

ART HISTORY

Paper 9799/01
**Analytical Studies in Western and
non-Western Art**

General comments

There is a tendency with some candidates to put **(b)** material in the **(a)** section of answers. In the pressured environment of the examination hall, there is an understandable reaction to put down everything they know about the work. They are not penalised for this, but unless they then include this material in the **(b)** section where it belongs they are potentially depriving themselves of marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)*, 1907

- (a) With four elements to analyse, the best responses were characterised by a systematic approach. Many candidates were able to reach the Very Good and Excellent bands on the Mark Scheme. There is sometimes an issue in how the term composition is interpreted. Identifying the subject matter is not enough if there is little sense of positioning. Beyond this, there also needs to be an analysis of the abstract, dynamic structure of the painting. There are very few verticals or horizontals in the work and a diagonal cross can be detected connecting all five figures.
- (b) The most comprehensive responses to this question identified the subject as being a brothel in Barcelona (not Paris, as some other candidates stated). The strongest responses also conveyed the breadth of artistic influences such as El Greco, Ingres, Manet, Cézanne, Matisse, African and Iberian sculpture and masks. It was also relevant to consider that, for Picasso at that stage, formal concerns were of increasing importance as he moved towards a new language of representation.

Question 2

Tara, 700–750 AD

- (a) Most candidates were aware of the unusual quality of this work being solid bronze rather than hollow. Descriptions of the casting process were made in generalised terms and the property of high tensile strength was also made, although *Tara* is not a notable example of this. The smoothness of the surface of the sculpture and its gilded finish were widely observed. Fewer candidates pointed out the use of chasing in some of the finer, more detailed parts of the sculpture. Some of the more subtle responses described the movement of the figure in her arms, hips and legs – movement that also paradoxically seems to express stillness.
- (b) Given the distance in age and culture for most candidates with this work, this was, on the whole, well answered. The resource of Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects* was clearly an illuminating aid in trying to understand the historical context in which *Tara* was made. The fact that *Tara* was a *bodhisattva*, but that she was originally a Hindu mother goddess, was noted by many candidates. The better responses were also able to postulate that she would have stood on a plinth in a temple, alongside her male consort, for a privileged elite of monks and priests.

Question 3

Andrea Palladio, *Villa Rotonda*, 1592

- (a) For those candidates confident in their classical terminology and ability to analyse a building systematically, this was a question in which they could achieve well.. The weaker responses were characterised by a limited grasp of terminology leading to a more basic analysis.
- (b) Candidates needed to look both backwards and forwards from the time of Palladio. They needed to be aware of Palladio's debt to the Roman architect, Vitruvius, who wrote *De architectura* which stated a structure must exhibit the three qualities of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, *venustas* – that is, it must be solid, useful and beautiful. In terms of those Palladio influenced, specific architects such as Inigo Jones, Lord Burlington, William Kent and Thomas Jefferson in America and the buildings they created such as Chiswick House and Monticello were cited in the more in-depth answers.

Question 4

JMW Turner, *Venice: Looking East towards San Pietro di Castello – Early Morning*, 1819

- (a) Among the few candidates that answered this section, there were some detailed and subtle answers. Reference was made to the 'tinted drawing' topographical tradition from which Turner emerged and which contrasted so strongly to this work. Knowledge of the technical aspects of watercolour as a medium was well demonstrated and also the variety of marks that can be made depending on the saturation or dryness of the surface of the paper.
- (b) Apart from a more modernist filter of saying that Turner was interested in light and colour, almost in the abstract, fuller responses noted that Turner was concerned with elevating landscape as a genre within the hierarchy of genres by connecting with subjects such as Venice with their rich and resonant history. In the interests of sublime effects, he was not averse to rearranging the skyline if it served his purposes.

