

# Q&A

with Hanna Jones, student and Annabel Simmonds, teacher  
West Moreton Anglican College

Visual Art, Internal assessment 2: Project — inquiry phase 2

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## Hanna Jones, student

### Q: What did you enjoy most about Visual Art?

A: *I really enjoyed the creative freedom I had in my assessments. When I was planning and creating my works, it did not feel like I was working, as visual art has always been a passion of mine.*

### Q: How did you prepare for this assessment task?

A: *To prepare for this mural, I first experimented with how I could generate ideas and tried creative exercises. In order to try and flesh out subconscious memory as an image, I found that fast-improvised drawings helped me the most. Other preparations included finding a space to place such a large piece, as well as collecting art materials required for the painting. My supportive school and teachers were able to provide these resources.*

### Q: How did your teacher prepare you for this assessment?

A: *My teacher introduced our class to a variety of artists we would not usually look into in order to expand our horizons and artistic knowledge. In some lessons, we individually (or in groups) researched one artist and shared summarised information with the class. When we were developing ideas for our assessment, my teacher made sure to avoid giving us direct instructions and focused more on guiding us to making decisions ourselves. This helped us keep on track while being able to create what we wanted.*

### Q: What made you choose the topic or method of presentation?

A: *I wanted to make my artwork impactful and in order to do that, I thought that creating a large-scale artwork would be fitting and exciting for the audience.*

### Q: What is most important to you when you are preparing a response to an assessment task?

A: *Backing up files is a very important part of preparing a response, as there is not much room to redo parts of the assessment. Touching base with your teacher often is also important, as you can ask questions about the assessment and make sure that you are on the right track.*

### Q: What are your thoughts about this assessment and the approach you took when responding to the task?

A: *I had a strong interest in starting out on murals, so I made this interest fit in the assessment. I initially wanted to paint on a real wall; however, I was told that it would have to be painted over after it had been marked. So I chose the second option where I could paint on a large piece of fabric canvas. But I found that creating a mural in Year 12 was quite a challenge, as I had to juggle other subjects while I tried to paint on a big piece of fabric on the driveway.*

### Q: How will you use what you have learnt in this subject?

A: *What I have learnt in Visual Art will carry onto my work at university (Fine Art and Animation). The developing and creating process in my assessments will help me devise plans and ideas for my future artworks.*

## **Annabel Simmonds, teacher**

**Q: What was the purpose of this assessment and what key decisions were made in the design of the task?**

*A: The Senior Visual Art syllabus places importance on student choice and freedom of expression. When designing the task, it was important to enable honesty and true creative expression of student knowledge. Scope within the stimulus allowed for students to draw on their existing knowledge, new investigated knowledge or react to a self-realisation. The task explored an individual, open-ended inquiry question in response to an exhibition seen during the class excursion to the Gallery of Modern Art in South Bank. The excursion featured key solo exhibitions for Margaret Olley, Ben Quilty and Nicolas Molé, allowing for this student to be exposed to large-scale artworks of a personal context.*

**Q: How did your teaching and the student learning experiences prepare the students to complete this assessment?**

*A: Class discussion and learning experiences focused on students realising their true self and how art making can be a process of self-discovery. The concept of Art as knowledge was redefined by the students to reflect their learning goals as they approach adulthood. The classroom was purposefully curated to be a safe and comforting space for students to realise their art dream, as this may be the last time Visual Art is formally studied. A large-scale mural is a common interest among students; however, it is rarely achieved, as the process can appear intimidating and time-consuming. To focus energy and knowledge on the process of painting a mural, the design needed to be genuinely organic. Hanna and I discussed sketches and characters that she had previously invented, as well as subconscious compositions created while absent-mindedly doodling. The student discovered that she already had a variety of characters and compositions to choose from and that knowledge would come from her keen understanding of self, even if this did not fully translate to a wider audience.*

**Q: How does this assessment reflect the unique characteristics of your school and your students?**

*A: Our school is unique for its large campus and recently built gallery area, putting students in a position to both produce and display large-scale artworks. The school has an impressive Trade Skills Centre, providing the Visual Art department with access to specialty materials, spaces and technicians. It is common for our Visual Art students to also have experience working in the Trade Skills Centre, becoming familiar with equipment such as 3D printers and laser cutters to understand that large-scale projects are achievable. Another unique characteristic of the school is the integral support students receive throughout Middle and Senior schooling to understand and harness their emotional intelligence. Placing focus on emotional education in the younger years is enhancing the depth and specialisation of personal and cultural responses from Senior Visual Art students, as cohorts are becoming more confident with exploration of self.*

**Q: Can you explain the exemplary aspects of Hanna's response?**

*A: Exemplary aspects of Hanna's response include her comprehensive planning and development to choose a composition design based on audience feedback, the complex use of monochromatic colour, an innovative use of the concept, and the work's dominating impact. Students chose their display location during the planning stage of the project, and this artwork was created for the largest wall of the gallery, which faces outwards toward the carpark. Due to this factor, audience engagement was not limited to the staff and students who entered the gallery but also included members of the community who drove past to view the mural externally. Complexity of design and application of media then became important factors as the work needed to be clearly visible from 10–15 metres away while also being appreciated up close, during the daylight and evening. The mural's innovative use of original yet familiar characters matched with the nostalgic monochromatic colour scheme and promoted a strong sense of comfort, contrasting against the line between literal and non-literal representation being challenged through the illogical application of a personal context.*