse research, extrapolate on the brief, or scope potential new avenues for inquiry
- omitted to include copywriting or narrative studies and storylines where character, prop development and environment exploration were apparent; there was no insight into the purpose of the game or clarity of the storytelling arc
- ran out of ideational strategies and tools, which exhausted the small array of ideas due to insufficient creative angles to consider, or visual elements to reform and explore new links within.

Performance standard 93308: Sculpture

General commentary

In Scholarship Sculpture in 2023, candidates presented authentic sculptural inquiries embedded in topics of personal interest and relevance. Enquiries were deep, broad, and eclectic in material usage and skills employed. Candidates spent the time required on making, which ensured technical application and inventive, beautifully executed artefacts and elements for installation. This execution aligned with media / process conventions and concepts and, at times, stretched aesthetics and expected usage within sculptures / sculptural arrangements.

Many different sculptural practice / submission types were explored and every submission operated differently. While the field comprised of substantial material enquiries driven by methods that commanded their own suite of techniques and three-dimensional approaches, most sculptural propositions were led by a personal backstory – familial, whakapapa / whānau-oriented projects. Working with subject matters of close interest and passion allowed candidates to explore and express new perspectives and knowledge.

Candidates engaged in authentic cultural and personal research, drawing on their own contexts so that the practice was meaningful, making visible their hand in the work. Documentation was effectively used to drive and augment the sculptural practice: in installing and photographing work, discoveries and new understandings of the conceptual framework were revealed, as well as potential areas for development. Photographic documentation of artwork on the folios was excellent. How objects were installed and staged captured their true essence, and the candidate's sculptural intention and ambitions. Likewise, with moving image submissions, recordings of performance were considered and purposeful in how / what was framed and revealed.

Workbooks were in-depth and usefully informed the study undertaken. Research into artistic reference and related contexts was well-integrated into the development of propositions and the making, with attention paid to proposition framework and viewer experience. Candidates were coherent and critically focused on how they established links to art / artists. The workbooks showed evidence of a parallel body of work, documentation, and analysis of less-successful outcomes or results that segued from the central theme / trajectory on the folio.

All aspects of the sculptural project were well-considered. There was a strong connection between materials, technical approaches, site, and the subject matter / idea / concepts they aimed to represent. The marking panel noted how brave candidates were in their experimental making, taking risks with how they tested different processes and materials / objects. They 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. These were often aesthetic decisions that impacted meaning and contextual communication. The level of criticality regarding the visual language used to expand propositions included material-as-metaphor, site, scale, projection, staging, and performative and ephemeral making. All this provided a raft of possibilities and highly innovative pathways.

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Report on performance standard

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

- utilised personal experiences / issues to drive a sculptural practice with authenticity and confidence
- demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of materials and processes that enhanced the depth and range of sculptural ideas
- employed strategic photographic or video documentation of works that provided a clear representation of the sculptural work whilst also strengthening the conceptual richness of the submission
- used the workbook effectively to expand and clarify the conceptual context of the sculptural activity on the folio.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- developed a clear sculptural proposition through analysis of established practice that aligned with their thinking
- presented personal observations about the world that they inhabit within a body of sculptural activity
- demonstrated command of sculptural issues such as site, scale, or material qualities in the production of work with appropriate contextual captions / text included on the folio / workbook
- 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
- engaged in creative play that was thematically linked without fully understanding the importance of materiality, site, and scale in making sculpture
- 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

The Scholarship Printmaking cohort in 2023 was robust, with a strong emphasis on technical skills and processes. Drawing skills, both figurative and abstract, were present throughout all the submissions awarded Scholarships. There was an ease and familiarity with how candidates used media and drawing, for example line and tone, to compose images that were layered and demonstrated restraint.

Candidates selected excellent topics and themes to explore through their printmaking practice, ranging from deeply personal, narrative, documentary, political, and culturally-specific subject matter, to landscape, still-life, illustration, nature, and architectural / urban subject matter. They also worked with their own imagery by taking photographs, setting up scenarios to draw from, or having a good selection of possible imagery gathered from personal / historical sources, meaning propositions had much scope for picture-making. They were also invested in gathering ideas from many sources, including art, science, film, theatre, literature, and personal experience, constantly analysing their learning with notes revealing deep thinking and well-informed decision-making.

The marking panel noted a commendable increase in experimental making to advance investigations. The less polished works included on the folio opened up intriguing dialogue, with smaller passages of making and work sequences also adding to the enquiry. In every instance, it was clear that candidates were building skills throughout the production of the folio work, a testament to their dedication to the creative process.

Works with a provisional or improvised quality of media revealed new ways of thinking and application within traditional processes. Evidence of this integrated way of making was often found in workbooks, with annotated analysis regarding their value in developing the conceptual framework. For example, sequences of cyclical making were established using methods like collage, visual manipulation / arrangement, Photoshop, and technical applications.

