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SCHOLARSHIP EXEMPLAR



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Scholarship 2023 Art History

Time allowed: Three hours
Total score: 24

ANSWER BOOKLET

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

Answer THREE questions from Question Booklet 93301Q: ONE from Section A, ONE from Section B, AND the compulsory question from Section C.

Write your answers in this booklet. Start your answer to each question on a new page. Carefully number each question.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–27 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (☒). This area may be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Section C, Question Seven: No art exists in a vacuum.

Artists are always inspired by, and learn from, their contemporaries and predecessors, as well as the world around them. These are the main ideas in this extract from Martin Gayford's "The Pursuit of Art: Travels, encounters, and revelations." Innovative ideas are never truly new—they are a synthesis of many inspirations that artists are surrounded by, reinterpreted through a unique lens. Art is imitation.

Some art draws a main inspiration from nature, like the works of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of mid-19th century English artists who sought to return to the naturalistic style of painting "pre-Raphael". Raphael is Gayford's main example of an artist who synthesised other people's work. But even these artists, who denounced him, are not purely inspired by nature—they still draw from many other sources.

John Everett Millais' 1850s work "Ophelia", based on the character from Shakespeare's "Hamlet", is a prime example. In this painting, the titular character lies partially submerged in a river, surrounded by flowers and leaves floating with her. Millais, in Pre-Raphaelite tradition, dedicated as much time to the flowers on the grassy riverbank in the upper half of the painting as he did to the titular subject herself, taking years to complete the work. This points to a fascination with nature, and considered observation of the natural world. However, the painting would not exist without Millais taking direct inspiration from William Shakespeare, the author of the play Millais' subject is found in, nor without Millais studying the works of artists like Michaelangelo; his predecessors in the tradition of works different to Raphael's. Just because nature is a key teacher, & inspiration, does not mean it is the only inspiration, and this artwork would not exist without artists who came before Millais. However, this also does not mean Millais' work was not

unique — he still has a distinctive, highly detailed, nature-oriented style of painting. This is another point Grayford touches on — synthesis does not mean a work is derivative, or something that is not still fresh.

This can also be seen in works by artists less inspired by the natural world, like Andy Warhol. His 1970s series of pop art works depicting Campbell's tomato soup cans is heavily inspired by ^{the design philosophy of} advertisements, with large-scale reproductions of the cans in flat, vibrant colours. Pop art is intrinsically linked to, and inspired by, mid-century advertising, ~~but~~ akin to ~~have~~ the pre-Raphaelite link to nature. Warhol's work is ~~a~~ inseparable from its inspirations, but still proved to be something unique at the time, resonating with audiences & spawning countless imitators. His art reimagines pre-existing concepts, as does all art, in an ~~an~~ overt way — you can take the ~~the~~ soup out of advertising, but you can't take the soup out of Warhol's works, ~~the~~ — but his reimagining of these concepts is reminiscent of ~~the~~ ^{that which occurs in} art as a whole, which Grayford purports is "how art works". Art cannot exist without an outside influence. Even Michaelangelo's Pieta (1500s) is inspired by the Bible, and all depictions of Christ that came before him.

// Another example of an artist creating a distinctive style heavily inspired by other people's work is Pablo Picasso, heralded as the creator of Cubism alongside Braque. His 1940 "Weeping Woman" painting depicts ~~an abstracted~~ ~~head~~ a female subject wailing in despair, her head and gesturing arms the focus of the piece. Two large tears protrude from her eyes. This work is in Picasso's signature, abstracted Cubist style, with simplified forms, thick black linework and bright colours. But these characteristics were not thought up by Picasso one day in an epiphany — rather Picasso took inspiration from sources such as African traditional masks he saw in a museum, which had the same characteristic simplified forms; and also ~~was~~ the work of his contemporaries, "collaborating happily" with Braque, for example.