ART HISTORY

Paper 9799/02
Historical Topics

General comments

As in the previous year, the general standard of answers was very good. Many scripts were of very high quality and demonstrated a close familiarity with the subject matter, a great depth of understanding and the ability to argue a particular point of view. Many candidates referred to a wide variety of relevant examples of works of art in their answers and analysed them in detail, remaining firmly focused on the question. In addition, the most accomplished candidates used quotations from secondary sources where this was felt to be appropriate.

On the other hand, a small number of candidates began their answers with an overlong introduction or by the discussion of largely irrelevant material which took up a great deal of space, leaving them with insufficient time to answer the question in detail. This was evident in the answers to Questions 1 and 2 in Topic 1, *The art and architecture of antiquity, c.600 BC to c.570 AD* and to a lesser extent in Question 36 in Topic 8, *The shock of the new: art and architecture in Europe and the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries*. In Question 1, for example, several candidates began with a general survey of vase painting, beginning as far back as 1800 BC, before getting round to discussing the red figure vases mentioned in the question. Likewise, in Question 2, several candidates prefaced their answer on the Altar of Zeus either with a discussion of classical sculpture or a general account of Hellenistic sculpture. In Question 36, on the development of Cubism before the First World War, a few candidates included irrelevant material on Picasso's early career or spent much too long on a detailed analysis of Les Demoiselles D'Avignon.

Secondly, in Question 16, more care was occasionally required in selecting appropriate examples of Donatello's sculpture to demonstrate a 'range of emotions.' In a few cases, candidates focused exclusively on works such as the *St George* and the bronze *David* which depict subtle and restrained emotions and did not include examples such as the *Judith and Holofernes* and the *Herod Relief* from the Siena Baptistery Font which express much stronger and more overt emotions.

Thirdly, as in previous years, there were isolated examples of candidates choosing works of art which did not belong to the appropriate chronological period. This was evident in Question 39, *The Figure and the Object*, where, instead of selecting examples from after the Second World War, several candidates chose ones which dated from earlier in the 20th century

Comments on specific questions

Topic 1: The art and architecture of antiquity, c.600 BC to c.570 AD

1 Art and architecture in the archaic period, c.600 BC to c.450 BC

Discuss the characteristic features of red figure vase painting.

Several candidates prefaced their account of red figure vase painting by a long and irrelevant account of the development of Greek vase painting in general, in some cases taking 1800 BC as their starting point. A small number of candidates did focus on red figure vases as required by the question and produced answers of a generally high standard. All candidates identified suitable examples of red figure vases and the best answers showed an awareness of the technique involved and innovations in the treatment of anatomy and pictorial space. On the other hand, very few candidates mentioned the new shapes of vessels.

2 Greek architecture and sculpture of the classical and Hellenistic periods, c.450 BC to c.100 BC

In what ways does the sculpture on the Great Frieze of the Pergamon Altar communicate the dramatic aspects of the subject matter?

As in the previous question, several candidates spent a considerable time in an irrelevant discussion of pre-Hellenistic sculpture which left them with insufficient time to explore the question in depth. A small number of candidates also discussed examples of Hellenistic sculpture other than the frieze (for example, the *Dying Gaul*) which were only peripherally related to the question. Several candidates, however, produced well focused answers in which they discussed particular scenes in considerable detail, referring to the facial expressions and the frequent use of diagonals as part of the composition. Only a few candidates discussed the way in which the dramatic aspects were enhanced by the monumentality of the figures, the depth of the relief, the techniques involved (deep undercutting and extensive use of the drill) and the relationship with the viewer (particularly in those sections of the frieze on either side of the stairs).

3 Roman Imperial architecture, c.50 AD to c.330 AD

Discuss what was innovative about Roman building in this period with reference to named examples.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

4 Painting and sculpture in the Roman Republic and Imperial periods, c.100 BC to c.330 AD

In what ways can the design and decoration of Trajan's Forum be seen as an exercise in Imperial propaganda?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

5 The art and architecture of late antiquity, c.330 AD to c.570 AD

During the 4th and 5th centuries AD, there was a great demand for small-scale luxury goods in materials such as ivory, silver and glass. Discuss a variety of examples.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 2: Art, religion and society in Romanesque Europe, c.1000–1200

6 Building the 'militant' Church

What was old and what was new in Romanesque architecture?

