



## AP<sup>®</sup> Art History 2003 Sample Student Responses

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# B

ART HISTORY  
SECTION II—Part B  
Time—60 minutes  
2 Questions

Z,

**Directions:** You have 60 minutes to answer the two questions in this part. You may wish to spend a few minutes organizing or outlining your response in the blank space provided above each question. Notes in the blank space will not be graded. Be sure to analyze each question carefully and choose appropriate examples. Identify your examples as fully as possible.

Responses that answer the question directly will receive higher scores than those that simply list characteristics or include irrelevant points.

Venus of Willendorf

Statue of  
Akhenaten...  
abstracted

8. The human body is often highly stylized or abstracted in works of art.

Fully identify two works from different cultures in which the body has been highly stylized or abstracted. At least one of your choices must be a work from beyond the European tradition. Discuss how the stylization or abstraction of each figure is related to cultural and/or religious ideas. (30 minutes)

The Venus of Willendorf which dates from about 25,000 - 23,000 BCE. and the statue of Akhenaten from the Amarna period of the New Kingdom in Egypt both are ~~two~~ splendid examples of the use of stylization and abstraction. ~~the two works~~ in representing the human body. The Venus of Willendorf is both stylized heavily and also abstracted in the ~~an~~ early attempts of its artist to create a female fertility figure. The statue of Akhenaten

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shows an androgynous being with features of both male and female. The two works were both constructed for various ends and serve as fine examples of the use of ~~artists~~ abstraction and stylization of artist's to achieve certain results.

The Venus of Willendorf is a 4" hand-held fertility figure of the Paleolithic period. Discovered in Austria, it seems almost monumental despite its miniature size. In Venus, the female figures reproductive features are overly emphasized to a point where the figure seems abstract. ~~The exposed~~ As a fertility figure, it only seems natural that ~~the~~ the figure would ~~be~~ have such features. During this time in prehistory, <sup>the beginnings of</sup> organized religion ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> far away and a sort of paganism ~~was~~ was practiced throughout what is now Europe. Women of the time would worship ~~to~~ hand-helds like the Venus hoping for healthy children and safe-child birth. Venus also is stylized in that her ~~to~~ head piece (~~either~~ now thought as being a cap) is decorated heavily with tiny squares carved ~~at~~ ~~out~~ out of the stone. Venus bears no facial features too, further emphasizing the abstractness of the figure. ~~Primitive~~ artist The artist of the Venus of Willendorf sought to create a piece which would serve effectively as a fertility figure. The use of abstraction and stylization attests to

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# B

Z<sub>3</sub>

Question 8 is reprinted for your convenience.

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<sup>the</sup> lack of interest in creating a naturalistic image and the desire of the people of the time to have pagan idols which they could worship. The Venus serves its purpose well as such a figure. The statue of Akhenaton, however, serves a different purpose than the Venus. Akhenaton, a ruler of the New Kingdom of Egypt, broke from the rigid tradition in art that had ~~of~~ been the standard of art in Egypt since the creation of the Palette of Narmer in 3000 BCE. Akhenaton believed only in one god, ~~the~~ the sun god Aten, and he founded the Amarna period of Egypt on this and other ~~issues~~ standards. The statue of Akhenaton shows the pharaoh as an androgynous being. It is unclear whether he had some form of physical defect but what is known is that <sup>the artist at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>work</sup> abstracted <sup>the ~~artist~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~</sup> his body in order to lash out against <sup>what</sup> ~~the~~ ~~former~~ was the harsh canon of art that predated him. Akhenaton's ~~sculptural~~ sculptural portrait is abstracted in that it is difficult to ~~see~~ ~~understand~~ ~~the~~ discern the actual gender ~~of~~ the awkward creature. ~~stylization~~.

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~~is also used in Akhenaton's statue to show further~~  
~~part~~ The abstraction serves to further emphasize Akhenaton's  
desire to break from rigid Egyptian artistic traditions  
and to create a style of his own. ~~is~~

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ART HISTORY  
SECTION II—Part B

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Tale of Genji Japan

• Takayoshi

- v. stylized ≠ form/body shown under dress
- stylized eyes = slits
- same facial features - hair style
- lacks emotional expression
- reflects attitude/nature of imperial Japanese court
- ↳ v. formal body NOT shown!

- de Kooning Euro. tradition
- Woman I
- rxn. / satirical rep. of ♀ fertility figure w/ large, triangular breasts
- large eyes
- very geometric abstract - grotesque rep. of a very classic theme - women = fertility

8. The human body is often highly stylized or abstracted in works of art.

Fully identify two works from different cultures in which the body has been highly stylized or abstracted. At least one of your choices must be a work from beyond the European tradition. Discuss how the stylization or abstraction of each figure is related to cultural and/or religious ideas. (30 minutes)

Many cultures have stylized or abstracted the human body in art. Two examples can be found in the figures from ~~the~~ "The Tale of Genji," a Japanese scroll by Takayoshi, and the painting "Woman I" by de Kooning.

The imperial Japanese culture was very strict ~~as to the~~ <sup>in</sup> adhering to custom. There were strict conventions for ~~eye~~ ~~all~~ all types of ~~etiquette~~ etiquette and especially in art. In Japanese culture ~~is~~ it is improper to show the form of the human body under clothing. Likewise, in "The Tale of Genji" all the

figures have very stylized bodies that show a head and a large garment that indicates no form of the body underneath. Similarly, the stylized eyes as slits and the lack of expression in the figures' faces is very much a reflection on the imperial Japanese formality.

De Kooning is an artist from within the European tradition who also abstracted the human body. De Kooning's abstraction of women as seen in "Woman I" were very much a reaction to classical views of women. De Kooning exaggerates the features of women, eyes, breasts, hips <sup>as</sup> a way to satirize the not only the "ideal" female form as portrayed in advertising of the time, but also the traditional fertility figure. De Kooning is going against the common theme of women as goddesses of fertility and earlier idealized female forms.

The human body is seen in many cultures and is used for many purposes. Abstraction and stylization of the body are just ways in which different artists in different times have represented a central theme in all art, the human.

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