Picasso interpreted these sources of inspiration through his own personal sensibilities, and through years of experimentation reached the stylistic attributes observed in "Weeping Woman". His innovative work was not innovative because it ^{only} featured ideas never seen before, it was innovative because the way the ideas were presented was wholly distinct from ~~the way~~ ^{and his collaborators} after his inspirations, as he ^{and his collaborators} conceived a new style as a patchwork of older ideas.

Overall, the main idea in Grayford's text is that art cannot be separated from its influences, as these influences are what make the art unique. Art movements, like Pre-Raphaelitism, Pop art, and Cubism, are reactions to different predecessors, collaborators, zeitgeists, and surroundings that each artist reinterprets in their own unique way. Relationships between artists, whether contemporaries like Brangue and Picasso or cross-temporal rivalries like Millais and Raphael, all contribute to art's characteristics and what makes different works unique. Art cannot exist without influence, and influence makes art innovative. Art is never found devoid of a source.

SECTION A NEXT PAGE →

Section A, Question Two - Line has many functions in art works.

Line has many functions in artworks. A line can be visible, a continuous stroke of a brush, a pen, or other implement. Or, a line can be metaphysical — the line of a composition, a ~~continuous~~ continuous contour, the ~~edge~~ edge between areas of light and shadow. Herein, ~~the~~ ~~only to lines in traditional networks, these are the most~~ ~~simply defined and easy to draw compared directly and~~ ~~the clearest lines of the presence or absence of a particular line.~~ "Line" will also be used in the ~~very~~ ^{but only in 2D contexts.} visible and invisible senses; ~~both~~ ~~are useful for visual art.~~ The absence of line also serves a function, as much as a clearly depicted line of paint would. A line can divide or unite a composition, form a picture in itself, and provide separation between the ^{"real"} world of the viewer, and the observable world of the artwork.

A first function of a line is as a barrier to forms in the absence of soft, detailed rendering. Lines provide definition where there would otherwise be none, such as in Botticelli's ~~1486~~ "The Birth of Venus". This painting depicts ~~the~~ mythological scene of Venus coming to shore, ~~it~~ standing in a shell ~~and~~ and being moved along by Zephyr, the wind god. Botticelli, in contrast to typical academic painters ^{like Leonardo da Vinci} who preferred careful tonal modelling to delineate form, employed the use of line to do the same. Venus' face is painted with limited tonal modelling, with ^{thin} brown lines of paint serving to provide detail, finely sculpting the goddess's facial features. Her hair is ~~not~~ similarly not rendered with soft colour transitions to denote highlights, but instead with the use of delicate golden lines to represent individual strands of her hair illuminated with sunlight, to separate the yellow of her hair from the turquoise of the sea by ~~feelin~~ creating a simplistic depth of field. The leaves of the trees in the top right of the composition are similarly rendered, with all detail coming

from Botticelli's outlining of individual leaves in the same golden colours, rather than creating detailed interplay of light & shadow across the entire canopy. These are not soft "brushstrokes", but hard lines, albeit thin and created through the use of paint. "Venus" is akin to a coloured ~~drawing~~^{outline}, created not through drawing with pencil but by using paint to perform the same function. In this way, a function of a line in a painting is to outline forms & provide simplistic clarity & depth to an artwork.

A second function of line in an artwork is that the line can become the artwork - artworks can have a basis in purely lines, with colour as a secondary tool and any form described only by the lines (ala Botticelli). Wassily Kandinsky's "Composition 8" (1928) is an abstract work inspired by the beauty of music, that is essentially a collection of lines interplaying with one another across the canvas, with some lines providing borders to shapes that are flatly coloured. Unlike Botticelli's "Venus", where the lines are not integral to the composition (they could be replaced with more rendered paint and the overall piece would look similar), "Composition 8" is a work where the lines provide the absolute foundation & rhythm of a piece, as they guide the composition & are also the primary subject. Similar to this is Vincent van Gogh's ^{post-}Impressionist work "Starry Night" (1890s). In this piece, the view from the asylum window Gogh painted it from, line is similarly the main basis of the artwork. The brushstrokes are linear, and colours do not mix on the canvas, instead allowing the proximity of the various lines of colour to mix in the viewer's eye. There are other compositional elements like colour of course, but the optical mixing ~~is~~ only works due to the clearly delineated brushstrokes, like the circular lines that radiate from every star in the painting. Line serves the foundational basis for many artworks, which would be vastly different without the focus on this formal element, that influences other elements like composition.