A large proportion of the candidates who attempted this question produced good or very good answers. All candidates were able to identify a satisfactory number of relevant examples which they discussed in considerable depth. Most candidates identified the new features of churches in the period, including the elaboration of the east end (extra transepts, an ambulatory and an increase in the number of chapels), the early use of pointed arches and the development of vaults. Some of the better responses also mentioned influences from architecture outside Western Europe. Weaker responses tended to give a more general account of architecture from the period and did not always distinguish between the old and new features of the buildings.

7 Heaven and hell: sculpture in the service of the Church

How did sculpture serve the Church in the Romanesque period?

This question elicited some very good answers. All candidates selected at least three excellent and varied examples which they discussed in a detailed and highly focused way, in each case explaining how the subject matter was used to expound biblical stories and to convey the teachings of the Church. Better responses also related the sculptures at Vézelay to the second crusade and the fact that they would have been seen by large numbers of pilgrims.

8 Illuminating the word

What different styles do we find in Romanesque painting?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

9 Bibles for the illiterate

Discuss the importance of luxury objects in the life of the Church.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

10 Priests, warriors, peasants

Discuss the stylistic influence of non-Western cultures on Western Romanesque art.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 3: A new heaven and new earth: Gothic art and architecture, c.1140–1540

11 Gothic architecture, the setting for prayer

Discuss the innovations which took place in the design and construction of English cathedrals in the 14th century.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

12 Prayer and the role of images

Discuss the variety of images in Books of Hours.

This question gave rise to answers most of which were in the good or very good category. All candidates selected a satisfactory number of appropriate examples of Books of Hours which they discussed in considerable depth. Most candidates pointed out the way in which Books of Hours were personalised for their owner's use including, for example, the presence of donor portraits in works such as the Vienna Hours of Mary of Burgundy. On the other hand, only a few candidates related the choice of saints to the owners and there was no mention of the way in which calendar scenes were an expression of courtly life.

13 Death

What do tombs of the period tell us about the people for whom they were made?

On the whole, this question elicited many good and very good answers. Most candidates focused on the religious element, relating tomb imagery to the individual's piety and the way in which it served as a focus for prayers intended to shorten the time spent by the owner in purgatory. In comparison, most candidates did not have a great deal to say about the secular aspects of tombs in the period including dynastic imagery, inscriptions about the individual's achievements, signs of ownership and the use of expensive and prestigious materials such as marble, alabaster and bronze.

14 Courtly life

To what extent was contemporary society reflected in works of art produced in the International Gothic style?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

15 Civic life and patronage

How can a knowledge of patronage enhance our understanding of religious works of art in 14th-century Italy?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 4: Man, the measure of all things: the Italian Renaissance, c.1400 to c.1600

16 Sculpture in Florence in the 15th century

Discuss the range of emotions found in Donatello's work.

This was a popular question which gave rise to answers ranging from excellent to satisfactory. Although most candidates identified at least three examples of Donatello's work, only the better responses used examples which depicted a wide range of emotions. In comparison, weaker responses focused solely on works which show restrained and subtle emotions, making it difficult to answer the question in a convincing fashion. Better responses gave detailed accounts of their examples and focused on the emotions which the sculptures conveyed; weaker ones gave a less detailed account and showed a tendency to veer from the question by concentrating on the way in which they show the development of naturalism in sculpture of the period.

17 The new naturalism; Florentine painting in the 15th century

What are the characteristics of the Sacra Conversazione type of altarpiece?

This question was answered by a large number of candidates who produced answers ranging from excellent to good. Most candidates began sensibly by defining the term 'Sacra Conversazione' and all were able to identify a suitable number of appropriate examples. There were some very good accounts of the treatment of pictorial space (including the treatment of the architecture) and the way in which this enhances the interaction between the viewer and the saints. On the other hand, only a few candidates mentioned that the saints were present as intercessors or could be identified by their attributes. Weaker responses also displayed a tendency to discuss their examples in terms of the development of naturalism in early Renaissance painting instead of focusing on the way in which they functioned.

