

# Visual Art 2019 v1.1

## Unit 2 high-level annotated sample response

September 2022

### Examination — extended response 1

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the assessment objectives.

### Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. implement decoding skills to read visual language and communicate understanding of ideas and representations in artworks
2. apply literacy skills using relevant visual art terminology, reference to artworks and language conventions to recognise and distinguish features of selected artworks and practices
3. analyse and interpret visual language, expression and meaning in artworks through a specified context
4. evaluate art forms to appraise the significance of relevant similarities, differences and ideas
5. justify a viewpoint supported by evidence of artistic processes, intentions and expression
8. realise a written response to demonstrate knowledge about how artists employ artistic qualities to create meaning.

**Note:** Objectives 6 and 7 are not assessed in this instrument.

# Task

Answer one of the following questions.

- **Question 1**

Evaluate how artists manipulate media and techniques to communicate contemporary issues. Justify your viewpoint by comparing two chosen artworks from the stimulus.

- **Question 2**

Evaluate how artists use symbols and metaphors to communicate their personal values. Justify your viewpoint by comparing two chosen artworks from the stimulus.

- **Question 3**

Evaluate how artists re-purpose found objects in response to cultural influences. Justify your viewpoint by comparing two chosen artworks from the stimulus book.

## Sample response

This is a high-level response because the student:

Applies literacy skills within the response through articulated ideas and controlled structure that enhances critical meaning for the reader

Justifies an informed and independent viewpoint supported by evidence and critical understanding of divergent perspectives

Analyses and interprets specific features and meanings of visual language that emphasise artists' intentions and multiple audience readings

### Question 1

#### Evaluate how artists manipulate media and techniques to communicate contemporary issues.

Artists use different viewpoints and subject matter to visually represent and communicate complex conceptual meanings. Portia Munson and John Dahlsen are contemporary artists who explore environmental perspectives and waste using representations, visual metaphors and illusion in their artworks. Audiences are able to interpret how these artists have manipulated media and techniques to successfully explore contemporary issues and communicate their intended meaning. Both of these artists investigate complex ideas within their artwork that reflect a broader social and environmental concern.

American born contemporary artist, Portia Munson, explores the ideas of consumerism and nature within her artwork, *Lawn*. The composition is constructed using green plastic objects which were collected at dumps by the artist. *Lawn* appears like a random pile of rubbish, but Munson has actually manipulated the materials by carefully arranging the objects into a tight rectangle to resemble a lush, cared for lawn. Within the sculpture are common household objects such as bottles, baskets and chairs, which are all coloured green. Munson arranged the materials so they sit in blended shades of green. This actually makes the various shades more obvious so that the viewer questions the purpose of the colouring and becomes aware of how much waste we throw away. Depending on the viewer's perspective, they might perceive the work as a haphazard collection of junk, or they might step back and see a carefully constructed and controlled arrangement of found objects.

The artist has chosen green plastic objects for this installation to symbolise the idea of a lawn as a human creation, and not a natural phenomenon. The suburban lawn is entirely manufactured and fabricated as a natural form for people to inhabit and enjoy, yet it takes a lot of time, care and products to maintain it. The artist creates a connection between

Implements decoding skills to construct valid relationships between the artists' manipulation of media and techniques and the communication of identified contemporary issues

Evaluates multiple components of artworks and practices to highlight complex and subtle comparative relationships between selected artworks

Realises the response to communicate an insightful synthesis of artwork observation, comprehension of information, individual interpretation and comparison that explains how artists manipulate media to create meaning and communicate contemporary issues in the selected artworks.

the natural and commercial world, as the colour green is used as a marketing tool for a huge variety of products to represent clean nature. *Lawn* also communicates to the audience the amount of waste within our society, as the objects within the artwork were all pieces that have been disposed of and then collected at dumps even though they are probably not broken. The objects themselves evidence the contemporary issue of humanity's consumerist waste, and consequently the lifestyle and activities these objects represent. Munson visually communicates a complex social practice by manipulating familiar subject matter to influence audience thinking.

While Munson makes connections to waste and the accumulation of waste through consumerism and the environment, John Dahlsen connects to waste through his collection of discarded found objects. The use of found subject matter such as collected debris conveys the meaning of not wasting. Dahlsen's *Blue Rope* is an artwork that communicates environmental issues, although the subject matter is displayed more traditionally. The low relief is composed in three frames that each contain an assortment of collected rubbish from the beach. Within Blue Rope synthetic blue, green and brown are arranged by Dahlsen to compositionally allude to a river or ocean landscape. *Blue Rope* compositionally appears as a natural landscape, communicating the connection between waste and the environment. Dahlsen discusses the use and abuse of the environment through his manipulation of objects while Munson communicates contemporary ideas of the environment and waste. *Blue Rope* uses objects two-dimensionally through subject matter, such as a collection of objects and uses visual conventions to position the audience to interpret the meaning of the artwork. It is through the choice of objects and the artist's selection of elements such as colour and placement of these items that meaning is constructed for the viewer.

Both artworks *Lawn* and *Blue Rope* use collected objects as the subject matter to visually represent complex conceptual meanings of environmental issues and human waste. The compositions of the artworks vary and effectively communicate each artist's intention within a contemporary context. While both discuss environmental issues, and use familiar subject matter to convey human waste, Munson's artwork uses a synthetic colour green to symbolise and allude to nature, while Dahlsen uses less intense and more natural colours of the ocean and the earth. Both *Lawn* and *Blue Rope* are artworks that are evidence of how artists use subject matter to communicate meaning and make connection between humanity and the waste products generated by society's lifestyles.

Dahlsen and Munson both collect objects to use as their art media because the audience understands and is familiar with them. They manipulate found objects as visual metaphors to allude to complex ideas and messages. Through careful selection and arrangement of their collected art media, the artists' techniques communicate their concerns about environmental issues, waste and consumerism and might generate feelings of guilt or responsibility in the audience. While in *Lawn*, the installation technique arranges an assortment of unchanged familiar objects, Dahlsen transforms his collections into new sculptural forms. Dahlsen's manipulation turns pollution into something visually appealing to capture the audience attention, whereas Munson's approach is to transfer our forgotten rubbish from the dump back to a place where it can't be ignored. Both artists convey the message that we must reduce waste

and manipulate media to communicate the detrimental effects on the environment. Therefore, complex ideas and meanings can effectively be communicated by using media and techniques in art.



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