

# ART HISTORY

Paper 9799/01

Analytical Studies in Western and non-Western Art

## Key messages

- Students can prepare case studies ahead of time but questions in the examination are structured in such a way as to avoid rote learning and to promote thoughtful discussion. They must approach each section carefully and make sure they answer the question directly.
- One of the questions will always require the context of the work of art.

## General comments

The general standard of answers this year was very impressive, and there was evidence of excellent teaching and learning. Relevant terminology was well used for the most part, and answers were well structured.

In order to improve on those areas where there were some weaknesses this year, candidates could have paid more attention to the technique of etching for **Question 4a** and the content of the print for **Question 4b**. Similarly, in **Question 2b**, candidates could have improved by having more to say about what was happening in the two panels.

## Comments on specific questions

**Question 1** Chris Ofili, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, 1996

- (a) This was answered well by many candidates. However, it was not sufficient to merely restate the list of materials listed on the paper. Answers gaining high marks analysed how the different mediums had been used and the possible influences. For example, Ofili's visits to an exhibition of Aboriginal art at the Hayward Gallery informed his use of small spots of paint. His visit to Zimbabwe led to the more overtly African elements, notably the elephant dung. Given that the materials were on the paper, it was a pity when candidates failed to mention, for instance, the map pins spelling out the words 'Holy' and 'Virgin' on the balls of dung lifting the painting off the floor.
- (b) Most candidates identified the main sources of hostile reaction to the painting. These were the perceived disrespect being shown to Mary through the use of dung and pornographic images. Fuller responses treated the issue with a greater degree of subtlety. First, it was pointed out that when the work was first shown in the London leg of the Sensation exhibition, it excited little controversy. It was only when it reached New York that it provoked a major outcry fuelled by the intervention of the then mayor, Rudolph Giuliani. The best answers seemed to be the product of vigorous debate in class about the contradictory elements in the work.

**Question 2** Ghiberti, *Gates of Paradise* (Jacob and Esau and the Joseph panel) 1425–52

- (a) There were some excellent responses to this question. On the whole, the best used a methodical approach. The adoption of classical perspective was an obvious point to be made, although it needed to be illustrated rather than just baldly stated. Overlapping forms, different degrees of relief, the compartmentalising of space by the architecture, varying textures and the inclusion of landscape were other valid points. An explanation of the bronze-casting process was only relevant in connection with the artist being able to create high relief figures.
- (b) This was the toughest question of the paper for most candidates who chose this section. The reason for this was that a good knowledge of the Genesis stories and how they were presented in the two panels was required. Most candidates had simply not looked at what was going on in the panels by Ghiberti, the story-teller.



**Question 3** Iktinos, *Parthenon*, Athens c.448–432 BC

- (a) A confident knowledge and use of classical architectural terminology was present in many responses to this question, bringing them into the excellent band. The question invited both a broad survey of the building in terms of its structure and consideration of such elements as entasis and the division of the entablature. Systematic analysis of the building was characteristic of the best responses but was not essential in achieving full or very nearly full marks.
- (b) The functions of the building fell principally into three areas; the political, the religious and the economic. Almost all candidates knew that the Parthenon housed Phidias' statue of Athena. Some expanded on Pericles' assertion of Athenian power through the building and its role in providing employment for the free citizens of the state. It was also a treasury. The theory of the sculpture being an allegory of the Greek war with the Persians – civilisation versus savagery - was cited in the fuller responses.

**Question 4** Rembrandt, *The Hundred Guilder Print*, c.1648–50 (Etching)

- (a) A full understanding of the technique of etching was relatively rare. Some answers did not make it clear either by specifically using the word *intaglio* or through description that the process involves ink being drawn from the channels in the plate rather than from the surface as in relief printing. A few candidates correctly pointed out that some impressions have deliberate surface tone left on the plate for atmospheric purposes. In most cases, the *chiaroscuro* present in the work was touched on rather than fully explored.
- (b) Most candidates know the alternative title to this work; *Christ Healing the Sick*, and that the episodes were based on Chapter 19 of the Gospel of Matthew. The best responses showed how Rembrandt melded the scoffing Pharisees, the rich young man, the mothers and their children and the procession of the poor and sick into a coherent composition. In some of the weaker responses it seemed that the content of the print had not been looked at in detail individually or discussed as a group.

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<p><b>Paper 9799/02</b> <b>Historical Topics</b></p>
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## Key messages

- The best responses referred to a wide range of examples where relevant.
- It is important to relate the examples to the requirements of the question.

