

Art Studio Practice

Course Code: ART315214

Art Studio Practice provides a valuable pathway for year 12 art students who have completed Art Production to continue their art practice at TASC level 3C with a focus on the further development of conceptual and analytical research skills and the consolidation of skills through a negotiated self-directed inquiry and practical studio based investigation.

In 2016 there continues to be a steady increase in the number of candidates enrolled in the course with 239 candidates being drawn from the 8 government state colleges and 11 non-government schools state wide.

Throughout the state there were a number of exceptional individual exhibitions this year representing a diverse range of studio disciplines; these included ceramics, photography (film and digital) digital art and media, printmaking, painting and mixed- media, drawing, collage, graphic design, sculpture, video and installation. In the exemplary folios, the standard continues to build in both a noticeable consolidation of technical skills, communication of conceptual content and refinement in the quality and resolution of the final exhibitions.

It is gratifying to see that the majority of teachers are interpreting the course guidelines to deliver the course with a consistent and shared understanding of standards and work requirements typified by the substantial and extensive evidences provided against the criteria.

The combined government and non-government moderation meetings held in the North and the South of the state in 2015 and 2016 have been instrumental in bringing the two sectors together after operating as separate entities for several years. This has ensured teachers have the essential PL opportunities to build a shared understanding of work requirements and standards and will promote an ongoing professional dialogue in this space.

The written **Proposal** is a focus statement and serves to provide the **context** for the studio practice and will, from the beginning of the year, necessarily involve refinement over time. The simple concise statement continues to represent a challenge for students. Some proposals remain essays which is to be expected earlier in the year but the idea is to refine the language and get to the 'nuts and bolts' of the issue. The use of simple and concise language tends to be particularly challenging for those students who tend to layer up the message to impress. It has never been the intention that the proposal is in essay form but it definitely needs to be longer than a four line paragraph - not to be confused with the notion of concise language- and be approximately 500 words in length.

The purpose of the proposal is to encourage the **articulation of the idea**, to focus students on the need to provide a **rationale** and be able to articulate it and use **appropriate language** to do so. The value of the proposal as a **learning tool** is to provide a focus and discussion point for teacher and student during the course of the year. As such evidence of the development of this process of edits and re-edits, articulation and refinement should be retained as part of the reflective practice materials. It is always very helpful to find proposals and statements easy to access in the reflective practice materials to support and facilitate the marking processes. Candidates are advised to print off two copies of their proposal attaching one to the Major Research Paper and one either on the wall or clearly visible on top of the support materials for easy access by examiners.

The success of the proposal is reflected in the **resolution of the final exhibition**. An exemplary standard will be evident in the **visual impact** and the cohesive strength of technical, stylistic and conceptual elements, convincing in all aspects to effectively **communicate the studio proposal**.

Students and teachers need to ask; 'Does the final exhibition exhibit **exceptional** qualities that immediately and powerfully impact the viewer? The exhibition '**hang**' and **design** represents an opportunity for students to demonstrate their **display skills** and attention to detail. Too much clutter and unrelated substances or additional props detract and often serve only to confuse. In many cases students would be advised to adopt a 'less is more'

approach. Students need to also ask '**does the exhibition express the intended outcome as expressed in the proposal?**' Although not specified the quantity of work produced must reflect the equivalent of 150 hours engagement in studio practice.

The development of depth in **conceptual content** and the establishment of an **artistic context** is a key course requirement and represents a challenge for most students. **Artist research** and **active investigations** will support this process but it needs to be **relevant, specific** and **individualised** evidence and clearly displayed in the reflective practice materials.

The **artist statement** is an opportunity for students to articulate the conceptual content of their work. **Clarity** and use of **concise language** is critical in the communication of the intended idea. Students need to ask 'does the artwork communicate the intended meaning as articulated in the artist's statement?'

The depth of **relevant investigation** and **research** will correlate with the final exhibition – ie evidence in the **VSO** to support the source and **development of the idea** over time. **Conceptual depth** needs to be backed up by **contextual** information in the reflective practice materials.

