General Certificate of Education

History of Art 2250

HART3

Investigation and Interpretation (1)

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

HART3

General Comments

This first year of examination at A2 showed that a wide variety of strategies for the delivery of the specification had been used. While some centres appeared to retain the core of their material from the A2 options of the previous specification, others adopted a broader approach. Overall, the examiners were very impressed by the invention and industry shown by both teaching staff and by candidates, although there were isolated instances where centres seemed not to have been aware of the standards expected which were communicated in the scripts and commentaries distributed to centres for HART3 and HART4.

There were some truly outstanding responses that combined a clear joy in the subject with impressive knowledge and acute powers of discussion and analysis. The most common causes of underperformance were, as in previous examinations, the inability to fulfil the demands of the question and the use of inadequate or inappropriate examples.

Since all questions require three examples, or two for compare/contrast tasks, the choice of these examples is crucial as they form the agenda on which to base discussions. While choosing three examples of the same subject, theme or purpose is acceptable, it might prove difficult to broaden a discussion, analysis or interpretation if similar information is repeated. Similarly, if the question requires two examples to be compared and contrasted, it is advisable to select two examples that provide enough material to allow similarities and differences to be pointed out. This is an aspect of the new specification that was not present in the previous specification and it does require a greater degree of discrimination from candidates.

In the discipline of the History of Art there are inevitably examples that are controversial or do not comfortably fit into categories. When candidates use examples that might be considered marginal, problematic or a mixture between media, it is important that some form of explanation or argument is provided to the examiner as to why the selected example is appropriate to the demands of the question. It is a last resort for examiners to disallow examples and a step that is never taken lightly.

If a building or artwork that spans two centuries is selected, it is incumbent on the candidate to give some form of explanation why their example belongs in one century or another. For example St Paul's Cathedral which was built across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The sample mark scheme uses this formula - '….the appearance and character of the chosen example must date primarily from work executed within the chronological period.' When deciding on which century a building that spans two centuries belongs in, this formula should be noted and for added confirmation the style of the building should be considered - since styles are usually associated with one century rather than another. For extra confirmation Honour and Fleming might be consulted to see where they place it. Though not detailed enough as a reference source for A2, this book does split art and architecture up into centuries). By all of these measures St Paul's, as an example of English Baroque Classicism, falls into the seventeenth century, rather than the eighteenth century.

Worryingly, the information cited for many examples consisted of the reproduction (full, partial or garbled) of the Wikipedia entry for that work. For the most part, electronic resources are no substitute for the detailed published sources that are appropriate for the demands and expectations of A2.

Although the Specification allows centres and candidates to choose their own examples with which to answer questions, on some occasions only vague or generic titles were given – such as Madonna and Child, Pietà, Portrait of a Man/Woman. This sometimes makes verification of examples difficult. Examiners make exhaustive efforts to identify examples and this summer they have spent an enormous amount of time checking information. Perhaps centres and candidates could assist them by adding a little extra information when using examples which exist in multiple versions or treat common subjects, such as date or location?

At A2 a competency is expected in the terminology of the History of Art and a sound understanding of the different categories and genres of art and architecture is required. This is a consolidation and expansion of the knowledge and understanding that should have been gained in HART2 'Subjects and genres' section. From this year's responses it was clear that some candidates found this a challenge and sometimes used inappropriate examples.

In response to questions that required comparison there was sometimes a tendency to write two discrete sections and to neglect the comparative element. Some candidates interwove aspects of similarity and difference while discussing both works others, drew their comparisons after having analysed or discussed the first example. Both strategies were successful. Leaving similarity or difference until a solitary concluding paragraph rarely yielded high marks.

Generally speaking, answers that contained some form of introduction and conclusion were more successful than those that did not. This was because an introduction either served to clarify a candidate's ideas about the discussion or argument to be pursued or defined the terms of reference by which the question would be approached. Candidates employing this method were then less likely to give a purely descriptive account of their examples. A conclusion could also provide further evidence of the security of knowledge and understanding. Some candidates wrote separate sections for all of the examples used with little or no linking material.

There was a tendency for architectural questions to be answered less well than those on painting and sculpture. This was mainly because candidates seemed less adept at providing architectural analyses that covered plan, elevation and style. Where required, discussions of the relationship between form and function were sometimes poorly addressed. Some difficulties with architectural terminology were also noted.

The standard of English was generally good-to-fair, but spelling was often erratic or phonetic and names of artists, patrons and commissions were sometimes spelt incorrectly. The problem of illegible or hard-to-read handwriting has undoubtedly become worse. Plainly put, if it cannot be read, it cannot be marked. The titles of the letters 'i' and 'j' were often replaced with tiny circles or even hearts.