Another function of a line can^{also} be felt ~~in~~ in its absence—lines tidily separate the real and unreal. In Claude Monet's "Poplars" (1881), an ^{impressionist} study of the interplay of light and ~~these~~ trees in a park Monet frequented, there are no lines at all—in the sense of a distinct, hard continuous ~~stroke~~ stroke of an implement. Impressionists believed that nature had no lines, and light was what defined forms instead. This allows Monet's hazy poplar trees, blending into the lilac sky beyond, to create the sense that the viewer is looking into another world beyond the canvas—a snapshot of a particular moment, the "impression" of the light onto the artwork. By choosing to not use line, Monet employs one of its functions—delimiting the real and the ~~unreal~~ reproduction—in the alternate way, to get ~~the~~ ~~unreal~~ to fully capture the moment as realistically as possible. Morning fog observes clear lines, and using them would be contrary to the impression being conveyed.

Overall, lines have many functions in artworks. Lines can outline forms in place of realistic rendering, like in Botticelli's "Venus"—On the ~~other~~ other side of this property, the absence of clear lines can draw a viewer ~~into~~ into an artwork, and allow them to imagine the depicted moment as a window through time, like in Monet's "Poplars". Line can also serve the foundational function of an artwork, from providing an avenue for optical mixing, in "Starry Night" to being ~~the~~ the representation of an abstract idea ~~in~~ in "Composition 8". Line is a key formal element, and the choice of how and where to employ it is integral to artworks, as it can take many forms & undergo many functions.

SECTION B NEXT PAGE →

Section B, Question Four: Art does not replicate the real world.

All artwork replicates the real world in some way, from faithful reproductions of everyday life to a stylised depiction of ~~an~~^{any} event, and even magnifications of aspects of the natural world & human society.

A "replication" does not need to be realistic, or exact - it only needs to seek to represent an aspect of the real world, which all art does in one way or another.

The most basic interpretation of art representing the "real world" would be an artwork that is ~~more~~ highly realistic & unembellished, such as Millet's 1830s painting "The Gleaners". This is, aptly, a Realist artwork - Millet sought to faithfully depict the lives of ordinary people, seeing them as worthy of being painted. "Gleaners" showcases three peasant women in the French countryside, "gleaning" - collecting wheat left behind after the main harvest, which can be seen progressing far in the background, ~~as~~ whereas these women are left behind to gather scraps to feed their families. Millet uses a palette of browns, ~~blues~~ greens, and other natural colours. The women are depicted going staunchly about their task, with hidden faces, in ~~order to~~ an unembellished fashion - this is not ~~the representation~~^{a dramatisation} of these three women, but a ~~an~~ display of a regular activity. Millet's usage of techniques ~~is~~ from colour to rendering (there is soft tonal modelling in the women's clothes) all speak to a desire to ~~faithfully depict~~^{represents aspects of the} accurately showcase a real life event. This painting certainly ~~represents~~^{represents aspects of the} real world.

But art does not have to be realistic to serve as a replication.

Pablo Picasso's 1937 Cubist work "Guernica" is, like "Gleaners", based on a real life event - this time, the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica. Picasso's ^{"Guernica"} work is heavily, typically stylised. Anatomy is

