



AP[®] Art History 2005 Scoring Commentary

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Question 1

Overview

This question asked students to identify the stylistic period of the work as Romanesque. It also asked them to relate iconography of the sculptural decoration of the tympanum, a vivid and very graphic representation of the Last Judgment presided over by Christ, to its placement over the primary entrance of the pilgrimage church of Autun. Students were directed to the fact that these sculptures were a visual representation of already very familiar scriptural passages, and that visitors were asked to make a conscious choice to walk under the side of the portal on which they viewed either the saved souls or the damned souls. The act of walking under the portal and being judged is central to the relationship between how the work communicated and its placement.

Sample: 1A

Score: 4

This essay correctly identifies the period of the tympanum as Romanesque. It also recognizes that the location of the tympanum is a pilgrimage church and that its position above a doorway would have had a noticeable impact on the pilgrims passing through. The student also implies that the relationship between the location of the tympanum and its iconography is connected to the “power and might of the Church.” In addition, the essay relates the image of the tympanum to a “sign” of things to come, implying that the pilgrims had an awareness of time and future events.

Sample: 1B

Score: 3

This essay correctly identifies the period of the tympanum as Romanesque. The discussion infers that the location of this tympanum is a pilgrimage church and that the iconography served the function of reminding worshippers to stay faithful and to understand with clarity the teachings of the Bible. However, the essay neither draws attention to the tympanum's specific location (such as above or on the outside facade) nor elaborates on the iconography within the tympanum. Therefore, the discussion tends to focus more on the function of the tympanum rather than the relationship between its placement and its iconography.

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

This essay incorrectly identifies the period of the tympanum as Early Christian. The student does, however, make note of the placement of the tympanum and its impact on those who pass through the portal. The relationship between the placement of the tympanum and its iconography is not discussed with even a fair degree of specificity. While the essay may demonstrate a familiarity with the term “tympanum,” it fails to communicate the importance of its setting or context. The essay is generally descriptive, not analytical.

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Question 2

Overview

Students were asked to name the event depicted in Picasso's *Guernica*—the bombing of the town of Guernica by fascist forces during the Spanish Civil War. (The painting was identified in the question.) The question then asked students to discuss how Picasso communicated his message—that is, his outrage at the slaughter of innocents in the bombing—through various visual means. Students were encouraged to connect their knowledge of a specific historical event (subject) with the specific visual devices (form) that Picasso used to communicate his anger and outrage (meaning). The intent was to draw out how Picasso's style may have been determined by the need to communicate meaning with a certain passion and power.

Sample: 2A

Score: 4

This is an exemplary essay. The event is identified as the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The student effectively describes how Picasso expressed the torment and sadness resulting from Franco's order to bomb the city. Several examples of how Picasso expressed this message (important in making the atrocity known) are described in the essay: the chaotic forms suggested through the use of Analytic Cubism, the dreariness evoked by the palette, a reference to the newspaper print as essential in making both Picasso and the world aware of the event, and the overall “vast” scale of the work.

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

This student identifies the painting and describes the meaning but struggles to communicate the ways in which the message of the work is conveyed. The event is identified as the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica. Picasso's message is forcefully characterized as outrage at the gruesome slaughter of innocent life. Only one strong point is made with respect to the ways in which the artist conveys this message—Picasso uses abstraction and symbolism rather than representational forms. Cubism is alluded to in the description of angular planes, but the discussion is never fully developed. The discussion of symbolism lacks substantiation and clarity.

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

This student recognizes that the painting is about war but fails to identify the event or demonstrate an awareness of how Picasso's message may be interpreted. The mention of the palette and forms implies some understanding of how chaos and death depicted in the painting are expressed, but the discussion is not developed. For example, the colors are described only as “gloomy” rather than monochromatic, or black, white, and gray. Forms are described as being “overlapping” and confusing, but this description falls short of a complete discussion of the Cubist and Surrealist elements of the composition and figures.

