

# AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY

## 2009 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 9

9. Self-portraiture provides a wide range of information about the artist in addition to physical appearance.

Choose and fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist and his or her era. (30 minutes)

#### **Background:**

This question asks students to analyze how self-portraiture conveys information about the artist and his or her era. It is intended to make students think about self-portraiture as a mode of representation and to consider the wide range of information self-portraits convey about artistic identity, the inner life or psyche, gender, and social status.

The emergence of autonomous self-portraiture in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries can be linked to a growing self-consciousness about identity, the development of autobiographical literature, and changing conceptions of the artist's role and status. Self-portraits provided an arena for technical experimentation, self-exploration, and self-fashioning and could serve as artistic manifestos or publicity tools. Self-portraiture has been widely practiced since the Renaissance.

An early example of an autonomous self-portrait is Alberti's self-portrait medallion from c. 1435. Van Eyck's *Man in a Red Turban* (1433) may be a self-portrait, though evidence for this rests on interpretations of the work's inscription and of the subject's gaze. Dürer made a series of self-portraits in various media beginning in his teenage years. Parmigianino's youthful self-portrait of 1524 reflects Mannerist conceits, as does Lavinia Fontana's of c. 1577. Caterina van Hemessen's self-portrait at her easel, aged 20 (1548), may be the first self-portrait by a Northern Renaissance woman artist. Renaissance examples of self-portraits contained within compositions include Ghiberti's tiny cast-bronze self-portrait (1425-52) on the east doors of Florence's Baptistery, Raphael's self-portrait within the *School of Athens* in the Vatican's Stanza della Segnatura (1509-11), and Michelangelo's self-portrait on the flayed skin of St. Bartholomew in his Sistine Chapel *Last Judgment* (1536-41).

Baroque, Rococo, and Neo-Classical self-portraits by women artists include those of Artemisia Gentileschi (1630), Judith Leyster (c. 1635), Angelica Kauffmann (numerous images dating from the 1750s to the 1790s), Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1786 and 1790), and Adelaide Labille-Guiard (1785). Rembrandt used himself as subject throughout his career. Self-portraits abound in the modern era, beginning with Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne. Among twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists, one might note self-portraits in a range of media by Pablo Picasso, Egon Schiele, Frida Kahlo, Francis Bacon, Alice Neel, Andy Warhol, Bruce Nauman, Chuck Close, Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, Hannah Wilke, Adrian Piper, Carolee Schneeman, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and many others. The major survey texts include numerous examples of self-portraits by the artists mentioned above.

#### **Students have three tasks:**

- (1) To fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period.
- (2) To analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist.
- (3) To analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist's era.

Better essays fully identify two appropriate self-portraits from two distinct art-historical periods. These responses analyze how each work conveys information about the artist and his or her era.

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### Question 9 (continued)

Weaker essays may include a discussion of only one self-portrait or discuss two self-portraits from the same art-historical period. These responses may have vague or partial identifications. Essays that simply describe the works, providing little or no critical analysis about how the self-portraits convey information about the artist and his or her era, earn lower scores.

#### Points to remember:

- Self-portraits may be either autonomous or contained within a larger composition.
- Students may be tempted to focus on physical appearance, but the question requires them to analyze how self-portraits convey information about the artist and his or her era.
- A discussion of stylistic features may be acceptable as a discussion of era provided that the answer makes specific connections between stylistic features of the work and its period.
- Students must address two specific self-portraits. Generic discussions of a body of self-portraits are not sufficient. The specific identification may emerge only through the description of the work.
- Works that reflect the biography of the artist but that do not constitute true self-portraits are not typically acceptable choices.
- Three-dimensional examples of self-portraiture are acceptable.
- Non-Western examples of self-portraiture are acceptable; however, these are often not included in the survey texts.
- This is a 30-minute question.

#### Scoring Criteria

##### Score Scale 0–9

- 9–8** Fully identifies two appropriate self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Provides a full analysis of how both works convey information about the artist and his or her era. The lower score is earned when the essay is somewhat unbalanced or has minor errors.
- 7–6** Fully identifies two appropriate self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Provides an analysis of how both works convey information about the artist and his or her era. The lower score is earned when an essay is notably unbalanced or contains errors significant enough to weaken the analysis.
- 5** Identifies two appropriate self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Identification may be incomplete or faulty. The essay fails to analyze how both works convey information about the artist and/or the artist's era. The essay may be wholly descriptive, unbalanced, and contain errors.

**Note:** This is the highest score an essay can earn if it deals with only one appropriate choice fully and correctly.

- 4–3** Identifies two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Identification may be incomplete or faulty, and choices may be less appropriate. The essay is descriptive, and discussion is unbalanced or general. The lower score is earned when the essay lacks meaningful discussion and/or contains significant errors.