18 Early Italian Renaissance architecture and the influence of antiquity

What are the characteristics of early Italian Renaissance architecture? Answer with reference to at least three different types of buildings.

Most candidates who answered this question chose three examples from Florence including a palace, a church and the façade of the Foundlings' Hospital. A few candidates used the dome of Florence Cathedral as one of their examples, even though its design and construction owe a great deal to the principles of Gothic architecture and therefore does not reflect to any great extent the new features of early Renaissance buildings. Most candidates referred to the use of a classical architectural vocabulary, but the better responses indicated particular antique prototypes such as the Colosseum for the superposed orders on the Palazzo Rucellai. Likewise, most candidates discussed the prevalence of proportional systems but only a few discussed the use of a modular system of design. Some of the better answers included a brief discussion of technical innovations such as the use of antique-inspired barrel vaults and also the highly distinctive appearance of the interiors of Brunelleschi's churches.

19 Painting in Renaissance Venice, c.1450 to c.1600

Analyse how Tintoretto exploits the dramatic potential of his subject matter.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

20 The High Renaissance in Rome, Florence and Milan

Discuss Michelangelo's treatment of the human figure with reference to three examples of his sculpture.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 5: Faith triumphant: 17th-century art and architecture

21 Baroque Rome

Discuss ways in which light and shade are used in painting and sculpture from the period.

This was a popular question which gave rise to answers ranging from very good to satisfactory. Most candidates prefaced their answer with brief historical context about the doctrines of the Counter Reformation, and all were able to identify suitable examples of both paintings and sculptures. There were some very good accounts of the use of chiaroscuro in Caravaggio's work, although a small number of candidates included some largely irrelevant material about the naturalistic aspects of his work. With regard to Bernini's the *Ecstasy of St Theresa*, which was most frequently used as an example of sculpture, all candidates discussed the emotional content of the work but only the better responses referred to the technical aspects such as deep undercutting and high polish and to the bronze rays lit by a hidden light source.

22 French classicism

What do paintings of this period tell us about the status of art and the artist?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

23 Flemish ambassadors

In what ways do portraits of the period show the importance of their patrons? Give at least two examples by different painters.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

24 The Dutch golden age

Analyse representations of landscape in Dutch painting, using a range of examples.

This question was answered by a small number of candidates all of whom selected an adequate number of examples, carefully chosen to represent different aspects of Dutch landscapes in the period. Better responses discussed their examples in considerable detail, referring to their expressive qualities, to symbolic and moralising elements and to patriotic feelings current at the time.

25 The Spanish court and Church

Discuss at least two examples of religious art made in Seville during the seventeenth century.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 6: Defining the nation: art and architecture in Britain, c.1700–1860s

No candidates answered questions on this topic.

Topic 7: Art, society and politics in Europe, c.1784–1900

31 Neoclassicism

In what sense was the art of this period 'Neoclassical'?

Most candidates had a sound understanding of the term 'Neoclassicism' and linked this to the writings of Winckelmann and to the recent discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum. All candidates selected a suitable number of relevant examples which they discussed in detail, particularly David's *Oath of the Horatii*. Most candidates mentioned stoicism as an underlying theme for many neoclassical paintings and were able to give a convincing explanation of the term. Stronger responses investigated a wider range of paintings and also referred to examples of Canova's sculpture.

32 Romantic heroes

How was the idea of heroism represented in Romantic art?

Most candidates gave useful contextual background, but in a few cases this was too extensive and used up valuable time which would have been better spent on directly answering the question. All candidates discussed a wide range of examples and demonstrated sound understanding of the features of the Romantic hero. There were some excellent accounts of paintings involving Napoleonic propaganda and many candidates also gave a convincing account of Goya's *Third of May 1808*. Accounts of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* were more varied, however, and several responses lacked clarity. The strongest responses wove aspects of Romantic art into their answer without losing sight of the question.

