

ART THEORY AND CRITICISM (ARA 315116)

FEEDBACK FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

2018 has been a strong year for Art Theory and Criticism students, with candidates producing critical and articulate arguments through the lens of visual arts.

Candidates should complete the minor essays as early as possible and visit galleries as often as possible to ensure meaningful investigation of major essay topics can take place. The major paper is best-written over time, to ensure the ideas of the candidate have time to develop into sound and holistic arguments.

Art Theory and Criticism helps nurture students into academic writers who can analyse art and form a critical and researched stance in relation to it. When producing their major papers, candidates should follow protocols of academic integrity and citation as stated in the course description and folio guidelines available on the TASC website. In most cases, candidates used suitable referencing systems such as Chicago or Harvard. However, a concerning number of candidates failed to suitably reference information from other sources. Teachers should work with all candidates to ensure they do not include plagiarised content.

The overall format of many essays was appropriate. Many candidates included contents pages in help outline subtopics within the essay. Most also included suitable captions with the illustration number, title of artwork (in italics), artist, media of artwork, dimensions and where the artwork is on display. Lists of illustrations were also included alongside reference lists and bibliographies.

Successful candidates utilised the D.A.I.E. (Describe, Analyse, Interpret and Evaluate) format to unpack their ideas and understandings. By scaffolding their arguments in this format, candidates were able to aid the reader by providing foundational information first before unpacking more abstract and nuanced concepts.

Furthermore, these candidates didn't accept conclusions drawn from sources without greater integration and evaluation of the information expressed. Through the combined use of primary and secondary sources, critic and audience reviews and most importantly, their own personal judgements these candidates produced essays that were resolved and engaging.

Unfortunately, in weaker essays, candidates were unable to relate descriptions of artworks to their broader arguments or flatly didn't provide broader arguments. This resulted in disjointed and at times, irrelevant discussions. It is vital that essays critically engage with the topic, rather than simply listing a series of artwork examples. Primary sources were also underutilised in some cases. Candidates are encouraged to engage with their local art communities to develop their own real-life perspectives on ideas discussed. Some candidates missed marvellous primary source opportunities presented by local galleries, museum and events.

In a notable positive change for 2018, many candidates used their essay to analyse and question the relationships between gender, society and fine art. These essays criticised traditional standards of beauty within the art world, questioned the gender roles of artists and articulated issues of equality being addressed in contemporary art. Strengthened by the personal significance of the topics to the candidates, these essays were socially conscious and reflected the empathetic values of the wider student cohort. It was thoroughly exciting for the examiners to see these authentic, intelligent and compassionate arguments being made. Similarly, issues around cultural identify, Indigenous art, the ethical use of animals and the use of technology within art were also major themes explored.

SOME ESSAY TITLES:

- Neglected Female Artists of the Pop Movement
- The Origin of Artistic Progression towards Abstraction
- How artists use trauma to portray the human condition
- Perfectly Imperfect: celebration of female imperfection
- The Meaning of Light; how light is used symbolically in art
- Man-Divine; Look into symbology and prevalence of Christian art
- How and why are contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginals reengaging with material culture?
- An Exploration of how artists have used distortion of the figure
- Do contemporary artists subvert the historical notion of idealised female beauty in western art?
- An exploration of video art as a method of documentation and expression
- Expressionism: Paintings of sadness, fear, love and death
- The emergence of Tasmanian gothic in contemporary female art
- The Gendered Rift
- The original 'Selfie'
- The many faces of Tasmanian Landscapes
- Impacts of technological development on outsider artists in Furneaux Islands
- How synaesthesia is portrayed in art
- Where women artists of the Renaissance just as talented as men?
- How art is used to further social justice movements: Animal Rights
- How European Artists influences and manipulated the portrayal of Aborigines through art
- Stitching together the world of fine art and fashion
- How art shows the condition of the mind