

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

Depictions of the male figure often support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts.

Select and clearly identify two works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. The works may be in any media. One work must date before 1700 C.E. and one must date after 1700 C.E. Using specific evidence, analyze how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. (30 minutes)

Background

This question asks students to select two works of art, one dating before 1700 C.E. and one dating after 1700 C.E., that depict the male figure. Students are then asked to use specific evidence to analyze how each work either supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The intent of this question is to provide students with the opportunity to analyze how cultural attitudes about gender roles are visually expressed. More specifically, students are being asked to explore how art plays a role in the construction of male identity within a given culture.

Cultural attitudes are informed by the inherited ideals, beliefs, and values of a particular group of people and are expressed in both the legal and civic codes of a given community and in the informal behaviors of community members. Artists communicate cultural attitudes about gender both directly and through more oblique representations of their subjects. More specifically, works of art that depict the male figure have served either to support or to resist social, political, or religious traditions of male identity. In all historical contexts, images of men exist that support cultural ideas and attitudes or that challenge these ideas. Ideals of masculine power and strength have been communicated through various means, including the portrayal of muscular, idealized bodies, hierarchic scale, or attributes indicating divine access or status. Challenges to male cultural ideals frequently appear as bodies that seem more vulnerable, include physical distortions, or convey a subjective, individualized image of maleness opposed to the official veneer of masculine power or privilege.

Prior to 1700 C.E., works that support or challenge attitudes toward men often appear in the context of cultural leadership or in the form of physical ideals. For example, in Egyptian statuary, such as *King Menkaura and queen* (c. 2490-2472 B.C.E.), the unyielding image of the pharaoh, forward facing and placed slightly ahead of his wife, stresses the rightness and continuity of male rule in the region, and even beyond into the afterlife. *Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and three daughters* (c. 1353-1335 C.E.) on the other hand, challenges these conventions by presenting the pharaoh with a different body type and in a family setting, in part to convey the pharaoh's institution of a monotheistic belief system that also changes the pharaoh's cultural status. In ancient Greece, statues such as *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer)* (original c. 450-440 B.C.E.) depict an athletic male figure in the nude in harmonious proportion, exalting the idealized body and the artist's specific pursuit of beauty and truth as an expression of the emerging cultural ideals of humanism. These ideals were revived in Roman culture, and often joined with ideas of cultural leadership or to commemorate qualities of specific rulers, as in *Augustus of Prima Porta* (early first century C.E.). They were also revived in the Renaissance in works like Michelangelo's *David* (1501-1504 C.E.) and used to assert the male figure as a representation of civic triumph and as God's perfect creation.

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Question 2 (continued)

After 1700 C.E. works of art that support cultural attitudes of men continue to be produced. For example, Jacques-Louis David's *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784 C.E.) provides an example of masculine virtue, heroism, and self-sacrifice, expressed in the solid geometries and balanced forms of the composition and contrasting the men's stoicism and the women's emotional collapse. Male identity is also presented as an assertive confidence or swagger, as in Auguste Rodin's *Monument to Balzac* (1891-1897 C.E.) or Chuck Close's *Big Self-Portrait* (1967-1968 C.E.).

Challenges to cultural attitudes about men often appear as a kind of anxious masculinity associated with modernity. In Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893 C.E.), for instance, the male figure has been isolated and stripped of any individual characteristics, reverberating with the psychic horrors of social alienation and overcrowding rampant in the modern city. That cultural anxiety frequently focused on men's role as military personnel responsible for war and destruction, as in Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's *Self-Portrait as a Soldier* (1915 C.E.). In the 20th century and beyond, sociologists and psychologists also began to analyze gender as a social construction, and artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds explore concepts of masculinity from this perspective. For example, Robert Mapplethorpe's *Self-Portrait* (1980 C.E.) investigates homosexual identities through a physical presentation that subverts gender binaries and combines visual qualities conventionally associated with both masculinity and femininity. Felix Gonzales-Torres's *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* (1991 C.E.) presents his lover's body implicitly through a disappearing pile of candy that evokes the physical wasting of the body associated with HIV as well as the homophobic rejection of gay men with AIDS in 1980s America.

