

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

1. Cultural attitudes about women are often revealed in art.

Select and fully identify two works of art that depict one or more women. The works must come from two different cultures, one of which must be from beyond the European tradition. Explain how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women. (30 minutes)

Background:

Throughout history women have been depicted in ways that reveal attitudes about women in a wide array of cultures. These might include but are not limited to the following:

- Depictions of political power
- Depictions of female divinities and icons
- Depictions of motherhood or domestic scenes
- Portraits representing wealth or status
- Representations of female heroism
- Depictions of geishas and courtesans
- Fertility figures
- Figures that represent cultural ideas about beauty
- Stereotypes of women in various roles

Students have two tasks:

- (1) To fully identify two appropriate works of art depicting one or more women from two different cultures. One work of art must be from beyond the European tradition.
- (2) To explain how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women.

Better essays fully identify two appropriate works of art, one of which is from beyond the European tradition. Through detailed analysis of the content, context, and formal aspects, these essays explain how each work of art reveals its culture's attitudes about women.

Weaker essays may use less appropriate examples, such as works of art that are technically from "beyond the European tradition" but do not clearly address the culture's attitudes about women. The identification may be vague or generic, or it may not locate the works specifically in time or place. Essays that merely describe rather than analyze the examples will earn lower scores. Essays that identify good choices but that provide little contextualization and/or generic or incorrect information earn lower scores.

Points to remember:

- Appropriate choices are works of art that depict one or more women and clearly reveal a culture's attitudes about women.
- Although some essays may include discussions of women as art makers or patrons, the essay must address the pictorial depiction of women.
- This question requires a full identification that makes it clear which specific work of art or architecture is being discussed. Sometimes the identification may be located within the body of the essay.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

Score Scale 0–9

- 9–8** Fully identifies two appropriate works of art that depict one or more women. At least one of those works must come from beyond the European tradition. Provides a full discussion that explains how each work of art reveals its culture's attitudes about women. The lower score is earned when an answer is somewhat unbalanced or has minor errors of fact or interpretation.
- 7–6** Fully identifies two appropriate works of art that depict one or more women. At least one of these works must come from beyond the European tradition. Explains how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women, but the discussion is less cogent and complete than a 9–8 essay. The lower score is earned when an answer is notably unbalanced or contains errors significant enough to weaken the discussion.
- 5** The highest score an essay can earn if it deals with one appropriate choice fully and correctly.
OR
Identifies two appropriate works of art that depict one or more women. At least one of these works must come from beyond the European tradition. Identification may be incomplete or faulty. The essay attempts to explain how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women, but the discussion may be unbalanced and may contain errors that confuse the argument.
- 4–3** Identifies two works of art that depict one or more women. At least one of these works must come from beyond the European tradition. Identification may be incomplete or faulty, and choices may be inappropriate. The essay attempts to explain how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women, but the discussion may be unbalanced and may contain significant errors. The lower score is earned when the essay is notably descriptive and lacks meaningful discussion.
OR
The essay deals with only one appropriate choice, but the discussion is not fully developed and may contain some errors.
- 2–1** Identification is incomplete and/or choices are inappropriate. If choices are appropriate, there is minimal discussion. The lower score is earned when there is no discussion of merit.
OR
The essay deals with only one appropriate choice, and the discussion is incomplete and inaccurate.
- 0** Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it restates the question, includes no identifiable choices, or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.
- Indicates a nonresponse such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

ART HISTORY
SECTION II
Time—120 minutes
9 Questions

This section of the exam contains the following types of essay questions.

- Question 1 is a 30-minute essay question that is not based on slides.
- Questions 2 through 8 are short essay questions based on slides and/or a quotation from a primary source or document.
- Question 9 is a 30-minute essay question that is not based on slides.

Note: This exam uses the chronological designations B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (common era). These labels correspond to B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (anno Domini), which are used in some art history textbooks.