Candidates demonstrated a substantial engagement with the medium – specifically conventions of drawing, layering, tone, and composition – understanding their theme / topic and knowing how and what they wanted to communicate. Once immersed in their project, they could expand from the work they had done to keep the project moving. There was no repetition of ideas; the process was extended repeatedly. Candidates were also good at moving into other spaces of production, such as installation, books, and large-scale work.

Workbooks were clearly produced in parallel throughout the year as a repository for thoughts and reflections. Pages from workbooks, notations, and backstory information were well-researched and reviewed. They also contained extra work, which helped enrich the enquiry and filled in the thinking between artworks on the folio.

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Report on performance standard

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

- immersed themselves in complex propositions, showing exceptional engagement, critical thinking and humour across both research and practice
- developed a deep and broad investigation, took risks in producing experimental works, and analysed the successful aspects to keep building possibilities
- explored conceptual concerns appropriate to the proposition through highly refined technical skills
- created and documented works in workbooks that extended beyond the folio through exploring new media, printing onto different surfaces, print installation, and large-scale work.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- established a clear, open-ended proposition to enable sustained exploration pictorially and conceptually
- included notes and thumbnails in the workbook showing 'why' works were produced and took own photographs or collages to inform folio works
- showed confidence and aptitude in the use of drawing and printmaking skills, continually building and refining techniques through the third panel of the folio
- presented a clearly ordered folio, including smaller series of works that contributed and led to larger resolved works.

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

- used workbook space to document works also seen on the folio without expanding upon the repetition
- over-described, in past tense, how works on the folio were produced
- presented works, or series of works, that were pictorially similar rather than pushing towards exploring and making new compositions, ideas, and options
- included notes on artists' works but did not indicate relevance, how, or why this research informed their own practice.

Performance standard 93310: Photography

General commentary

In Scholarship Photography 2023, we saw many candidates taking risks to produce ambitious projects and topical artworks. Over and over, candidates demonstrated a willingness to be experimental, to see what transpired, and then to rework or develop new avenues and outcomes. Continually delving into new territory allows the process of engaging in Scholarship Photography to unfold – knowing how to see something and valuing it.

Personal investment by candidates was visible in the rigour and intentionality of their chosen topics and the amount of work made. They gave themselves something to work through without a predetermined outcome, meaning they always had multiple directions and possibilities to pursue. Topics were based on personal interests, thus providing genuine and authentic propositions about life circumstances, family connections, and the place they were in – there is obvious success in working with something candidates have already established curiosity about, knowledge of, and connections with.

Enquiries were well-supported by art world / artist references and contextual material from other areas related to their propositions, for example novels, films, politics, ethics, science, mathematics, and ecology. The work outcomes were their own: contextual influence was apparent but was critically synthesised and reflected through the practice. Candidates communicated their thinking through consistent image-making, with many making significant bodies of work that sought different and experimental outcomes, including changing trajectories when that seemed the conceptually apt thing to do.

Candidates achieving Scholarship had a good understanding of the genre modality and tropes they were working within, specific to the type of photographic practice conventions and contemporary art. These included camera control and functionality, lighting options, and compositional devices. Of note were the use of technology and a return to a broader range of photographic practices within a single enquiry to create an expansion of engagement: cyanotypes, pinhole, film, polaroid, emulsions, scanography, and toners, as well as different paper stocks and printing.

Overall, candidates engaged in deep, genuine enquiries that considered the relationship between folio and workbook. High levels of criticality were visible in workbooks with different types of writing and notations employed – diaristic, research, and response. The practice journey was understandable in workbooks via the dialogical recording of the process and steps taken through processual phases linked to conceptualisation and context. Technical processes were reflectively unpacked, especially when a candidate chose a particular camera / process, built a set for a photographic narrative, or staged complex arrangements and installations to make an image. Another strength was directorship, with those candidates consistently asking: am I photographing myself, or what kind of model do I need to express my topic best? Respect was given to the reception of the audience and the potential sensitivities of person and place.

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Report on performance standard

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

- demonstrated a high degree of technical facility and functionality with the camera to support fluent production
- had an investigative approach to their proposition, diving deep into the unknown to allow for the process to provide new findings, accepting what they found, and doing something further with that to seek value from it
- took ambitious risks to push their projects further and avoid predictable outcomes, encouraging depth into the enquiry
- presented a folio / workbook that was reciprocal to one another, with the workbook becoming another site to unpack, critically analyse, and synthesise ideas in development through the practice.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- presented an authentic relationship / connection between the folio / workbook practice to show their learning through research, experimentation, testing, and willingness to take risks to expand ideas
- demonstrated fluency with a range of photographic conventions used to produce a large quantity and breadth of work
- developed a proposition that was not just positioned within artistic practice but included references of contextual relevance
- reflected on their practice and analysed evidence of the processes used to meet outcomes.

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

- presented limited research in the folio / workbook to expand the proposition and allow for a variety of experimentation to occur
- attempted to demonstrate the level of technical fluency required with a variety of conventions, but were inconsistent
- provided evidence of few photoshoots, so the links between research and practice were compromised, lacking in communication and output
- did not realise successes within their own practice due to a lack of analysis and poor decision-making around editing on the folio.