## General comments

The general standard of answers was very good. Examiners were pleased to read a considerable number of scripts of the highest possible quality which demonstrated a detailed and sensitive analysis of a large number of carefully selected works of art. This was particularly true with regard to **Questions 1** and **3** in Topic 3 and **Questions 1** and **3** in Topic 9. In addition, where the question lent itself to this, many candidates demonstrated an impressive grasp of architectural terminology.

The most accomplished answers referred to a wide range of examples where this was relevant; less effective ones included fewer examples and/or discussed them in less detail. In some cases candidates discussed examples well but did not explain how they related to the wider issues contained in the question. This was most evident, for example, in **Question 1**, Topic 8, where weaker candidates did not explain exactly how the paintings which they discussed served as Napoleonic propaganda. To a lesser extent this was also true in **Question 2**, Topic 2, where some candidates concentrated on the content of the sculptures without saying clearly how they were integrated into their architectural settings.

Although it is not a requirement, it is recommended that candidates write each question out in full in order to focus their minds on what is required immediately before beginning their answer. Likewise, it would be useful if candidates gave the dates of works of art, where known; although this is not a requirement it is particularly relevant in questions which invite candidates to outline a chronological development.

Not all topics were answered by candidates. Within the topics which candidates used, not all questions were attempted. Only those questions for which responses were received will be included in this report.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Topic 1: The Art and Architecture of Classical Antiquity.**

Too few candidates answered questions in this topic for us to be able to provide meaningful comments.

### **Topic 2: Art, Religion and Society in Romanesque Europe c.1000-1200.**

#### **Question 1**

This was a popular question which on the whole was well answered. The better candidates correctly identified the key characteristics in a variety of named examples (describing them with accurate architectural terminology) and referred in addition to the influence of Norman prototypes. Weaker candidates omitted some of the characteristics and a few of them spent too much time dwelling on Norman architecture which left them with insufficient time to discuss the English churches.

## **Question 2**

This question met with a variable response. The better candidates analysed a wide range of examples in depth to demonstrate the close relationship between sculpture and architecture in the period. Weaker candidates discussed fewer examples in less detail and in several cases concentrated almost exclusively on the sculpture itself without attempting to explain how it was incorporated into its architectural setting.

### **Topic 3: A New Heaven and a New Earth: Gothic Art and Architecture c. 1140-1540.**

#### **Question 1**

This question was chosen by a large number of candidates and the answers were of a very high standard. Most candidates identified all of the major points of comparison and impressed with their use of architectural terminology. A few omitted some of the important differences and discussed them in less detail. The great majority of candidates referred to one or more examples of Gothic buildings by name but very few named a specific church from the Romanesque period.

#### **Question 3**

This question was also quite popular and the great majority of answers were of an impressively high standard. With one exception, all candidates correctly identified the dual role of the chapels (religious and secular) and drew on a wide range of carefully chosen examples in their discussion.

#### **Question 4**

This question elicited some exceptionally good answers from a large number of candidates. Most candidates not only identified the major influences coming from France but gave good explanations for why this was so. A small number of weaker candidates omitted some of the French sources or failed to discuss why they were chosen.

### **Topic 4: Man, the measure of all things: the Early Italian Renaissance 1400-1500.**

#### **Question 1**

This was a very popular question which on the whole was well answered. Almost all candidates identified a wide range of drawing types and analysed these in considerable depth with reference to relevant named examples. Better candidates discussed the way in which different techniques and materials were employed for different kinds of drawing and also had more to say about the use of preparatory drawings.

#### **Question 2**

This was answered by a considerable number of candidates with varying degrees of success. The better ones chose a suitable range of examples (in particular from Orsanmichele and from the cathedral façade and campanile) and demonstrated the new sense of naturalism in the work of the three sculptors. Weaker candidates dwelt at excessive length on the competition reliefs for the north doors of the Baptistry, in some cases comparing Ghiberti's work with that of Brunelleschi. A few candidates had little or nothing to say about the work of Nanni di Banco and in one case Donatello's sculpture was not mentioned at all.

#### **Question 3**

Only a small number of candidates attempted this question. On the whole, answers were rather sketchy and although several relevant works of art or architecture were mentioned (in particular with relation to the Medici family) these were usually discussed in isolation without any substantial attempt to explain why they had been commissioned.

### **Topic 5: The Renaissance in Northern Europe 1420-1570.**

No candidates chose to answer any questions in this topic.

**Topic 6: Faith Triumphant: Seventeenth Century Art and Architecture.**

**Question 1**

This was a popular question which was answered with variable success. Almost all candidates identified relevant examples which they analysed in often sensitive detail. Only the stronger candidates gave a clear exposition of the aims and ideals of the Council of Trent and the way in which their chosen examples were conditioned by this.

