



AP[®] Art History 2001 Sample Student Responses

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AA,

Question 9

- I. Doryphoros Polykleitos High Classical, chiasmic scheme, contrapposto, tightly muscled, idealized, perfected, ratios "The Canon", introspective, rational, posed, static
- II. Rubens Abduction of daughters of Leucippus, fleshy, movement, emotion, colors, Flemish Baroque, huge,

9. Representations of the human body vary considerably in different periods and cultures. Fully identify two specific representations of the human figure, each from a different period or culture. Discuss how each work reflects the cultural values of its time period or the place where it was made. (30 minutes)

Though both western periods of civilization, the High Classical ancient Greece and the Baroque Europe contrast sharply in their representations of the human body. The Doryphoros figure was carved out of marble by Polykleitos in the High Classical period of Greece c. 400 BCE. This figure is so important, that it is called "The Canon" and ~~shows the perfection of classical ideals.~~ shows the perfection of classical ideals. Doryphoros is a young, idealized man who stands still in space holding a stick and looking out thoughtfully into space. He is composed with a slight curve or contrapposto, and he is perfectly balanced with a chiasmic scheme. This opposition of fixed and relaxed limbs was exalted as theoretical perfection and harmony, which were high ideals to classical Athens. This period saw a perfect republican democracy, which prized order,

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harmony, mathematical perfection, balance, and logic. The life sized Doryphoros purveys these ideals in his idealized face and body, to smooth ripples and lithe muscles that exude health and ideal youth. His gaze is introspective and thoughtful, and shows rational thought and being that was prized in Athens. He is calm, serene, and stable, and this also purveys Universal Reason. It is said that he was even constructed of perfect ratios figured out by Polykleitos, where every part is in mathematical harmony and precision. The static pose raises him to immortality, as he seems to live forever as a heavenly ideal, where time has no meaning. This is reflective of philosophies like Plato's Forms, where the ideal of every thing resides in heaven, which is unchanging, perfect, and absolute. Doryphoros contains all of these qualities, and represents the idea of perfect man, which every citizen of Republican Athens aspired to be.

Hundreds of years later, the Baroque painters would head in a completely different direction. They reject the classical revival of the Renaissance, and ~~artists~~ had completely different ideals. The essential Baroque ~~artist~~ ^{artist} is Rubens, a Flemish painter whose Abduction of the Daughters of Leucippus is huge, overwhelming, and creates a completely different kind of human being.

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The painting is very Baroque (c. 16700's) European, and the figures are no longer classical models. It shows two huge, fleshy women being weightlessly abducted by two ~~gods~~ ancient gods, in ~~very~~ heavy action. Now, the figures are twisted and turned, in strange positions that spiral upwards and around. The composition of the painting is a nicely balanced diamond, but it clearly purveys emotion and ~~and~~ harsh action. The bright lavish colors add to the flowing rippling line and give an overall feeling of movement. In these, the bodies of the men are heavily muscled, with ~~and~~ grins on their faces. The women are very round, ~~and~~ and remind one of the prehistoric venus-figures of fertile femininity. The horses are masses of flesh, and yet are weightless as they hover in the air. The Baroque time was a period of monarchy and aristocratic power, and this painting reflects their tastes. It is huge, gaudy, and overwhelming, very appropriate to a lavish royal lifestyle in a palace dripping with decoration. This would later manifest with the overly-frivolous rococo, which only appealed to the noble upper-classes in Europe. This was a style, not for the betterment of the

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individual citizen, but of excitement for the few. The mere size of the painting suggests royal power over the nation-states, and a right to conquer the world that is seen in the periods of Exploration and Imperialism that would glorify the throne. Clearly, a Flemish master, Rubens shows a stark break from classical ideal qualities and REASON, that Polyphorous made essential.

BB,

Question 9

Venus of Willendorf
Andy Warhol's depiction of Marilyn Monroe.
Diego Rivera

Mary Cassatt
Breakfast in bed
Vermeer
Family

É. Matisse
Madame Matisse's D'Arignon -
Cubist - Picasso
Polykleitos - Kritos boy
Greek

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From culture to culture and century from century the representation of the human body ~~has~~^{has} changed considerably. The change reflects the cultural values of its time period. The Paleolithic figure "The Venus of Willendorf," and Pop Art icon Andy Warhol's depiction of Marilyn Monroe both depict women differently, however, underline the cultural values of the period.

"The Venus of Willendorf" from Paleolithic times symbolizes fertility with its large breasts and protruding stomach. To pre-historic people fertility was important for two reasons. To survive and continue on living and producing offspring. The threat of these people's survival was constant and this ~~old~~ object depicts pre-historic people's knowledge of that. "The Venus

of Willendorf" is a symbol of fertility, to which pre-historic peoples based their existence upon.

Andy Warhol's depiction of women is extremely different. His depiction of sex object Marilyn Monroe defines the cultural values of America in the 1950's-1970's. ~~The~~ This depiction of a woman ~~of the~~ glorify's ~~sexualness~~ sexual independence. The cultural values of the 1950-1970's ~~were~~ revolved around revolutionary ideas such as sex and sexual independence. This depiction of sex object Marilyn Monroe underlines that her lips are bright red, suggesting liberation and ~~the~~ her hair is styled ~~very~~ in a chic fashion again suggesting a concern for beauty and appearance. Andy Warhol's depiction suggests America's growing cultural values based on looks, ~~and~~ independence, and sex.

"The Venus of Willendorf" and the depiction of Marilyn Monroe both outline the two very different cultural values. The paleolithic obsession with fertility and the modern ^{american} obsession with sex have defined these two cultures.