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Question 3

Overview

Students were to identify the art historical period as rococo and to discuss how the subject matter and style of rococo were exemplified by these paintings specifically, and how each painting expressed the tastes and interests of the culture in which it was produced. Students were expected to consider how the erotic fantasy of the “fête galante” and the stylistic characteristics of rococo, as seen in these paintings, revealed an artistic retreat from the palatial taste of Versailles toward the more intimate setting of the private, upper-class residences (salon culture) of the later rococo. The question asked students to explain changes in subject and style in terms of changes in patronage and taste.

Sample: 3A

Score: 4

This exemplary essay correctly identifies the art historical period (rococo) and discusses with a high degree of specificity the subject matter and stylistic characteristics evident in both paintings. It does an excellent job relating the subject matter (mythology, contemporary “leisure,” and “romantic intrigue”) and the stylistic elements (“elegance,” “feathery brushstrokes,” and “pastel colors”) to the aristocratic patrons, including Louis XV’s mistress, who commissioned paintings from Boucher. The essay also associates the rococo with a “feminine aesthetic” [*sic*] and the “ornate rooms” where the paintings would have been displayed.

Sample: 3B

Score: 3

This essay correctly identifies the art historical period (rococo), but the discussion is not fully developed. There is no substantive discussion of stylistic characteristics, although the derivation of the rococo from the term “*rocaille*” is mentioned. The essay relates the erotic content of the works to the frivolous tastes of the aristocracy who commissioned them, but the discussion of the cultural context is somewhat simplistic and is less complete than in the previous example.

Sample: 3C

Score: 1

This essay correctly identifies the art historical period (rococo) but does not discuss the subject matter and stylistic characteristics evident in both paintings. No attempt is made to link the works to the tastes and interests of the culture in which they were produced. Other than the identification, there is nothing of merit in the essay.

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Question 4

Overview

This question asked students to name the period of the Alberti building (the Renaissance). The name of the architect was given. Students were asked how and why Alberti adapted elements from the Arch of Constantine (not identified) in his architecture. This question was intended to elicit an explanation of the theoretical reliance, reuse, and transformation of the ancient past as an idea that was at the very heart of early Renaissance architecture, especially in the hands of Alberti, one of its most significant early proponents and writers. Students were asked to discuss how Alberti drew specific architectural vocabulary from the ancient model and to explain why fifteenth-century Italians wished to revive the visual and philosophical bases of classical architecture, as an identification with, and symbol of, modern Italian and Christian victory over Imperial Rome, pagan religions, and even death.

Sample: 4A

Score: 4

This essay correctly identifies the building on the right as a Renaissance structure. With a good deal of specificity and clarity, the discussion addresses both how and why Alberti adapted elements of the Arch of Constantine. The organization of the elements on the facade (in a “symmetrical” manner with a keen interest in “mathematical” proportion) is specifically considered. Although a number of additional contextual concerns could have been addressed, the essay clearly communicates to the reader that the key issue of this question concerns the reuse and transformation of the ancient past in Renaissance architecture. The importance of “rules,” “harmony,” proportion, and “rationality” in the Renaissance are unmistakably emphasized and linked to Alberti's architectural design.

Sample: 4B

Score: 3

This essay correctly identifies the building on the right as a Renaissance structure. It also addresses both how and why Alberti adapted elements of the Arch of Constantine. The essay provides a rather general, nonspecific discussion of the organization and adaptation of architectural elements on Alberti's facade. It does, however, make a crucial point by alluding to Alberti's desire to “unify” architectural elements on the facade. Less specific is the response to why Alberti adapted elements of the Arch of Constantine. While the discussion acknowledges the Renaissance interest in learning and paying homage to Classical themes, it does not go far enough to connect these ideas to the structure itself.

Sample: 4C

Score: 1

This essay correctly identifies the building on the right as a Renaissance structure but fails to address how or why Alberti adapted elements of the Arch of Constantine. Although mention is made of the use of arches and columns, the student fails to convey *how* these architectural elements are modified within the structure's facade. The essay lacks analysis and is therefore only descriptive.