**Question 2**

The few responses to this question were on the whole relatively weak. Several candidates appeared uncertain as to the meaning of 'history painting' and in consequence chose examples that were not particularly relevant to the question.

**Question 3**

As with the previous question, this was answered by very few candidates. Several of them appeared uncertain of the term 'pictorial elements' and as a result their answers were rather weak.

**Question 5**

Most candidates came up with three relevant examples of the artist's work but only the better ones discussed these in detail with reference, amongst other things, to the spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius.

**Topic 7: Defining the Nation: Art and Architecture in Britain c.1700-1860s.**

No candidates chose to answer any questions from this topic.

**Topic 8: Art, Society and Politics in Europe c.1790-1900**

**Question 1**

This was a popular question which on the whole was well answered. All candidates identified suitable examples which they discussed in an often detailed and perceptive manner. However, weaker candidates tended to do so in isolation without clearly explaining exactly how these works could be regarded as propaganda.

**Question 3**

Several candidates answered this question. At best, the responses were extremely good and involved analysis of a wide range of works including, for example, Monet's Argenteuil paintings, his series paintings, Caillebotte's Parisian scenes and several named examples by the Skagen artists. Weaker candidates explored fewer examples in less detail.

**Topic 9: The Shock of the New: Art and Architecture in Europe and the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries.**

**Question 1**

With a few exceptions, this very popular question gave rise to answers of the very highest standard. Most candidates analysed a large number of examples in a very perceptive way to communicate how Cubism progressed through its various stages. In comparison, weaker candidates discussed only a few examples, in less detail. In a few cases, candidates dwelt excessively on early works, in particular Les Femmes d'Alger, to the exclusion of much else.

**Question 2**

Only a few candidates attempted this question. With the occasional exception, answers were rather weak with little about the nature of the prize itself and no clear idea as to what was special about their chosen building.

### **Question 3**

This question elicited answers of the very highest standard. The background to the commission was explained concisely and the building was described in detail, setting it clearly into its historical context.

### **Question 4**

Relatively few candidates attempted this question, several of whom produced impressive answers in which they analysed a wide range of paintings by Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon, in the process making a convincing comparison of their treatment of the nude figure. Weaker candidates, of whom there were only a few, discussed fewer examples in less detail and as a result were unable to make effective comparisons.

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<p><b>Paper 9799/03</b> <b>Thematic Topics</b></p>
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## Key messages

- General strengths in all topics lay in detailed information about specific works, which candidates had clearly studied in depth.
- Examiners will always reward related historical and cultural material where it is relevant to the discussion.

## General comments

Candidates answered questions from Topics 1, 3 and 4. In Topic 1, all questions except for **Question 8** were attempted. In Topic 3, **Questions 1, 4, 6 and 7** were answered. In Topic 4, all questions apart from **Question 6** were attempted.

Like last year, all the candidates who answered Topic 1 used Barcelona as their chosen city. There was a pleasingly wide range of answers, usually drawing on examples from the late nineteenth century onwards. With the exception of some accounts of Santa Maria del Mar there was relatively little on the rich medieval heritage of that city, and Centres wishing to continue with Barcelona might wish to consider looking at some more Gothic church and secular architecture, the monastery of Pedralbes etc. Once again we should stress that any other city would be equally welcome.

The overall standard of organisation in essays seemed better than last year. Here and there in Topic 1, candidates strayed into a style more suitable for tourist brochures than academic writing. In Topic 4, some works studied for Paper 1 were (quite legitimately) employed in answers. However, all candidates took heed of the advice not to discuss the same work in different answers, which allowed them to demonstrate the range of their knowledge and understanding to best effect.

## **Topic 1: Art and Architecture in the City**

### **Question 1**

There were only a few responses to this question, using MNAC, MACBA and the Miró Foundation as examples. There were some interesting remarks on the theory of museums, the notion of the white cube and the effects created by modernist spaces. However, the question specifies 'styles of display', and to deal with this one needs to know what is being displayed. Knowledge of the actual contents of these museums was rather thin, leaving candidates stranded on generalities without specific examples. More could have been said of the historical context of the museums and their collections, which are closely tied to regional and city history. This question is an excellent opportunity to give some first-hand experience of what a visit to a museum feels like. Candidates preparing this topic (for any city) would also benefit from acquainting themselves with the often very rich material on museum websites.

