General Certificate of Education

History of Art 2250

HART2   Themes in History of Art

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

General

All six questions were attempted; Questions 1, 2 and 3 were the most popular and Question 5 was least popular.

AO1 was generally sound and secure. Sometimes artworks were imprecisely identified and only vague titles were given such as Henry Moore's <u>Reclining Figure</u> or <u>Mother and Child</u>, Claude's <u>Landscape</u> or Monet's <u>Gare St Lazare</u>. There were many incorrect dates and misspellings of artists, architects and proper nouns. Erroneous information was often offered.

AO2 was usually demonstrated ably and justified cogently. Cases of subjective and unsubstantiated judgment and over-interpretation were, however, common.

AO3 was evidenced to a pleasingly high level in the majority of cases. The most successful responses were fluent, concise, stylish and well-structured. However, lack of clarity and loss of coherence were common flaws in some responses, as were ambiguity and repetition, and inappropriate register. Padding was abundant: candidates regularly employed incoherent material and long-winded digressions which gained no credit.

Subjects and genres
Question 1

Compare and Contrast **two** paintings which are of the **same** genre.

Many candidates attempted this question, regularly producing long answers (often the longest they attempted). The most successful candidates engaged with a range of comparisons and contrasts between their selected paintings, made in relation to a number of formal and contextual aspects. A significant number of responses fell below mark band 4 because they totally or partially neglected the instruction to compare and contrast. Such responses often featured sound and interesting evidence of AO1 in relation to each work, but they did not answer the question effectively, tending to produce two 'stand alone' sections of analysis (usually of an iconographic nature). Occasionally, candidates offered a comparative or contrasting point regarding one or other of their examples by referencing a third work: a particularly unfruitful approach. In a few cases, candidates did not seem to understand the term 'genre' and they wrote everything they knew about a specific art movement without placing the examples they selected within a particular genre.

Materials, techniques and processes
Question 2

Comment on how the use of different materials affects the appearance **and** the meaning of **two** sculptures.

This was a popular question, which was answered by many candidates. Donatello, Michelangelo and Bernini were most commonly chosen, but the range of examples spanned the time period. The more successful responses showed a sophisticated and detailed understanding of how, for example, carving, casting and assemblage techniques have an impact on the appearance and the meaning of sculpted works. It was noticeable that a significant number of candidates adopted the same compare and contrast instruction as Question 1, which did not necessarily impede their effectiveness, but it was not what was stipulated in the wording of the question. A number of candidates did not address the 'use of material(s)' effectively, failing to investigate the stages of making and techniques of fashioning involved; there was also a common failure to discuss both 'meaning' and 'appearance' in substantial depth. Digression such as patronage was common.

Form and function
Question 3
Examine how the purpose of a building may be reflected in its form **and** appearance with reference to **two** examples.

This question was marginally the most popular and was generally well answered. In some cases the examples were unevenly developed. The <u>Parthenon</u>, the <u>Pantheon</u> and the <u>Colosseum</u> were popular choices, as were <u>Falling Water</u> and the <u>Villa Savoye</u>. Often, in spite of reference (of some validity) to architectural details and features, the form of a chosen building was not fully addressed, for example, the rectangular, colonnaded form of the <u>Parthenon</u>; similarly, characterisation of a building's overall appearance was neglected by a significant number of candidates. Interesting discussions ensued when candidates addressed varieties of purpose within a building, or when the example chosen was polyvalent (the <u>Pompidou Centre</u>) and the candidate addressed its multiple use. Occasionally, candidates only partially identified the building's purpose. Digression was, unfortunately, common with superfluous and protracted consideration of historical context, patronage and building history. As with Question 2, a significant number of responses set up a comparison/contrast debate between their examples.

Patronage
Question 4
Show how patronage is reflected in the appearance **and** meaning of **two** commissioned works of art. Choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

This question was generally well answered and was attempted by a significant number of candidates. Poorer responses offered a description and/or an iconographic analysis (often muddled and factually flawed) of chosen works with limited reference to the patronage behind them. Meaning was better handled and conveyed than appearance, on the whole. Renaissance examples were popular; the more successful responses aired a variety of relevant points, often conjectural, while the less successful candidates asserted simplistic or subjective judgments.

Social and cultural status
Question 5
Discuss the social and cultural status of **two** artists or **two** architects.

Although attempted by a minority of candidates, some very good responses to this question were seen. Some candidates investigated contemporary and (as appropriate) retrospective readings of status. Others were merely biographical or anecdotal and lacked an understanding of social and cultural status, consequently tending to provide a superficial overview of their chosen artists/architects. Ambitiously, some candidates attempted to tie their answers to focussed consideration of a work or works, such as, Picasso's <u>Guernica</u>; this often proved fruitful although the question did not stipulate that it was a requirement.

Gender, nationality and ethnicity
Question 6
Discuss the ways in which gender is represented in **two** works of art.

The quality of answers to this question, attempted by approximately one third of candidates, varied considerably. There was a wide range of examples used,

predominantly women (mothers, fallen women, objects of beauty). The more successful candidates were conversant with gendered readings of art; less

successful candidates did not show an awareness of the implications of gender.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.