Directions for Question 1: You have 30 minutes to answer Question 1. Read the question and take a moment to think about what the question asks. You can receive full credit only by answering the question asked. Therefore, spend a few minutes organizing or outlining your response in the blank space provided above the 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.

[Lady Agnew, John Singer Sargent, 20th century
 ↳ sexual power / social power ↳ personality
 ↳ intelligence
 ↳ Bijja dolls, massi people

[~~REPOUS OF DIVIDED OF PRAEDUM OF BEZID~~
 ↳ fertility ↳ mother goddess ↳ power
 ↳ Teched in many African sculptures

Bijja massi

1. Cultural attitudes about women are often revealed in art.

Select and fully identify two works of art that depict one or more women. The works must come from two different cultures, one of which must be from beyond the European tradition. Explain how each work reveals its culture's attitudes about women. (30 minutes)

Without doubt, the role of women in art has drastically changed over the centuries. In prehistoric times, women were symbols of fertility, sexual energy, and "mother goddesses" that were closely associated with the earth. They were typically nude or abstracted: figures of great power and strength in society. However, as the centuries marched on, the role of women ~~start~~ began to

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change. First it became immodest to depict a woman nude, and when nude figures did come back into style, the women were portrayed as objects of man's lust. They possessed none of the strong sexuality of their ancient predecessors. ~~Women~~

In many cultures, women were depicted as the ideal societal figure: graceful, pious, and above all, meek. The rise of Christianity and the saint-like portrayal of Mary only added to this ~~from~~ furor. Only in recent times, have paintings of women begun to round the bend: depicting them as intelligent, sharp, and frankly sexual. Let's look at examples from each of these kinds of art. First, a bijja doll from the Mossi tribes of Africa, and next, Lady Agrew by John Singer Sargent.

In many African cultures, art is more than a hobby: it is a fully representational craft. Sculpture and paintings are often made not to mimic reality ~~to~~ but to idealize it, or even change it through sympathetic magic. The Mossi peoples are no exceptions to this rule. Even in the present day, this traditional tribe has continued to make bijja sculptures for its young girls. But these dolls are no ordinary playthings. They are ~~are~~ a representational statuette of the idealized Mossi women, and much like western girls are ~~is~~ tucked into idolizing Barbie dolls, Mossi girls ~~are~~ are taught that the dolls hold everything they themselves should be. The statuettes are small and often carved of wood. They depict a highly abstracted adult woman with several telling characteristics. For example,

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Question 1 is repeated for your convenience.

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the dolls' hair is worn in the same style as the young girls in the tribe: pulled back, with one lock hanging above the eye. The figures therefore end their resemblance to the young girls and instead focus on idealizing the characteristics of the perfect Mossi woman. The skin is glossy and shiny and the ~~fig~~ forms themselves are compact and lean. The figures have little to no facial identification, but instead have long, pointed breasts, a full belly, and several scars on the lower abdomen, indicative of pregnancy. Clearly this doll is a symbol of fertility: the focus on breasts and pregnancy illustrate to the adolescent girls what is expected of them in life. But this doll is more than just a guide: it is also used as a powerful fertility charm. A teenage girl will bring it into the home of her husband, where, supposedly, it will help her become pregnant. Even before the baby is born, the women of the tribe are supposed to care for the doll as if it was the infant: bathing it, singing to it, and placing it on the newborn's pillow. Clearly, this statuette is a physical manifestation of the Mossi's cultural drive for fertility and reproduction. This doll, and all the symbology that goes with it, illustrates clearly what the role of a woman will be.