### **Question 2**

This was a popular question, with answers covering principally the Raval, the Eixample, Parc Güell and Barceloneta. Answers showed a very high level of detailed knowledge of the chosen areas, commenting on issues of patronage and planning, and discussing the impact of sculptures and other landmarks. The very best answers were able to put this in a deeper historical context. Some answers were a little weaker in this respect: for example, some discussion of the significance of the city walls and their demolition would have enriched some answers on the Eixample; and not all candidates made it clear that the story of Barceloneta really begins with the foundation of the Ciutadella in the eighteenth century. Good answers made something of the instruction to compare and contrast, bringing out social and functional differences. Some answers simply discussed one place and then another, with fairly minimal comparisons.



### Question 3

This was another popular topic and candidates referred to the Columbus monument, the Tàpies homage to Picasso, Blay's sculpture on the Palau de la Música and the monument to Dr Robert. There is an unavoidable overlap between public sculpture and monument. It was good to see some candidates striking out independently and writing about works that interested them, such as the nationalist war memorial on Montjuïc. The main strength of the best answers was an excellent level of detailed knowledge of the visual details of the works discussed, with some convincing remarks on their immediate context. As ever, contextual discussion could always be widened: Columbus could be placed more in the nineteenth-century phenomenon of industrial fairs and material; the idealism of the St Luke Circle, as well as Modernisme, would be a helpful reference for Blay and Llimona. When preparing a complex work like the Columbus monument, candidates should research the authorship thoroughly. This monument involved a number of sculptors, and was sometimes too securely attributed to one person.

### Question 4

The most popular choice was the painter Ramon Casas, with some excellent accounts of the historical works, in particular *Garrote Vil* and *La Carga*, and careful readings of society portraits. There were some good answers on Tàpies and Picasso. Although Miró's work somewhat resists the formulation of the question, at least one candidate used this painter convincingly as an example. While the accent of the question is on the depiction of the city in particular works, some more historical information on the artist's trajectory and relation to the city can be illuminating. No candidates wrote about a photographer.

### Question 5

There were some excellent answers on Gaudí, Santa Maria del Mar and Camp Nou, the Barcelona football stadium. The best answers conveyed a real enthusiasm for the work discussed, and in the 'Give reasons why' part of the question, offered interesting comments on the building's cultural and historical significance and its relation to cultural trends.

### Question 6

A few candidates attempted this, writing on a particular patron such as Eusebi Güell, or considering diverse works from the point of view of the patron and the expectations which went with the original commission. Once again, there was a good level of detail when it came to the works discussed, while historical and biographical material could have gone further.

### Question 7

The best answers engaged with the historical origins and meaning of particular works, commenting on the values that they embody and transmit to future ages. Some candidates showed a sensitive awareness of the complicated and violent political history of the city and were able to read monuments against this. Weaker answers resorted to rehearsed facts without taking the emphasis of the question into account.

### Topic 2: Landscape

No candidates chose to answer any questions from this topic.

### Topic 3: Portraiture

Very few candidates chose this topic, so a question by question report is not possible.

There was an impressive clarity about concepts of realism and idealism (**Question 1**), some sound knowledge of specific works throughout, and answers were in general well organised. The highest marks went to answers where the candidate paused and went into a work in great detail, discussing pose, medium and subtle semiotic touches. Weaker answers seemed at times vague about the precise detail of the works being treated. There was at times a feeling that candidates had more to say but were constrained by vocabulary. As much reading as possible of relevant literature and exhibition reviews in the national press would help candidates to acquire the language required to express subtle and nuanced points.



## **Topic 4: The Nude**

### **Question 1**

There were some thoughtful responses to this statement by Clark. Candidates wrote more on idealised presentations of the nude body than on expressive distortion (though there was some interesting discussion of Bacon here). The best answers went beyond saying that an image was idealised and discussed what values (courage, grace, the harmony of strength and beauty etc.) are being transmitted through the idealised human form.

### **Question 2**

Candidates enjoyed the role of patient teacher ('At first I would try to explain ...') and wrote in detail about works from different points in the classical period. Most were able to give detailed discussion of individual works. The best had the linguistic means to make comparisons, bringing out distinctions in posture and expression, and there were some impressive links to Greek thought. There might have been more on original context (location, function, painting) and on present-day presentation (the homogenizing effect of museums).

### **Question 3**

Candidates used appropriate examples of the body as an instrument for the expression of Christian ideas, from the Fall to the Crucifixion. There was some learned reference to *nuditas criminalis* etc., which was rewarded, particularly when candidate clearly showed they knew what these terms mean. This was not always the case: some plain statements about ideas concerning shame, purity etc. needed to be made at some point; beyond saying that Christianity views mankind as sinful, candidates need to go into particular sins (e.g. vanity) and explain their expression through visual imagery. The best answers combined knowledge at this level with confident and detailed discussion of individual works.