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Question 5

Overview

The *Stele of Hammurabi* is a standard monument that should be familiar to most students. This question required a simple identification of the work of art and its subject, but then students were asked to analyze how the subject of the work (divinely granted legal authority) was conveyed, preferably visually as well as in content. The intent was to encourage students to draw connections among the needs of the patron (Hammurabi), the function, the visual form, and the intended audience response to this work of art.

Sample: 5A

Score: 4

The essay identifies the *Stele of Hammurabi*. The student notes that the work illustrates both the delivery of the code and the code itself. Hammurabi's size in relation to the god is discussed, and the student establishes how the divinely granted legal authority is visually conveyed to the viewer.

Sample: 5B

Score: 3

This response correctly identifies the work. The subject of the relief, Hammurabi receiving the laws from an important deity, is discussed. The student notes that this establishes the king's power and authority for the people.

Sample: 5C

Score: 1

The response identifies the work and notes that it is about law, but it contains no discussion of how that relates to the ruler's authority.

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Question 6

Overview

This question asked students to identify the art historical period of Hellenistic art by visual observation. The work of art may be unknown to many students. The intent was to ensure that students could identify Hellenistic art from the visual characteristics that are evident in *The Old Market Woman*, not simply list them in abstract, and that they could differentiate these characteristics from the preceding period, Classical Greek art, by recalling the visual characteristics of that art historical period. This was essentially a question of visual comparisons, but it was complicated because students were asked to identify Classical art and to recall its characteristics.

Sample: 6A

Score: 4

This essay correctly identifies the art historical period as Hellenistic. It distinguishes the work as being clearly different from idealized portrayals of the Classical period. The student describes the woman portrayed as being “old,” “haggard,” and expressive. Additionally, it is noted that the subject “is definitely [*sic*] not god-like.” While rather brief, this response contains the essential elements required to earn the maximum number of points.

Sample: 6B

Score: 3

The response correctly identifies the art historical period as Hellenistic. The student mentions that it is an “unidealized” portrayal and distinguishes it from the classical. The work is described as a genre piece.

Sample: 6C

Score: 1

The art historical period is misidentified as Archaic. The only valid point this essay discusses is that the portrayal of “the human figure is no longer idealized.”

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Question 7

Overview

The intent of this question was to gauge how well a student could identify an art historical movement (Romanticism) from a painting that was likely unknown to him or her; recognize the major tenets of Romanticism as revealed in the painting; read and relate the text of the given quotation to Romanticism; and relate the specifics of the text to the work of art shown. Students needed to have a full understanding of Romanticism to excel at this question, since they were asked to connect ideas about the visual image to ideas communicated through the contemporary written word.

Sample: 7A

Score: 4

This essay correctly identifies the art historical movement with which the work is associated (Romanticism) and relates the critic's response to the painting shown with a high degree of specificity. There is a full discussion of the Romantic characteristics mentioned in the text and visible in the painting. This well-crafted essay discusses such key Romantic elements as the "large and firm" brushstrokes, the "vigorous" but slightly "raw" color, and Delacroix's powerful "artistic imagination," which are identified by the critic and displayed in the *Barque of Dante and Virgil*.

Sample: 7B

Score: 3

This essay correctly identifies the art historical movement with which the work is associated (Romanticism) and relates the critic's response to the painting shown with a fair degree of specificity. The discussion of the Romantic characteristics mentioned in the text and visible in the painting is less fully developed than in sample 7A. The essay touches upon Delacroix's brilliant palette and the dynamism of the composition, but the discussion is more general and somewhat descriptive.

Sample: 7C

Score: 1

This essay correctly identifies the art historical movement with which the work is associated (Romanticism) but makes no other points of merit. Although the essay repeats a few words from the text, there is no substantive analysis of the critic's response to the painting or of the key Romantic elements mentioned in the text and visible in Delacroix's *Barque of Dante and Virgil*.