Two Tasks for Students

1. Select and clearly identify two works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. One work must date before 1700 C.E. and one must date after 1700 C.E.
2. Use specific evidence to analyze how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context.

Points to Remember

For a work to be appropriate for the question, it must depict a male figure or figures in such a way that supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. This means that a male figure must be present in the work.

To answer the question successfully, students will need to identify at least one attitude toward men that is supported or challenged. If students do not identify an attitude toward men, it will be difficult for them to analyze evidence in a manner relevant to the question.

Discussions of generic sculptural types (such as kouroi) are unlikely to yield the specific evidence needed for an appropriate analysis.

The identification of each work must be clear; however, identifications may be located within the body of the essay, or the specific identification may emerge only through the description of the work.

Works may be in any media, but one work of art must date before 1700 C.E. and one must date after 1700 C.E. If both works date before 1700 C.E. or both works date after 1700 C.E., the stronger response should be scored.

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Question 2 (continued)

If a student identifies more than two works, the two stronger responses should be scored, keeping in mind that one work must date before 1700 C.E. and one must date after 1700 C.E.

Students are not limited to examples from the European tradition. They may select works from a larger global perspective, provided one work dates before 1700 C.E. and one dates after 1700 C.E.

Prehistoric examples about which little information regarding the culture that produced them is available are not acceptable choices and should not be scored.

Students are not asked to compare or contrast the two works.

Notes written in the blank space above the response should not be scored.

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Question 2 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

9-8 points

Response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

The student clearly and correctly identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. Using specific evidence, the student analyzes how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The response may include minor errors that do not have a meaningful effect on the analysis.

The score of **8** may be earned when the response is slightly unbalanced — with a stronger analysis of either one work or the other, although both are represented — and/or includes several minor errors that do not have a meaningful effect on the analysis.

7-6 points

Response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

The student correctly identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. Using specific evidence, the student analyzes how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. However, the response may be somewhat unbalanced and/or may include minor errors that have some effect on the analysis.

The score of **6** may be earned when the response is significantly unbalanced and/or contains several minor errors that have some effect on the analysis.

5 points

Response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.

The student identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. Using evidence, the student addresses how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. However, the response is less analytical than descriptive. It may be overly general, simplistic, digressive, or unbalanced. For example, the discussion of one of the works may be mostly accurate, whereas the discussion of the other work includes errors that affect the response.

OR

The student clearly and correctly identifies **only one** appropriate work of art depicting the male figure, but the response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding by using specific evidence to analyze how the work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context.

NOTE: This is the highest score a response can earn if the student identifies and analyzes only one appropriate work correctly and coherently.

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Question 2 (continued)

4-3 points

Response demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the question.

The student identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. The identification of the works may be incomplete, implied, and/or contain errors. Using evidence, the student addresses how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. However, the response is limited, digressive, overly unbalanced, and/or contains significant errors.

OR

The student correctly identifies **only one** appropriate work of art depicting the male figure, but the response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding by using evidence to analyze how the work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context.

The score of **3** may be earned if both works are appropriate, but the discussion contains many significant errors.

2-1 points

Response demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the question.

The student identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. The identification of the works may be incomplete, implied, and/or contain errors. The response demonstrates general familiarity with the issues raised by the question. However, the discussion is weak, overly descriptive, and/or contains significant errors.

OR

The student identifies **only one** appropriate work of art depicting the male figure, but the response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding by using evidence to address how the work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context.

A score of **1** may be earned, even with two or more appropriate works depicting the male figure, when the discussion is too limited to ascertain the student's level of knowledge and understanding.

0 points

Response demonstrates no discernible knowledge or understanding of the question.

The student attempts to respond, but the response is without merit because it simply restates the question, includes no appropriate or identifiable structures, and/or consists entirely of incorrect or irrelevant statements. The score of 0 points includes crossed-out words, personal notes, and drawings.

— This is a blank paper only.