### **Question 4**

Candidates discussed a range of examples, usually but not entirely drawing on images of female nudity. Most answers were wholly or chiefly on painting, though the question allows for examples from sculpture and other media. As elsewhere in the paper, the question tests candidates' ability to articulate subtle points about brushwork, modelling, textures etc. Not all were able to develop points in this way. A preparatory tactic might be to take a key word like 'sensuality' and investigate what particular kinds of sensual effect we might find in a work and how they could be characterised.

### **Question 5**

There were some excellent answers on this, in which candidates showed a deep familiarity with key works by Giorgione, Titian and others. It was clear that there had been diligent reading of Clark's book, which might also explain the relative lack of later examples (Matisse, Modigliani, Freud etc.). There was much good discussion of the relation between image and viewer, in particular with regard to Manet. As with all compare and contrast questions, candidates do need to set up some comparative approach, not simply produce rehearsed material on individual works.

### **Question 7**

Several candidates chose this question, going into detail about subject matter, composition and other formal effects. The strongest answers made the most of the open-ended nature of the question and placed works in some historical and social context, relating them to wider fields such as fashion and gender issues. Candidates writing on photography need to show some familiarity with the distinct nature of this medium, and to make detailed remarks about lighting and the effects of black-and-white where relevant.

### **Question 8**

A few candidates attempted this question, which demands a high degree of clarity and detail when it comes to dealing with concepts. Particular examples were discussed in some detail, and candidates showed an awareness of the importance of the issues and an interest in exploring the demarcation between art and pornography. In a question like this, candidates are advised to take a paragraph to explore and define a key term like 'obscene'. They should not assume that they and the reader share the same understanding of the word at the outset.

**Topic 5: Still Life**

No candidates chose to answer any questions from this topic.

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<p><b>Paper 9799/04</b> <b>Personal Investigation</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

- Successful titles allow the focus to be narrowed, aiding the overall argument.
- Examiners look for evidence of personal engagement in the essay and in the viva.

## **General comments**

The process for the Personal Investigation began with the Outline Proposal Forms submitted in October. Proposals varied from long descriptive plans to brief notes about the aims of the research. As a rule it is recommended that these outlines should be between 300 and 500 words. The titles of the main books to be used in research can be included. It is useful if candidates outline their methods of research and an overall idea of the argument, although it is of course noted that research is organic and plans can change. Examiners are looking for focus and clarity and will advise ways to narrow the research and avoid pitfalls if at all possible.

Many schools ask about the cross over into the other papers. A holistic approach is welcomed and candidates can benefit enormously from going outside of their historical periods, but should they choose artists from the period they are studying for Papers 2 or 3 they must be aware that they cannot answer questions in Papers 2 and 3 which relate to their Personal Investigation.

This year, work was well presented on the whole and well illustrated with good clear images scanned into the documents. Bibliographies were comprehensive and candidates had in some cases undertaken visits and interviews which enhanced their research. An impressive amount of care had been taken in most cases. Many candidates wrote a rationale or introduction to explain the background and context and to make the piece more personal in terms of research. Foot noting was better this year. Candidates had clearly been given support from their teachers but the viva helped the Examiners to discern the level of personal engagement with the work.

Vivas were held in schools in May. Most candidates gave an impassioned presentation of their work. Candidates were asked to talk about their research and reading and to discuss their findings in an informal atmosphere. Vivas are not intended to be scary or intimidating and the candidates seemed to enjoy the experience. Candidates are not being tested on their memory of the material and may refer to their text whenever they like but some questions do require a degree of engagement with books read and research undertaken.

## **Specific titles**

This year the range of research was wide and frequently interdisciplinary. Some titles contained a question such as:

- What were Horace Walpole's objectives with Strawberry Hill House?
- To what extent are Canaletto's paintings architecturally accurate?

Others had a title followed by a question such as:

- Unfinished and yet complete. To what extent does the incompleteness of Michelangelo's unfinished sculpture enhance their impact?
- Dharavi, conscious design within chaos. To what extent does the design of the Dharavi slums consider its social needs?

These titles allowed focus to be narrowed at the outset. Some titles were broad and less conducive to an overall argument, such as:

- Edvard Munch; love and death
- Egon Schiele's interpretation of the Nude

An example of a title which might need to be channelled into a certain number of works or a period of the career of the artist is:

- Gods and Men; discuss Titian's depictions of mythological characters and stories

Many candidates approached their work through one trigger image and this helped to avoid too much breadth; for example:

- Epstein's The Rock Drill represents to de-humanising effect of modernity. Discuss.