A surprising number of candidates were confused about the correct usage for identifying centuries and, for instance, when referring to 19th century works, dated them beginning with the digits 19.

Topic 1   Art and Architecture in Fifteenth-Century Europe
Question 1
Examine **three** fifteenth-century sculptures of a single figure and discuss the subject matter **and** use of materials in each.

This was a popular question and more able candidates were able to choose appropriate figure sculptures and discuss the subject matter and the use of marble,

bronze or wood. The most commonly used examples were works by Donatello
(David, St George, St Mark, Habbakuk, and Mary Magdalene) Ghiberti
(St John the Baptist and St Matthew) and Verrocchio (David). Frequently, however,
the answer was unevenly balanced with more emphasis on the use of materials and
little on subject matter. A minority of candidates cited examples of sculptures that
included two full figures - notably Donatello's Judith and Holofernes.

Question 2
Analyse **three** fifteenth-century domestic **and/or** civic buildings, explaining how each
communicates power and status.

The most popular choices of examples were the Florentine palaces - Palazzo Medici,
the Palazzo Rucellai and Palazzo Strozzi,- the Foundling Hospital and the Ca' d'Oro
in Venice. Stronger responses discussed power and status via a consideration of
such elements as scale, decoration, references to the authority of antiquity and the
use of family emblems and coats of arms.

Question 3
Analyse **three** fifteenth-century portraits, each by a different artist, **and** discuss how
status and character are communicated. You may choose your examples from
painting **and/or** sculpture.

Examples used included Ghirlandaio An old man and his grandson, Donatello
Gattamelata, Van Eyck The Arnolfini Portrait, Filippo Lippi Portrait of a Man and
Woman at a Casement, and Botticelli *Portrait of a man with a medal of Cosimo the
Elder*. The more able candidates discussed how naturalism, pose, accessories and
symbolism were used to demonstrate the character and status of the sitter. Less
able candidates produced inappropriate religious examples such as statues of David
and various Madonnas.

Question 4
What methods were used to convey religious narratives in fifteenth-century painting?
Answer with relation to **three** examples, each by a different artist.

A fairly popular question and examples mainly came from Italy and Flanders,
including Masaccio's Tribute Money, Gentile da Fabriano's Adoration of the Magi, the
Mérode Altarpiece by Campin and scenes from Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Chapel.
Responses were often focussed on description rather than on indentifying the range
of narrative methods that had been employed to tell the religious story. Some
candidates chose iconic subjects, such as the Virgin and Child that had little narrative
content.

Topic 2   *Art and Architecture in Seventeenth-Century Europe*
Question 5
Analyse and discuss the subject matter and composition of **three**
seventeenth-century sculptures containing two or more figures.

This was a popular question and as there was no requirement to discuss the work of
more than one artist, often three examples by Bernini were used - usually
Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius, Pluto and Persephone, Apollo and Daphne and the
Ecstasy of St Teresa. Examples by Algardi, such as the
Encounter of St Leo the Great and Attila were also used.   Less able candidates were
limited in their ability to give a full account of subject matter and were vague or
inaccurate on the composition of the sculpture.

Question 6
Discuss how character and identity are conveyed in **three** seventeenth-century portraits of an individual sitter, each by a different artist. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

This was a very popular question and a wide range of examples were employed, with works by Bernini, Hals, Rembrandt, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck being the most popular. Owing to weak labelling it was sometimes difficult to identify examples, especially in the case of Hals who painted a number of works entitled 'Portrait of a Woman'. Unfortunately, some candidates had imprecise ideas about what constituted a portrait and images of biblical and mythological figures, as well as genre scenes, were discussed.

Question 7
Conversions and martyrdoms of saints were frequently depicted in seventeenth-century art. Analyse **three** examples, each by a different artist, **and** discuss the religious purpose of each. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

The most popular choices were examples by Caravaggio, Poussin, Bernini, Stefano Maderno, Algardi and by Spanish artists such as Ribera, Zurbarán and Murillo. Many candidates were also able to place works in their historical contexts as having to meet the demands of the Counter Reformation as the outcome of the Council of Trent. Some candidates wrote general essays about the religious purpose of three seventeenth-century works without considering whether or not their examples depicted conversions or martyrdoms.

Question 8
Analyse **three** major country residences built in the seventeenth century **and** discuss how each communicates the status and importance of the owner.

This was not a popular question, although there were a few good answers that included examples such as the Palace of Versailles, Vaux-le-Vicomte, Maisons and the Queen's House at Greenwich that reflected the status and power of the owners. Candidates sometimes incorrectly used examples of grand town houses or institutional buildings.