Question 2

Early Classical

a. 480 - 323 BCE

Doryphoros
Strodolus

18th century - Rococo
Enlightenment

19th century - Romanticism
Realism

20th century - Mapplethorpe

2. Depictions of the male figure often support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts.

Select and clearly identify two works of art depicting the male figure that support or challenge attitudes toward men within their cultural contexts. The works may be in any media. One work must date before 1700 C.E., and one must date after 1700 C.E. Using specific evidence, analyze how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. (30 minutes)

~~Surprisingly, societies' expectations of men have not changed much over the past~~

Surprisingly, societies' expectations of men have not evolved significantly over the past 2500 years. Polykleitos' Doryphoros epitomizes the heroic Greek man: strong, athletic, competitive (ca. 480-323 BCE, Early Classical Greece). Mapplethorpe's self-portrait (ca. 1980's, Social/Political Art, Photography) calls ~~for~~ contemporary society's understanding of masculinity into question in a timely, provocative manner.

Doryphoros, the sculptural manifestation of Greek artistic ideals as written by Polykleitos in his canon, supports the image of virility accepted in Classical Greece. The sculpture would have held a spear, a

representation of his sport. This aspect reflects the Classical value of athleticism and competition. Because Classical sculptors, especially Polykleitos, valued idealization of the human body and made use of a weight shift called contrapposto, the figure's muscular, lean body is emphasized, ~~and further~~ the further expanding upon ideals of strength and athleticism. The Greeks revered competition and individual talent and achievement, specifically for men, in fields of athletics, art, and theater. Poryphoros represents the individual achievement, distinction, and strength ~~that~~ expected of men during Polykleitos' time.

On the other side of the spectrum, Mapplethorpe's self-portrait photograph caused enormous controversy in its time because it starkly contrasted accepted images of masculinity. In the image, a bare-chested Mapplethorpe gazes directly into the camera. He appears to be wearing makeup, with glossy lips and long, full eyelashes. His hair, ~~and~~ which is not styled in a traditional short, male haircut. Mapplethorpe looks directly at the viewer with a slight smile. The femininity of Mapplethorpe's hair and makeup directly contrast accepted images of men in the United States during the 1980s, especially because the outbreak of AIDS created a hypersensitive, conservative attitude toward

Question 2 is repeated for your convenience.

2A 3/3

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gay, non-heteronormative men. While the subject's apparent nudity suggests a kind of vulnerability, it also presents a brazen challenge to its audience to reexamine the concept of manhood. The close-up scaling, direct gaze, and slight smile make the work an even more bold image within its cultural context. The photographic medium makes the work current and frank.

With his perfectly muscled nude spear-bearer, Polykleitos accepted and further shaped the ideal image of a man in early Classical Greece. In contrast, a ~~muscular~~ Manlytorpe created manes with a shirtless self-portrait, applying the sexualized "feminine" aesthetic typically attributed to female subjects to himself, a gay male. While nudity represented strength in one culture, it was perceived as effeminate and vulnerable in a later one.

David by Donatello → ^{city} republic of Florence
 Courtyard of Medici family

Louis XVII Portrait the heliotroping.
 Baroque period.

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The male figure has been depicted differently within their cultural contexts. During the early renaissance period in Italy, the nude male figures are banned due to the clergy. But Donatello, an sculptor and Architect once again revived the male nude figure with his David, a bronze sculpture commissioned by the Medici family for their courtyard. Donatello depicts David after his fight with Goliath ~~the monster~~. The sculpture stands with a slight contrapposto that recalls Greek high classical sculptures. As well as a hat that resembles the hat of Mercury. David is seen as the embodiment of both the male and the female figure as one in expressing the sensual beauty of sculptures. This is a work that examines ^{the soft naturalistic} ~~sensual and female~~ portrayal of the male figure. Donatello is also seemingly attempting to revive the classical beauty of the Greeks in his time. A sculpture