#### OR

Identifies only one appropriate choice. The discussion is not developed and contains errors. The essay is descriptive, and the description is unbalanced or general. The lower score is earned when the essay lacks meaningful discussion or contains significant errors.

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**Question 9 (continued)**

- 2–1** Identification of the two self-portraits is incomplete and/or inappropriate. If choices are appropriate, there is minimal discussion.
- OR**
- Only identifies one appropriate choice, and the discussion is incomplete and inaccurate. The lower score is earned when there is no discussion of merit.
- 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.
- This is a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

**Directions for Question 9:** You have 30 minutes to answer Question 9. 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.

9A,

~~2010~~ Judith  
Leyster  
Baroque  
work  
show female  
brushstrokes

Michelangelo  
~~Sistine Chapel  
Last Judgement  
The Skin Peeler  
showing his sin  
Mannerism~~

Reel man  
Self portrait  
newspaper  
identity  
#  
made in America

9. Self-portraiture provides a wide range of information about the artist in addition to physical appearance.

Choose and fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist and his or her era. (30 minutes)

Self-portraits convey information about the artist and his or her era especially concerning the paintings by Judith Leyster and Jean Oude-see-Smith.

Judith Leyster's self-portrait stylistically fits among Rembrandt and Hals under Baroque. The painting itself shows fast brushworks that characterize the style. But what gives meaning behind the piece is the fact that Leyster does not just paint herself. As a woman in a field predominately known to have great works by men, Leyster establishes that not only does her self-portrait include her physically, it also includes her craft. ~~She~~ The painting looks as if she was in the middle of ~~a~~ completing a work when the image catches her off guard. Furthermore, ~~the~~ Leyster paints herself with classical and high class

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~~attire~~ attire. The white collar around her neck shows her importance as does the rich collars. In essence, the self-portrait is Leuser's way of showing society that she deserves equal attention in the world of art and her talents and manner are again equal to those of higher class rather than the ~~feeling~~ <sup>idea</sup> of female discouragement of her era.

The red man by Quick-to-see-Smith takes the normal idea of a self-portrait and radically shifts it. As a native American ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~american~~ <sup>american</sup> mixed culture, Smith shows the constant struggle between the controlling nation over what she believes are oppressed people. It is a post-modern piece, but it makes references to the classical style such as the Vitruvian man. But that well known form is surrounded by native American newspapers of tragic news all covered by a large circle with a slash through it. This shows how the culture feels alienated and separated. Furthermore, Smith's portrait shows the unjust actions by not giving the figure a name. Instead the body just has a "made in America" sign and a series of numbers below it. Those numbers juxtaposed below shows Smith discouragement of being just a number and dehumanized in society. Her self-portrait explores the idea of ~~not knowingly being~~ ~~becoming just a~~ ~~number in society~~ a deterrent to see the nation as treated by others based on a person's culture.

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9B,

Michelangelo → last judgement  
Van Gogh

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Choose and fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist and his or her era. (30 minutes)

Both Michelangelo's Last Judgement and Van Gogh's Self Portrait reflect their individual ~~or~~ turmoil. While Michelangelo's self portrait in ~~last~~ his Last Judgement ~~is not~~ doesn't clearly show illustrate his physical appearance, the context and form of his portrait reflects his attitude and ~~the era~~ his situation in the given era. Van Gogh's depression and bipolar tendencies are evident in his self portrait. His attitude also reflects social norms of his time.

The Last Judgement, which can be found in the Sistine Chapel, violently displays the horror of ~~the~~ the Biblical story. ~~A~~ The skins of ~~of~~ one of the damned is

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held up in the fresco. Michelangelo intended this skin to be a portrait of himself. While he was an extremely gifted artist, Michelangelo was known for not wanting to listen to anyone but himself. He loathed the fact he was commissioned to work on the Sistine Chapel until it was finished. During this era, painters had little freedom in what they could use as subjects. The Pope instructed Michelangelo to paint certain scenes, while Michelangelo nevertheless took many liberties, he was still bitter about the commission. Michelangelo's personality and frustration with the hindrances of artists of his time is clearly reflected in The Last Judgement.

In Van Gogh's portrait we not only see ~~his~~ certain distinct personality traits ~~off~~, but we see ~~his~~ his personality. ~~His feelings being affected~~ his feelings being affected. Van Gogh was a man full of extreme energy. His paintings reflect this as he incorporates short brushstrokes, movement, and vibrant colors that reflect this. ~~He was~~ In his self portrait, Van Gogh looks sad. He frowns and he looks as if he has ~~seen~~ experienced a lot. During this time, people like Van Gogh with depression and bipolar

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Question 9 is repeated for your convenience.