33 1848 and its aftermath

In what ways did artists of the period 1848 to 1860 challenge artistic traditions in France?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

34 The Impressionist Eye

How did Baudelaire's *Painter of Modern Life* (1863) influence the subject matter of painting in Paris?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

35 Beyond Impressionism

In what ways did the work of Post-Impressionist artists show their disenchantment with urban life?

This question was answered rather unconvincingly by a relatively small number of candidates, most of whom discussed the work of van Gogh and Gauguin. There were useful accounts of the way in which Japanese prints affected the work of these artists and several candidates discussed the treatment of peasants. (Van Gogh's *Portrait of Patience Escalier* was an excellent choice but his *Potato Eaters* was not very appropriate, given that it was an early painting, executed before his stay in Paris.)

Topic 8: The shock of the new: art and architecture in Europe and the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries

36 Brave new world, 1890–1914

Consider the development of Cubism before the First World War.

Most candidates displayed a sound grasp of the development and features of analytical cubism but several were less clear in their analysis of synthetic cubism and cubist sculpture. Most answers were prefaced by useful contextual background, and candidates identified a wide range of appropriate examples. Weaker responses discussed their examples in less depth and in a few cases spent too long on transitional works which they discussed in unnecessary depth. A small number of candidates also discussed Picasso's blue and rose periods which were not only irrelevant but took up a considerable amount of time.

37 Visions of Utopia – architecture

What are the characteristics of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright? Discuss with reference to at least two examples.

This question was answered by a small number of candidates whose marks fell into the good and very good categories. All candidates correctly identified the characteristic features of his style, and there were some excellent and detailed accounts of the genesis and design of *Falling Water*. Several candidates referred to the influence of the English garden suburb and of Japanese architecture, but one candidate spent much too long on a comparison of the architect's work with that of Le Corbusier.

38 Rebellion and the unconscious

To what extent did Freud influence Surrealist artists?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

39 The figure and the object

Consider the depiction of the figure in the work of at least two artists.

This was answered by a small number of candidates whose responses were rather limited and who showed varying degrees of accuracy and relevance. Most candidates selected examples from post Second World War artists but a few drew on examples from earlier in the 20th century which were not appropriate for the question.

40 'Art is about life': art after Modernism – 1970 to the present day

How have artists explored ideas of race and identity?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

ART HISTORY

Paper 9799/03
Thematic Topics

General comments

There were answers from all five topics this year, with a very wide range of questions being answered. Centres are reminded of the advice given at the top of each page of the question paper that unless the question clearly indicates otherwise, candidates are advised to base their answers on detailed discussion of three or four case studies. Some candidates could afford to be more selective in their choice of material when choosing examples.

Comments on specific questions

Topic 1: Art and architecture in the city

This was the most popular topic. The cities covered included Rome, Venice, New York and Paris.

1 Architects frequently travel to a city to study and learn from existing buildings. What would they learn from a study of your city?

Candidates typically chose buildings from a variety of time periods and architects. Many limited their responses to stylistic features. A popular point was that of 'cultural transmission.' For example, candidates observed the qualities of ancient Roman architecture in Renaissance and Baroque architecture, assessing the reason for both the adoption of those qualities and also the innovations or divergences from the preceding tradition.

Better responses considered what the function of the buildings or materials used said about the city; why the buildings were important and worthy of study; how much could actually be gleaned from ancient / partially ruined buildings.

2 How have painters responded to the city of your choice?

This proved to be a very popular question, which yielded a high number of good responses. Candidates took various approaches, although, in the main, students tended to adopt a broadly comparative and chronological approach.

All painters chosen were natives or lived the substantial part of their life in the city. (It might have also been interesting to assess how the approach of local and foreign artists differed.) Many good responses looked at representations of the city; some looked at representations of important figures or events in the city's history. Some good responses discussed how paintings created at different times reflected the changing fortunes of the city. Quotations from artists supported the arguments presented by candidates well.