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Question 8

Overview

This 30-minute essay question asked students to engage in a significant way with at least one work of art beyond the European tradition. This was the last year in which the art historical topic of the question was one of two topics announced in advance. Students had to identify two works of art (one from beyond the European tradition) that convey a narrative and discuss the means by which each work does that task. The question did not ask for a full and lengthy analysis of each story or its cultural significance. It did ask the student to connect how and why the artists communicate various aspects of their narratives to viewers through visual forms.

Sample: 8A

Score: 9

The student selects and fully identifies two appropriate works of narrative art, Caravaggio's *Entombment* and a sculpture of a seated Buddha calling the Earth to witness, from Bengal, India. The example of a seated Buddha is from beyond the European tradition. Although sculptures of a seated Buddha calling the Earth to witness often serve as the focus of veneration in Buddhist shrines, they are also reminders of the specific moment of Shakyamuni's awakening—his achievement of enlightenment—which is one of the most critical moments in the story of Shakyamuni's life story for many Buddhists. The student provides a full identification and description of the subjects of each narrative. The essay is highly specific in its discussion of how the story of the Entombment is conveyed through artistic means, such as the dynamic composition, which "pushes towards the viewer," the use of dramatic lighting, and the use of expressive poses and gestures. The student emphasizes the depiction of Christ's suffering as "believed by most to be the means of salvation in the Catholic Church, and therefore an important event." The essay also provides a full discussion of how the narrative is communicated through the sculpture of the seated Buddha at the moment of his enlightenment. The student describes the stylized, idealized body of the Buddha, showing "no muscles or tendons . . . completely smooth and placid" and the pose as frontal and "symmetrical." The Buddha's peaceful appearance reveals a "lack of suffering, that seems to be everywhere in Caravaggios peice [*sic*]" and a "focus on the spiritual world." The student also refers several times to the broader cultural relevance of these two narratives, stating that they represent key moments in their respective religions.

Sample: 8B

Score: 5

The student selects and fully identifies two appropriate works of narrative art, Hogarth's *Breakfast Scene* and a painting of Krishna and Radha in a Pavilion from India. The painting of Krishna and Radha in a Pavilion is from beyond the European tradition. The student provides hints to the narrative subject of the Hogarth painting, suggesting the themes of infidelity and that this is a "sarcastic satire of discontent with the high social classes," however, the specific storyline of the Hogarth is never presented. The essay does explain how symbols can be read to convey some of the content of the Hogarth painting. The discussion of the meaning of the shrouded painting in the background of the *Breakfast Scene* is unclear. The student likewise identifies the theme in the Indian painting, love between Krishna and Radha, but does not place the illustrated scene within a specific narrative or moment in time. The essay does not discuss the visual means with which a story is conveyed in the Indian painting, and the description of the visual

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Question 8 (continued)

presentation itself is either vague (“both are stylized figure [*sic*] in the stylized pose [*sic*]”) or incorrect (“the narrative goes continuously”). The student recognizes that this is a popular subject, that it is associated with Hinduism, and that it conflates a religious and a romantic subject. Although the student selects two appropriate choices to discuss, the essay’s lack of specificity regarding the narrative subjects of both paintings and the vague and incorrect discussion of the visual presentation of the Indian example kept it from earning a higher score.