in the foreground

of terrified people

simplified, with arms ~~that~~^{resembling} semicircles and the legs of a horse depicted as a series of squares & triangles. Their painting is devoid of colour, and ~~these~~^{these} forms are conveyed through thick, black lines. Lighting is subjective, with a ~~the~~ broken light bulb ^{at the top of the canvas} illuminating the ^{background} scene below in a triangle of brightness, while figures ^{both} outside this triangle and inside it are depicted in an equal shade of grey. All of these elements are unrealistic—but Gernica nevertheless replicates aspects of the real world precisely because of the lack of "realism." The terror, for example, that the figures in the painting are depicted feeling, and ^{that} is conveyed also through the general chaotic atmosphere & daunting scale, is a very real & human emotion. Embellishment serves to enhance the negative negativity of the painting, in order to connect with the audience & make the experience of these villagers more confronting to them. It also replicates the real world by depicting a contemporary event, using stylisation ~~in the same way~~ ^{reporting on a specific} a newspaper would use a specific photograph—to best communicate the horror of the situation. ~~Neoclassical~~ Paintings like David's Neoclassical "Napoleon crossing the Alps" depict a real life event in realistic style but add plenty of embellishments in order to serve the needs of the audience (in this case, a propagandist glorification of the emperor), ~~which~~ nevertheless is a replication of reality in at least one aspect.

What about art which ~~is~~ not ~~not~~ based in any realistic setting? Marina Abramovic's 1972 work "Rhythm Zero" is a performance art piece, wherein the artist sat in a gallery with an array of ⁷² objects—a ^{loaded} gun, pearls, playing cards—and instructed passers-by to do whatever they wanted with them. This work does not depict ~~an~~ everyday life, or a particular ^{newsworthy} event, or even a realistic situation, but it still replicates the real world—~~based~~ In reality, what would people do to a woman they don't know, with no consequences? Despite not copying a particular subject ^{physically} or environment, "Rhythm Zero" captures an emotional, abstract subject akin to "Gernica". That subject

is human free will, ~~the~~ impulse, and conscience, as well as the ideas of how it is socially acceptable to treat a woman; whether she's "asking for it," ~~or if they're~~, or whether she is^{treated as} an object ~~to~~ with no agency or even a say in what is happening, and if ~~asked~~^{giving permission} is the same as giving endorsement. These are all very real concepts, replicated^{here} in a controlled situation, although not a naturally occurring one. Even works like Barnett Newman's "Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, & Blue?" series (1966-1971) replicate an aspect of the real world—colour. Despite being large scale, abstract canvases consisting only of red, yellow & blue in different proportions, the primary colours are still an aspect of real life. Newman has magnified them to elevate their importance in the work, but they are not elements unfounded in reality. ~~aspects of~~ All art, even more abstract or performance based^{works}, is influenced by reality, and replicates it in some way, shape, or form.

A replication of reality does not have to mean a perfect depiction of real life in exactly the way it is observed with no changes or human reimagining. Even photography requires creative input to a degree. All artwork replicates the real world in some manner, because all art has a basis in the real world, whether that basis is emotional, physical, temporal, or a magnification of ~~a~~ ~~particular facet of~~ reality, like colour. Art cannot avoid replicating reality, as reality is key to all art even if it is interpreted through an endlessly abstracted lens. To quote Martin Gayford, art is "an unending process of imitation"; and any imitation has a basis in reality, just as any "faithful" replication has a particular idea in mind. To replicate the real world, an artwork can replicate a small facet of it ~~or~~, try to encompass all of human & nonhuman existence, or compromise in the middle. And no art can avoid entirely any replication of the real world, because art is inherently inspired by an artist's interpretation or exploration of reality.

Scholarship

Subject: Art History

Standard: 93301

Total score: 15

Q	Score	Marker commentary
2	06	Extensive understanding of line was evident in Botticelli and Kandinsky and the discussion on Monet was thoughtful. There was evidence of high-level analysis and critical response to the question while communication was high-level, cohesive and focused.
4	05	Perceptively redefining 'replication' worked well for the manageability of this question – an approach adopted by very few candidates. Extensive knowledge was evident over a varied range of works demonstrating skills in visual analysis. Some unevenness held this back from a 6.
7	04	This was a fluent argument engaging, albeit narrowly, with some of Gayford's ideas. Communication was clear and the discussion would have been further strengthened with more detail of artistic sources (e.g., Raphael, Millais), and further explanation of the links between artists, and artists and nature.