from Africa shows a different idea of the male figure. Nhop sculpture of a king by the Koba people ~~is a~~ ^{shows} the figure's elevated status through the pose and its physical depictions. The body is extremely disproportionate in comparison to the huge head. The head is signifying the intelligence and importance of the figure. He crosses his leg as he sits, which is a sign of authority and status. The small sculpture from ^{the} 1740s of the Koba people examines the depiction of people based on their status in society. In David, the male figure is admired as a source of beauty and heroism. As unreasonable as it seems, ~~a~~ the figure of a ^{skinny} youth defeated ~~the~~ Goliath with that thin frame of his, the piece only emphasizes the delicate and elegant ways of the Florentine even in the face of battling another. The ~~Nhop~~ Nhop sculpture shows the solid and expressive forms of the body as necessary for the males in society. That it is based on the stance, the solidity ~~of~~ ~~the~~, and the seriousness you embody in order to stand high within society.

Question 2

2C1/1

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The Discus Thrower from Ancient Greece clearly represents the social standards set for men at that time. It was believed that men should be calm and strong. The Discus Thrower seems at ease with his task. There are no signs of emotion or struggle on his face. He also appears very strong. His muscles are well-defined, and the ease with which he is preparing to throw the heavy discus suggests his strength.

Social attitudes toward men haven't changed much, therefore men are still expected to be strong and calm, and Edward Munch's The Scream is anything but that. Munch's painting depicts a man in obvious distress. ~~It is anything but calm~~ He is screaming at some unseen horror, and seems almost ready to faint. Screaming is the exact opposite of calm, and as for strength, he doesn't seem to have much, mentally. Physically, he's still very thin.

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Question 2

Overview

This question asked students to select two works of art, one dating before 1700 C.E. and one dating after 1700 C.E., that depict the male figure. Students were then asked to use specific evidence to analyze how each work either supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The intent of this question was to provide students with the opportunity to analyze how cultural attitudes about gender roles are visually expressed. More specifically, students were being asked to explore how art plays a role in the construction of male identity within a given culture.

Sample: 2A

Score: 9

This response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question by using specific visual evidence to analyze how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The response clearly and correctly identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure, one before 1700 C.E. and one after 1700 C.E.: Polykleitos's *Doryphoros* (*Spear Bearer*) (original 450-440 B.C.E.) and Robert Mapplethorpe's *Self-Portrait* (1980 C.E.). With regard to Polykleitos's *Doryphoros*, the response outlines how the sculpture supports the concept of the heroic Greek male figure, epitomizing his athleticism and competitiveness. The response provides cultural context, explaining that the *Doryphoros* "represents the individual achievement, distinction, and strength" of ideal Greek men. Further, the response highlights Greek intellectual interest in the arts and theater, and in the pursuit of individuality, so that the physical idealism of the *Doryphoros* "represents the individual achievement" and "distinction" expected of men in Greece at this time. The response provides specific visual evidence describing the *Doryphoros*'s "virility" and "muscular, lean body," ideals that are further supported by Polykleitos's *Canon*. The response interprets competitive athleticism as another facet of the *Doryphoros*'s strength, noting how the figure originally held a spear "as a representation of his sport." With regard to Mapplethorpe's *Self-Portrait*, the response explains that the photograph caused "enormous controversy in its time because it starkly contrasted accepted images of masculinity." The response provides specific visual evidence, such as Mapplethorpe's depiction as "bare-chested" and gazing directly into the camera. The response analyzes how Mapplethorpe challenged visual conventions of masculinity in America with this self-portrait, noting, "[h]e appears to be wearing makeup, with glossy lips and long full eye lashes" and has hair that is "not styled in a traditional short, male haircut." The response adds that Mapplethorpe's feminine depiction directly contrasts accepted masculine images of American men in the 1980s, especially during the AIDS outbreak and in an era of a "hypersensitive, conservative attitude." The presumed nudity and vulnerability of the figure "presents a brazen challenge to its audience to reexamine the concept of manhood." Although the question does not specifically require comparison between the two works, the response concludes with a brief comparison of the two cultural contexts, with the strength and "perfectly muscled" idealism of Polykleitos's *Doryphoros* juxtaposed with the vulnerable, "sexualized," and gay aesthetic of Mapplethorpe's *Self-Portrait*. This comparative element contributes to the coherence and sophistication of the response.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