Some less successful answers attempted to say how paintings reflected ideologies held in the city; these could have been good responses, but did not really manage to show how the paintings represented the ideologies effectively, and also did not choose ideologies that were especially relevant to the chosen cities.

3 How can public sculpture be an expression of either religion or politics or both?

This was well answered on the whole. Some of the better answers showed how many works combined aspects of both religion and politics. Some interesting answers considered not just city-wide politics or the political expression of ruling powers, but also the politics of personal and professional relationships. Good answers considered the impact that the location, patron, materials, and indeed the changing ownership of a sculpture had on its political expression. Weaker answers described relevant sculptures but did not present any argument about how the works expressed political or religious ideas.

4 How can art galleries and museums be providers of culture for a modern audience? Discuss with reference to at least two institutions in your city.

The rubric for the question specifically directed candidates to address issues relating to contemporary modern audience, as well as asking candidates to address the notion of museums and galleries as 'providers of culture'. Not all candidates defined what a modern audience was or engaged with what it might need. Good answers addressed how galleries might educate or offer facilities to 'provide culture' to the audience. Some very good answers also challenged to what extent galleries do actually provide culture for a modern audience; some criticised curation for maintaining cultural and social attitudes of previous generations without presenting information in line with contemporary perspectives (e.g. displaying non-Western art as subsidiary to Western art); others compared galleries which display art of former centuries with those which showcase contemporary art.

5 Compare and contrast two public areas of your city which help us to understand its history.

This question yielded a very good proportion of high quality responses. Public areas varied in their identity. Candidates chose parks, piazzas, fora and bridges: all worked well. Weaker responses just described the spaces and what they contained. Other answers did not compare the spaces. Others looked at the current city through the public areas and did not satisfactorily look at what could be gleaned about its history. Good answers considered the use (and changing use) of the public area, as well as the historic context in which it was formed.

6 What role can patrons play in shaping the appearance of the city?

This was answered well. Weaker answers just considered why patrons commissioned art. Better answers discussed how the patron's activities had *shaped* a city. This might have been by creating a large / famous / notable structure; by setting a precedent for future patrons / artists / architects, e.g. in palace design; by notably modernising a city. A good answer considered the public reception of the patron's works to assess its impact on the city.

7 In what ways has your city been represented in either film or photography?

This question was not widely attempted but it produced some excellent answers enhanced by comparing and contrasting two depictions of the city in film.

8 How does your city pay homage to its heroes? Discuss with reference to a number of works.

This was largely well answered. Weaker answers did not establish what a hero was or why the figure was a hero to the city. Good answers considered how homage could be seen / interacted with, i.e. was the object on the same level as the public or above them. Others considered if the homage took place in a notable location in the city and what impact the object's environment had upon it. Some candidates mentioned books written by local figures about the city's heroes.

Topic 2: Landscape

9 How do landscapes in non-Western art explore the relationship between man and the land?

This was one of the most popular questions. Answers mainly focused on Japan. The best responses explored the religious, political and cultural background of the art discussed and examined a variety of relationships ranging from national pride and respect for nature; spiritual roles and/or souvenirs for pilgrims, and the role landscape art plays in honouring/recording the power of nature.

10 What different approaches can we find in Dutch landscape art?

This was another popular question. Works such as *View of Haarlem from the Northwest, with the Bleaching Fields in the Foreground* by Ruisdael were analysed in detail and compared with, for instance, Hobbema's *The Avenue at Middelharnis*. Whether the approach was to dramatize the scene or observe it more naturalistically, the differences were nicely distinguished, including any symbolism.

11 Compare and contrast the treatment of landscape in a selection of religious paintings. Your examples may be taken from any period or periods.

This was another popular question. There was a challenge in both comparing and contrasting works while also specifically considering what 'treatment' meant in the context of religious paintings. Some candidates restricted themselves to earlier examples from the Renaissance and Baroque periods where visionary and narrative elements were analysed. Later artists included the Pre-Raphaelites and Stanley Spencer.