9. Self-portraiture provides a wide range of information about the artist in addition to physical appearance.

9B<sub>3</sub>

Choose and fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist and his or her era. (30 minutes)

tendencies were placed in asylums. They were given little help, Van Gogh was never helped and ended his own life at a very young age. His impressionist style is even more vital in understanding his self portrait. The style ~~that~~ popular style involved images as the artist perceived it. Van Gogh clearly acknowledges his inner turmoil in his self portrait. His ~~to~~ contrast of vibrant colors reflects his bipolar disorder. While both of these artists are from completely different eras, they utilized their own frustrations with themselves and society in their self portraits. Michelangelo cleverly does this in a place and time where personal expression was ~~not~~ hindered. Van Gogh utilizes the ~~style~~ of his personal style to illustrate his sadness.

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Albricht Dürer  
Van Gogh  
Cezanne

9C,

9. Self-portraiture provides a wide range of information about the artist in addition to physical appearance.

Choose and fully identify two self-portraits, in any medium, each from a different art-historical period. Analyze how each self-portrait conveys information about the artist and his or her era. (30 minutes)

Albricht Dürer's self-portrait is an oil painting done in the early 1700s. His style of painting used dramatic lights and darks. His self-portrait shows a powerful looking version of himself, which shows that he thought very highly of himself. His portrait is very life like. Painters at that time were doing very realistic pieces of artwork. He shows very good facial anatomy and shading.

Cezanne's self-portrait is not as life like as the previous artist Albricht Dürer. Cezanne's style was more impressionistic and less realistic. His style was a good example of the new impressionistic style at the time. Cezanne painted with very loose

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and large blocky strokes. He used vivid colors and painted what he saw, which was not always true to life. He used multiple colors for his face and the rest of his pictures. This new style was definitely a change from the previous works of art that were very realistic in the earlier periods. This painter was active during the 1900s.

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## 2009 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 9

#### Overview

This was a 30-minute question dealing with self-portraiture. Students were asked to identify two self-portraits, each from a different art-historical period, and to discuss how those images convey information about the artist and his or her period. This essay required students to draw on knowledge of both the individual artist and the contextual setting in which the artist lived and to relate that information to specific self-portraits. They had to examine both the personal and social contexts of the works.

#### Sample: 9A

##### Score: 9

Judith Leyster's self-portrait and one by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith constitute good choices. The Leyster is linked to the Dutch Baroque era by references to Leyster's contemporary Frans Hals and to Rembrandt, as well as by a brief characterization of one aspect of period style, "fast brushworks." The subject of the painting (the woman artist at work), Leyster's choice of dress, and the relationship between gender and an artistic career at that time are all addressed accurately. This portion of the essay concludes with cogent remarks about Leyster herself and about class and gender in the Dutch Baroque era: "In essence, the self-portrait is Leyster's [*sic*] way of showing society that she deserves equal attention in the word [*sic*] of art and her talents and manner are again equal to those of higher class rather than the idea of female discouragement of her era."

The section of the essay on Quick-to-See Smith's self-portrait *The Red Mean* establishes a key difference between that work and Pre-Modern self-portraits, among them the Leyster. Quick-to-See Smith's work "takes the normal idea of a self-portrait and radically shifts it," to reflect her view of herself as a "[N]ative [A]merican in [A]merican mixed culture." The essay identifies the piece as Post-Modern and discusses with specificity the wide range of references characteristic of Post-Modernism employed by the artist in this self-portrait, ranging from Vitruvian man to Native American historical imagery and text. In conclusion, the essay analyzes the effect of these visual quotations on the self-portrait's meaning. Overall, this response includes fine choices and full, correct, and somewhat sophisticated discussion.

#### Sample: 9B

##### Score: 5

Two appropriate choices are presented, Michelangelo's self-portrait in the *Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel and a Van Gogh self-portrait. The latter work, though referred to in the singular, as if there were only one, is never identified fully and remains generic. There is no indication in the essay that Van Gogh produced a body of self-portraiture, of which the cited work might have formed a part. While Van Gogh is characterized as an Impressionist, which is incorrect, Michelangelo is not linked to an era. Van Gogh's personality ("a man full of extreme energy") and his mental health are addressed with some specificity in respect to the self-portrait ("short brushstrokes, movement, and vibrant colors") though not sufficiently to constitute an actual identification. Michelangelo's self-portrait is correctly placed on the flayed skin of St. Bartholomew, who is not identified and wrongly characterized as among the damned; this is part of a general discussion of Michelangelo's life, personality, and "frustration with the hinderances [*sic*] of artists of his time" that has little to do with the work cited or its era.

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**Question 9 (continued)**

**Sample: 9C**

**Score: 3**

The two choices here are self-portraits by Cézanne and Dürer. The latter's work is not clearly identified from among the artist's body of self-portraits and is placed, incorrectly, in "the early 1700s." Cézanne is mischaracterized as having painted in "the new impressionistic style at the time." The discussion is general: Dürer "thought very highly of himself" and his self-portrait is "life like," while the Cézanne image features "loose and large blocky strokes." Neither work is discussed with specificity, nor is either connected in a meaningful way to its artist's life or era.