Sample: 8C

Score: 3

The student identified two works of art, Ogata Korin’s *Cherry Tree Blossoms* and Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People*. Ogata Korin’s screen may be misidentified here, as the description suggests that the student may be referring to his well-known screen depicting red and white plum blossoms. Ogata Korin’s painting is from beyond the European tradition. While Ogata Korin’s painting presents a common theme in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese art—the cycle of the seasons and the blossoming of the plum tree—it is not a narrative and thus is an inappropriate choice. While the student reveals a great deal of knowledge about the Ogata Korin painting, the discussion does not grapple with the major issues of the question: what is a narrative artwork and how is the specific narrative communicated. This is an example of a well-researched and creative choice that was, in this case, a poor choice. Therefore, the discussion of Ogata Korin was not considered and the essay was scored only for the discussion of the Delacroix, on a scale of 4 possible points awarded to a full and correct answer and 5 possible points awarded to a correct and exceptional answer. The discussion of the Delacroix painting identifies elements that convey emotional content like the brushstrokes, the composition, and the symbol of Liberty. The student recognizes that while the depiction is representational, “the poses and composition are incredibly contrived.” The essay does not succeed in linking the painting to its specific narrative. The student suggests that this was created around the time of the French Revolution. Delacroix painted *Liberty Leading the People* to represent the Parisian uprising of 1830 against Charles X, thus the identification of the subject is incorrect. Though this discussion could not receive full credit because it misidentifies the subject of the narrative, a student who presents a more complete understanding of the historical context could score highly with this example.

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Question 9

Overview

The second 30-minute essay question centered upon a major contextual issue. Students were asked to identify two works of art (one from before 1800 C.E.) that challenged established traditions and to examine how and why each work constituted a significant challenge to the accepted conventions of its time. Students had to discuss how the works both represented a challenge and were significant in that challenge, and they had to suggest why each artist wished to challenge accepted conventions. Good choices resulted in good arguments, while good arguments were not enough to redeem poor choices.

Sample: 9A

Score: 9

This essay fully identifies two works of art that challenged established traditions, Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin* from circa 1600 (pre-1800) and Roy Lichtenstein's *WHAAAM!*, a late twentieth-century painting from the Pop Art movement (post-1800). The comic-book style of Lichtenstein's work, with "solid color planes, bold outlines, text bubbles, and even Benday dots," questioned the definition of art and pointed to the manner in which contemporary culture desensitized the public. The student notes that Lichtenstein painted during a period of great change in the art world; "Beginning with Duchamp," the mundane could be "elevated" to art, and Lichtenstein took this idea to another level. These observations indicate a solid understanding of both the historic and artistic context. The student continues by referencing some of the legends surrounding Caravaggio's biography and points out that his innovative and intense tenebrism was both dramatic and closely tied to the "somber" subject of the painting. Caravaggio used visual tricks to pull the viewer into the scene and employed "commoners" for his models, including, in the most extreme example, an actual drowned woman as the model for the deceased Virgin Mary; the resulting heightened realism was a disturbing innovation. With these two examples, the student accurately and fully discusses how and why each work of art challenged accepted artistic conventions.

Sample: 9B

Score: 5

This essay identifies two works of art, the sunken relief of *Akhenaton and his Family* from the Ancient Egyptian 18th Dynasty (pre-1800) and Manet's *Olympia* (post-1800); no historical context is provided for *Olympia*, so it cannot be considered a full identification. The student notes that the Egyptian tradition of ruler portraits, as exemplified by the *Khafre* statue, depended on idealization, whereas the Akhenaton relief, executed in what came to be known as the Armana style, was distinctly unidealized and even demonstrates familial interaction over aloofness. The student then comments on the iconographic controversy of *Olympia*, representing as it does an unidealized and unabashed prostitute in a rather confrontational pose. Both examples are discussed with only minimal analysis, depending more on description than on an analysis of the historic and artistic context.

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Question 9 (continued)

Sample: 9C

Score: 3

This essay uses Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* (post-1800) and Élizabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun's *Marie Antoinette and her Children* (pre-1800); it does not identify either in terms of historical context, so these are not considered full identifications. The student understands that the Duchamp represents a found object, or ready-made, and that this type of object questions the very definition of art itself. The student also discusses the patronage issue behind the portrait of Marie Antoinette and the reasons for this rather unusual representation. However, more time is devoted to telling the story of the portrait rather than analyzing its innovations. The comparison of other Renaissance portraits of the queen is murky at best. There is little meaningful discussion overall, and little understanding of the artistic and historic contexts of the chosen works; more emphasis is placed on description, rather than analysis.