12 How have artists used landscape to convey ideas about the past?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

13 'The whole of nature is an endless demonstration of shape and form' (Henry Moore). Discuss with reference to any landscape art you have studied.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

14 Compare and contrast different representation of the landscape of any one country.

This proved to be the most popular question within this theme, with many candidates using examples from Impressionism and Post-impressionism in France. The best answers included visual analysis to back up the points of comparison raised. Generally speaking, fewer, well selected examples enabled candidates to compare and contrast and provide proof of their interpretation most effectively.

15 Assess the work of any one landscape artist working since 1900.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

16 How have artists sought to express the inner world of human feeling through their depiction of the external world of landscape?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 3: Portraiture

17 Compare and contrast three portraits from the ancient world.

This was one of the most popular questions. Sculpture dominated as a medium – *Augustus of Prima Porta* was used by many candidates. *Ramesses II, the 'Younger Memnon'* from Paper 1 was an interesting and legitimate example. Less developed responses tended to examine examples one after the other. Juxtaposition does not actually compare and contrast different elements of the works.

18 To what extent did portraiture undergo a 'Renaissance' in the 15th and 16th centuries?

This was a popular question for this theme. Some of the better responses interrogated the question first – what do we mean by 'Renaissance'? References to antiquity, the rise of the individual and examples of exceptional naturalism, particularly in Northern art, were identified. Again, a work from Paper 1, Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, was fruitfully analysed. It was fairly rare for essays to fully engage with the argument implied in the question.

19 How have portrait artists depicted different stages of human life?

This was one of the most popular questions. Ghirlandaio's *An Old Man and his Grandson* was a well-known example used by some candidates. British portraits from the last three centuries were also chosen from artists such as Hogarth and Gainsborough.

20 Compare and contrast portraits in different artistic styles.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

21 How have portrait artists made their subjects look heroic?

This was the most popular question within the Portrait theme. The best answers defined the term 'heroic' and contextualised and analysed the examples chosen to illustrate the argument. Detail and depth of analysis was rewarded. Inevitably, Napoleon was often cited with works by Canova, David, Gros and Ingres promoting different aspects of the man.

22 Compare and contrast any three portraits made in a medium other than painting. Your chosen examples do not all have to be in the same medium.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

23 Assess the portraits of any one artist at work since 1900 whose work you think rewards close attention.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

24 Discuss some of the ways in which portrait artists have depicted the poor and the marginalised.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

Topic 4: The nude

25 Discuss the depiction of the female nude in ancient classical art.

This was a reasonably popular question. It required candidates to focus on Greek or Roman art. Unfortunately, some answers took a broader definition of classical and went beyond the desired time frame.

26 Compare and contrast approaches to the nude in Western and non-Western art.

Too few candidates attempted this question for comment to be appropriate.

27 Compare and contrast depictions of Christ, nude or semi-nude.

This was a reasonably popular question. Some candidates chose to look at different stages of Christ's life from infancy to death as the structure of their essay. Some candidates used the focus of the question to examine 'nudis criminalis', etc.

28 Discuss approaches to the female nude in Western art after the ancient classical period.

This was a reasonably popular question. Candidates drew on material from a wide range of time spans, appearing to favour later works overall.

29 Explore the treatment of the nude in the work of any one photographer.

Not many candidates tackled this question, but those who did provided thought-provoking answers and in some cases used the photographer's biography to enhance their interpretation of the question in terms of stylistic influence.

30 To what extent have artists after 1900 turned against traditional depictions of the nude?

Again, another popular question. Better answers were able to juxtapose the developments described in their answer with more traditional depictions before 1900. Excellent answers explored links with historical background to enhance the reading of the images.

31 Discuss how artists reveal and conceal the nude body.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

32 Does the nude still have a power to shock?

This was a very popular question. Works from the 19th century were successfully used, especially where they were put in historical context. Very good answers included comments on the display and critical reception of the works to enhance the discussion of how and why the nude shocked. The best answers covered a variety of shock factors.