However, most western art tells a different story. John Singer Sargent was an influential painter in the early twentieth century and was most famous for

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his work in portraiture. One of his best captures is Lady Agnew. In this painting, Sargent has used quick, colorful brushstrokes to ~~transform~~ ^{transform} a simple painting of a wealthy woman into a keen character study that illustrates the growing role of women in society. In the painting, Agnew is clearly a beautiful woman, but this piece is not just a beauty shot of a pretty face. Instead, she studies us: leaning back in her chair with one arm draped casually over the armrest, she sizes us ~~up~~ ^{up} as intently as if she were a queen on a throne. Her dress and simple jewels belie her wealth, and while her gaze may seem arrogant, there is a playfulness evident in her face. She has an enigmatic half-smile playing about her lips, and one eyebrow arched: almost as if she is amused by us. There is a striking intelligence in her gaze: this is not a woman oppressed, humble, or confined by society, but an individual who is staring out at us, unafraid, even smiling a little. Clearly this painting is a tremendous portrait and personality capture, but it also adeptly illustrates the growing role of women in western society. No longer painted with their eyes down and hands folded, women like Lady Agnew are free to lift their faces and smile. Clearly, this is a marked rise from the slightly oppressive treatment of women in art's hallowed past.

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les Mademoiselles d'Avignon
 Picasso
 1907

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While history often overlooks the vital role women have played in the development of a cohesive, and successful world culture, art highlights the paramount involvement of women throughout time. From art that originates pre-historically to modern day pieces, women, and their respective symbolism, are at the center of the art world. Furthermore, the role women figures play in artwork reveal, subsequently, that respective culture's attitudes towards, and about, women. By analyzing the role a woman takes on in a piece of art, one can assess how the

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artist, and ultimately the culture itself, viewed women at the time the piece was done. A piece from the European tradition that exemplifies this role in art is Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger. A piece from the non-European tradition that explores the role of women in art is The Venus of Willendorf.

The Spanish artist, world renowned for his work done in the early to mid 20th century, is known as Pablo Picasso. While the nature of his work, and where it falls with respect to period, is up for debate, Picasso is most generally known as a cubist - that is to say, Picasso painted within the period of cubism and respected its "rules" when it came to formulating art. One of his cubist pieces was Les Femmes d'Alger, a piece done in his early career in 1907, right after the turn of the century. While it is a piece ~~with~~ with a funny story behind it, as Picasso paid several prostitutes to pose as its subject matter for a day, it also serves as a prime example of cubism, Picasso's work, and the changing role of women during the early 20th century. Cubism can be identified by the use of color, differing vantage points, and rearranged subject matter. The women portrayed in this painting follow these guidelines and resemble African figures as well. The very liberal and free manner in which the women are depicted sheds light on the liberal way in which women were leading their lives. While the population of women on the whole were not as liberal as these prostitutes, the changing role of women within European culture was most definitely shifting towards a time when women would be allowed to live more free lives. Within 10 years, women would be allowed to vote and the innovation of birth control would be revealed. Les Femmes d'Alger, and the way in which Picasso depicted these women, showed the greater

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freedom's women were going to soon live under
While the Venus of Willendorf is a piece from pre-history, it
still allows for insight into the role of women in that it
portrays a woman.

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~~Prehistoric~~
 Venus or Woman of Willendorf.
 - fertility

Isabella
 Eugene Delacroix

Mona Lisa Da Vinci
 - Europe
 - portraiture
 - status among the Ranks
 Virgin among the Rocks

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"Venus" or Woman of Willendorf is a prehistoric art piece that expressed the fertile use of women at the time. It is a small ~~sculpture~~ sculpture carved from rock that depicts a woman. It is characterized by large breasts, a large abdomen and a pronounced pubic triangle. These exaggerated figures allude to the purpose of women. The piece was likely intended to represent creation of life and a child bearing female. Attention was not paid to the facial features

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of the woman. Hair spiraled around the ~~the~~ head in a braid-like fashion. The prehistoric culture did not feel the need to emphasize elements of the female that were unrelated to reproduction. The feet were not included on this figure statue, they would not have been an important element for the culture to create.

The Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci is a Renaissance piece that ~~showed a woman~~ depicted the high classed woman. Status was important in this time period of the 15th Century. Women and men alike were fond of portraiture. They would display portraits and other art pieces in their homes. The possession of paintings was another form of community status. Europe respected women of class and dignity, thus the women were painted accordingly. ~~The~~ Da Vinci's piece shows a seated woman in front of a landscape. She is painted in soft, naturalistic shades, common for the time. In choice of color and technique the woman reflected the quiet, respectful position women had in society. Women ~~were not~~ could be in the elite class, but they displayed themselves in a kind-hearted manner. Da Vinci's piece masterfully parallels the appearance of a soft spoken woman in her position of her society or culture.

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AP[®] ART HISTORY

2008 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

The question asked students to discuss cultural attitudes about women as revealed in art, with reference to two relevant works selected from memory; at least one of the works had to come from a culture that does not belong to European-based art traditions. Broad-based contextual questions of this kind have been part of the AP Art History Exam since 1998. The original intent of this question was to introduce students to global art traditions. Until 2006, possible topics were announced in advance, to help teachers accustom students to writing confidently about material presumed to be new to them; in 2006, the practice of announcing topics before the exam ended.

Sample: 1A

Score: 9

The student selects and fully identifies two appropriate choices, Mossi dolls and the Sargent portrait of Lady Agnew. (NOTE: For classes of artworks with multiple published examples, the identification should be as specific as possible—for example, “fertility dolls, Mossi tribe.” References to African female figures, tribal goddesses, etc., are not considered full identifications.) The essay provides a detailed and cogent analysis of the appearance, cultural symbolism, and ritual use for “sympathetic magic” of a Mossi doll. The student then analyzes how Sargent depicts Lady Agnew as an empowered woman who engages the viewer with her “gaze” and is shown as more than just “a pretty face.” The essay presents Agnew’s portrait as a depiction of a modern woman, a socialite, and a woman with personality. Although the introductory paragraph attempts to generalize historical depictions of women, this does not detract from the complete and sophisticated analysis presented in the essay, earning it a score of 9.

Sample: 1B

Score: 5

The student selects one appropriate work, Picasso’s *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, and one less-appropriate work, the *Venus of Willendorf*. The essay analyzes Picasso’s painting, associating it with contemporary culture, the liberal lives of the prostitutes, and the “changing role of women”; but a stronger analysis would firmly link the painting to the artist’s and society’s anxieties about women. The extended discussion of Cubism at the beginning of the essay does not contribute to the response until it refers specifically to the depiction of women. The student appears to run out of time, so there is no discussion of the *Venus of Willendorf*. The analysis of the *Demoiselles d’Avignon* and the selection of the *Venus of Willendorf* earned this essay a score of 5.

AP® ART HISTORY
2008 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1 (continued)

Sample: 1C

Score: 4

The student correctly identifies two works that depict women. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is technically an appropriate choice but may be difficult to contextualize, as seen in this response. The *Venus of Willendorf* is a less-appropriate choice because all knowledge about its cultural context is speculative. Some credit was earned for the discussion of the Venus's form in relation to fertility, but further analysis (size, nomadic culture, etc.) could have strengthened this response. In the discussion of the *Mona Lisa*, the student earned credit for mentioning status and the role of portraits in the society of the time; however, the discussion of the painting's style does not respond to the question asked. The identity of the sitter for the *Mona Lisa* is unknown (documentation to suggest an identification only surfaced in January 2008), so the assertion that the painting depicts a "high classed [*sic*] woman" is unclear. The statement that "[w]omen could be in the elite class, but they displayed themselves in a kind-hearted manor [*sic*]" doesn't refer specifically to Renaissance culture. Limited and general discussion of both of these works earned this essay a 4. (NOTE: A fuller discussion of High Renaissance ideals, such as humanism, or the evolution of Italian female portraiture from profile to three-quarter view, or a greater contextualization of the *Mona Lisa* and Leonardo would have enabled this response to earn a higher score.)