Conceptual meaning and the **communication of ideas**. The commonality of ideas clearly identifies the primary concerns of the candidates' adolescent age group; Selfies, social media, Animal rights, environmental sustainability, stereotypes, identity, personal issues, family, friendship, body image, the impact of technology, apocalyptic scenarios and fantasy surrealism. Idea generation and conceptual development is an area that can be more explicitly taught. If a student chooses to investigate 'identity' which is a common area of interest they are advised to explore their own context in some depth to create an original take on the concept.

Although the delivery of the course may be typified by a range of approaches reflecting different educational settings it is important for teachers and students to recognise that Art Studio Practice is designed at a level 3 level of difficulty. The level of engagement and involvement in studio practice during the course of the year is equivalent to 150 hours design time. In a few schools there was clearly an over production and exaggeration of the requirements for the **reflective practice** evidence. This was evident in the mass production of multiple 'scrap books' without relevant or meaningful annotations or overly detailed and written text on VSOs which are not necessary to provide authentic, relevant and genuine evidence against the criteria.

The **reflective practice** criterion for this course needs to be considered in the context of the final exhibition with the supporting evidences reflecting sustained engagement over time, relevant research and investigation appropriate to a self- directed inquiry typified by authentic and individualised learning. The VSO is a **visual** rather than a written overview. A 'map' of artistic and relevant influences reflected in the research. This year some schools provided slick and impressive electronic versions. Unfortunately these were considered very time consuming to navigate and did not provide a total visual overview which defeated the purpose of the 'visual map'. Students are encouraged to revert to paper versions or print out a hard copy to facilitate the marking process in future.

In some schools the **active investigations** continue to be delivered as a series of 3 essays rather than a compilation of a range of evidences and reflections that indicate a student's actual engagement with real world art practice. Examples could include documentation on a visit to a gallery, an exhibition review, an artist interview, pecha kucha presentation on key influences or documented links to the past and present in the context of each student's own area of interest. This represents a challenge for students who tend to default to the internet for all their research and information. Essentially teachers need to engage students in 'actively investigating' to demonstrate initiative as part of their self-directed inquiry.

The consolidation of technical skills was evident in the increased number of folios exhibiting an exceptional standard of **technical skill and application of technologies**. In the most outstanding exemplars the high degree of technical resolution was clearly demonstrated in the extensive exploration of materials and processes evident in the reflective practice materials where it was apparent that skills had been consistently refined through a sustained practice over time. The aesthetic and conceptual aims clearly articulated in the application of technical skill. By contrast in some folios there appeared to be an extensive amount of work on the wall with little or no evidence of process and the development of the technique through experimentation or practice equivalent to a 150 hour

course. In the presentation of installation and video exhibitions the provision of appropriate levels of process documentation and **reflective practice materials** is critical to the success of folios presented in this medium.

The resurgence of interest in traditional media as the preferred medium remains strong with an increase in the number of folios based on observational drawing and detailed illustrative techniques. A renewed interest in craftwork, stencils, stitching and embroidery emerged as an interesting trend this year while student engagement with Mona and Art Rage exhibitions remain strong influences.

Although digital photography continues to dominate in preference to film there was a stronger element of photo-montage and experimental collage evident in photography exhibitions this year. In photography in general the provision of appropriate levels of process documentation and evidence of photoshoots, annotations, screen shots and documented idea generation in diaries remains inconsistent.

The number of exceptional exhibitions and outstanding exemplars this year indicates that teachers and students in both the government and non- government sectors understand very clearly the required evidences and how to achieve them. For an exceptional rating to remain the highest and most outstanding exemplar deferring to a norm referenced model in rating students internally at this level is a tendency that needs to be discouraged. Teachers are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the external marking process in some capacity. It represents an excellent PL opportunity and should be an essential requirement for teachers of the course particularly for those who have never participated in the marking process. This would be advisable for teachers new to teaching the course or working in small schools or in isolation.

Thank you to the students and teachers of Art Studio Practice who have ensured the successful delivery and exemplary standard attained in 2016. A testament to the creative talents of our students and also the high level of professional knowledge, engagement with contemporary art practice and commitment to exemplary practice demonstrated by their teachers.