Topic 5: Still life

33 Discuss examples of the 'vanitas' theme in Dutch still life, c.1560–1650.

This proved to be the most popular question within this topic, and was one which produced a significantly high number of good responses. The best answers were able to analyse symbols of 'vanitas' and place them in their 'wider social and cultural context' to construct a dialogue between visual and contextual analysis.

34 Compare and contrast at least three examples of still life in Spanish art, c.1600–1850.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

35 'To relegate the still life to a purely academic exercise is to limit its possible meanings.' Discuss in relation to French art, c.1720–1900.

This question was answered by a moderate number of students and produced a range of responses in terms of quality. The weaker responses tended to be produced by candidates who did not address the aesthetic doctrines espoused by LeBrun's Academy, i.e. the lowly status accorded to still life within the 'hierarchy of the genres', as against the subsequent development of the genre, particularly during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Also, the chronological range of the question, c.1720 to 1900, proved difficult for weaker candidates, who chose works post-1900. It often transpired that those responses which began by looking at Chardin proved to be the more successful.

36 How was the still life genre redefined in the period c.1900–1950? Discuss with reference to at least two works.

This was another very popular question, which produced many good responses. Dada Ready-mades, or Warhol Pop Art sculptures, were credit-worthy choices of material. The broad chronological and thematic scope allowed by the question yielded a notable number of very thoughtful and thought-provoking responses – responses which meditated on the nature and philosophical status of the artwork itself, in a manner of which Duchamp would surely have approved!

37 Compare and contrast the use of materials in at least two still life objects made since 1950.

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

38 How have women artists treated the theme of still life?

There were too few answers to this question to make comment appropriate.

39 Consider the representation of fruit and vegetables in any still lifes you have studied.

This was a very popular question, yet one which – as with Question 35 – needed careful selection from the sheer range and variety of the artworks which it might potentially encompass. The most successful responses were those which combined detailed visual / symbolic analysis and contextual material.

40 How can a still life painting help us to understand a civilisation? Discuss with reference to at least two works.

Another popular question, which yielded a notably high proportion of good responses. The determining factor with respect to this question was how well the candidate balanced visual analysis and historic context: the question directly asked the candidate to relate specific artworks to the 'civilisation' which produced and consumed the art.

ART HISTORY

Paper 9799/04
Personal Investigation

General comments

One of the challenges of the Personal Investigation is to choose a topic that is neither too ambitious for the word limit nor too thin. If this becomes apparent after the Outline Proposal Form has been submitted, there is no objection to a reorientation of the title – this is the nature of research. Comparative studies of works from different eras can be stimulating but the candidate needs to make sure that the linkage is more than superficial. Art History is an inherently inter-disciplinary subject. However, candidates need to be cautious in making their essays more, for instance, about the literature than the art that the literature informed.

The general standard of the essays was very good. Candidates should aim to use a question for their title so that they can put forward some sort of argument. The better investigations invariably did so, but many of the weaker ones did not and, (perhaps) as a result, their essays were too discursive with little sense of an argument. The range of subject matter was quite narrow with almost all candidates writing about late nineteenth and twentieth century painters. Given the vast scope of the subject, it would have been interesting to encounter more works of art from earlier periods. The small number of candidates who tackled non-Western art produced excellent work which demonstrated enormous enthusiasm for their subject.

The best presentations were where candidates used no notes at all or only briefly referred to them. The aim should be to have a degree of familiarity with the material that makes continual consultations with notes unnecessary. A small number of candidates read out their written presentation word for word whilst others displayed a marked tendency to speak very quickly, it might be worth suggesting that they pace themselves when practising.

On the whole, candidates were very articulate in their response to questions. None of the Examiners adopt a formulaic approach to the viva; rather, they are guided by the nature of the particular Personal Investigation and what is said and shown in the presentation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to be rigorous in their footnoting and to stay within the word limit.