Topic 3   Art and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Europe
Question 9
Examine **three** nineteenth-century works of art, each by a different artist, that are concerned with women and their role in society. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

This was a very popular question that frequently produced excellent responses. A wide range of examples were used such as Hunt's Awakening Conscience, Manet's Olympia and Bar at the Folies Bergère, Renoir's La Loge, Cassat's Woman in Black at the Opera and Herkomer's On Strike. Some examples cited offered limited opportunities to discuss the role of women in nineteenth-century society, such as Canova's Pauline Borghese as Venus Victorious and Ingres' La Grande Odalisque.

Question 10
Analyse and discuss **three** nineteenth-century paintings, each by a different artist, that depict modern urban life.

This was also a popular question and the majority of examples used came from the Impressionist period. The more successful candidates made firm links between their chosen examples and the nature of nineteenth-century urban life, usually some aspect of the Hausmannisation of Paris, such as vice, entertainment or the *flâneur*. Monet's paintings of the Gare Saint Lazare, Caillebotte's <u>Pont de l'Europe</u>, Renoir's <u>Dance at the Moulin de la Galette</u> and Degas' <u>Place de la Concorde</u> were amongst the more frequently cited examples. Realist works such as Courbet's <u>The Painter's Studio</u> and <u>Burial at Ornans</u> were sometimes inadequately linked to the question. Some paintings chosen, such as Turner's <u>Rain, Steam and Speed - The Great Western Railway</u>, although containing elements of the modern world, gave very few opportunities to discuss modern urban life.

Question 11
Discuss the relationship between form and function in **three** nineteenth-century commemorative sculptures **and/or** monuments, each by a different maker.

This was the least popular question. Works by Rodin <u>The Burghers of Calais</u> and <u>Balzac</u>, Rude's <u>La Marseillaise</u> and <u>Napoleon Awakening to Immortality</u>, Scott's <u>The Albert Memorial</u> and Canova's <u>Monument to the Archduchess Maria Christina</u> were most frequently discussed. A few candidates discussed the form and function of the <u>Eiffel Tower</u>. Occasionally works with no commemorative function were discussed.

Question 12
How were attitudes to architectural styles of the past expressed in nineteenth-century architecture? Refer to **three** revivalist buildings, each by a different architect, in your answer.

The most common examples of the revival of past styles were Classical (Schinkel's <u>Altes Museum</u>) and Gothic (Barry and Pugins's <u>Houses of Parliament</u>, Scott's <u>Midland Hotel</u> and Butterfield's <u>All Saints' Margaret St.</u>). Mughal architecture at Nash's <u>Brighton Pavilion</u>, the Neo-Baroque at Garnier's <u>Paris Opera</u> and the vernacular tradition at Webb's <u>The Red House</u> were also discussed.

Topic 4   Art and Architecture in Europe and the United States of America between 1946 and 2000
Question 13
Analyse **and** interpret **three** examples of installation art, each made by a different artist during this period.

This was a popular question and examples by Damien Hirst, Judy Chicago, Antony Gormley, Tracey Emin and Dan Flavin were discussed. The more successful candidates gave some definition of 'installation art' that then enabled the interpretative element of the question to be addressed. Unfortunately, some candidates chose examples beyond the year 2000, the cut-off point of this topic.

Question 14
Discuss how stylistic change **and/or** development are demonstrated in **three** paintings by one artist working during this period.

Jackson Pollock, Lucian Freud and David Hockney were most frequently used as examples. The most successful answers were those that were underpinned by a sound sense of chronology that enabled stylistic change and/or development to be identified and discussed.

Question 15
Discuss **three** self-portraits, in any media, each by a different artist, produced during this period. What ideas about himself/herself does each artist project?

This was a very popular question and many examples came from British artists, such as Marc Quinn, Tracey Emin, Peter Blake, Sarah Lucas, Gavin Turk and Gillian Wearing. Discussions about the projection of ideas included the autobiographical, the humorous, the confessional, the adoption of alter-egos and considerations of mortality. Although some candidates chose examples by Cindy Sherman, these did not provide much scope to discuss the projection of ideas about the artist.

Question 16
Analyse and discuss t**hree** examples of non-domestic architecture built between 1946 and 2000.

Museums and galleries were frequently chosen as examples of non-domestic architecture with Libeskind's <u>Jewish Museum</u> in Berlin, Piano and Rogers' <u>Pompidou Centre</u>, and the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao often being selected. Less well-known examples, such as the Brutalist <u>Hunstanton School</u> by Peter and Alison Smithson and Will Alsop's striking <u>Peckham Library</u> were also analysed and discussed successfully.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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