This response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question by using specific visual evidence to analyze how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The response correctly identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure, one before 1700 C.E. and one after 1700 C.E.: Donatello's *David* (c. 1440-1460 C.E.) and the *Ndop* (portrait figure) of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul (c. 1760-1780 C.E.), created by the Kuba peoples in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (For this second example, the full identification is implied through the description

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Question 2 (continued)

of the work, with a minor error in the dating of the figure to “the 1740s.”) With regard to Donatello’s *David*, the response clearly establishes the work’s cultural context by discussing the revival of the nude male figure in the Early Renaissance and noting that the bronze figure was commissioned by the Medici family for a residence. The response provides visual evidence, observing that David is depicted after his fight with Goliath, wearing the hat of Mercury and standing “with a slight contrapposto that recalls Greek high classical sculptures.” The response describes David as “the embodiment of both the male and the female figure as one” and states that Donatello “examines the soft naturalistic portrayal of the male figure.” The response links *David* to the cultural standards of ancient Greece but notes that this portrayal of *David* is also soft and feminine, which “emphasizes the delicate and elegant ways of the Florentine” at this time. Unfortunately, a deeper analysis of humanism or Florentine politics is not provided, which would have strengthened the analysis of the cultural context of the work. With regard to the *Ndop* (portrait figure), the response describes how the ruler’s “elevated status” is shown through the figure’s pose and physical attributes. The response provides visual analysis in the description of the body, noting that the “huge head” is disproportionate to the body as a means of “signifying the intelligence and importance of the figure.” The king sits with crossed legs, a “sign of authority and status.” Yet although the response displays some knowledge of the *Ndop* (portrait figure), the response does not discuss other visual signifiers of the king’s status, such as the identification on the plinth or the fact that *Ndop* (portrait figures) were produced after a king’s death as a carving that represents his spirit, evidence that would have strengthened the analysis of the cultural context of the work. The response concludes by comparing the two male figures, noting that David is admired as a source of “beauty and heroism,” whereas the *Ndop* (portrait figure) “shows the solid and expressive forms” necessary for the “males in society.” The response is significantly unbalanced because it provides a more thorough and accurate visual and contextual analysis of Donatello’s *David* compared to a more general description of the *Ndop* (portrait figure).

Sample: 2C
Score: 4

This response demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the question by using evidence to address how each work supports or challenges attitudes toward men within its cultural context. The response identifies two appropriate works of art depicting the male figure, one before 1700 C.E. and one after 1700 C.E.: Myron’s *Diskobolus* (*Discus Thrower*) (c. 450 B.C.E.) and Edvard Munch’s *The Scream* (1893 C.E.). The response begins by identifying the *Diskobolus* as having originally been created in ancient Greece and noting that the work “clearly represents social standards set for men at that time.” The response observes the well-defined muscles of the *Diskobolus*, equating the figure’s obvious strength with the belief that “men should be calm and strong” as a demonstration of confidence. The response provides further visual evidence of the figure’s strength by describing the *Diskobolus* as having “no signs of emotion or struggle on his face,” proof of the “ease with which he is preparing to throw the heavy discus.” With regard to Munch’s *The Scream*, the response notes an attitude of implied expectations toward men that has not changed much since ancient Greece because men are “still expected to be calm and strong,” yet Munch in *The Scream* “depicts a man in obvious distress.” The response provides some visual evidence for the contrast between the calm *Diskobolus* and the turmoil shown in *The Scream* by noting that the male figure in *The Scream* is “physically . . . very thin.” The response also notes, “He is screaming at some unseen horror, and seems almost ready to faint.” The response does not engage, however, with why Munch’s figure might be distressed: there is no attempt to link Munch’s representation to the cultural context of the time, such as the anxiety of modern life or the zeitgeist of turn-of-the-century Europe. With regard to both examples, the discussion is limited, and the response is unbalanced with a stronger discussion of the *Diskobolus* than *The Scream*.