Assessment Schedule – 2007

Scholarship Art History (93301)

SECTION A

QUESTION ONE

How important is the use of light and shade in creating an illusion of depth in art works?

Refer to art works from two or more chronological periods or geographical regions in your answer.

- An illusion of depth is often sought by artists working in two-dimensional media such as painting and printmaking. The depiction of light and shade greatly assists in creating the illusion of three-dimensional effects such as the roundness of body forms and solidity of objects. For example the muscular form of Adam in *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel ceiling, 1508–12.
- Light and shade can also be important in three-dimensional media such as sculpture and architecture where recessed areas are contrasted with projected areas, creating areas of shadow in the recesses. For example, the undulating flow of the façade in Gaudí's *Casa Milà*, 1910, has contrasting light and shade effects.
- Apart from light and shade, other devices do create an illusion of depth (such as foreshortening, colours appearing to recede or push forward towards the picture plane), but these are less consistent contributors to the illusion of depth. For example, in Tintoretto's *Discovery of the Body of St. Mark,* 1562, the extreme foreshortening provides a means of measuring the depth of the picture space and gives a viewer a sense of vast depth, but the device is clearly illusionary and the simultaneous use of contrasting light and shade serves to support the sense of a three-dimensional space in which the figures exist.
- Light and shade have purposes beyond creating an illusion of depth, such as chiaroscuro used to create drama eg Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath,* or light and shade used to highlight or diminish the gestures, expressions and objects in a painting, but its other purposes do not take away from the fact that light and shade are important in creating an illusion of depth. For example Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* c.1596–1600, Leonardo's *St. John the Baptist*, and Hopper's *Nighthawks,* 1942, all use light to draw attention to key faces and gestures, but they also use light and shade to create the illusion of the three-dimensional environment which the figures occupy.
- In sculpture and architecture, light might be incorporated into the design so that light and shade are created by 'holes' in the sculpture or building which create contrasts of solid form and space, eg Henry Moore, *Two Forms* 1966; Gaudí, the towers of *Sagrada Família.*
- In black and white prints, contrasts of light and dark areas are the means by which forms are made identifiable and hence the means by which space is alluded to. For example, the sphere in Dürer's *Melancholia,* 1514, is indicated primarily by the way light and shadow modulate the sphere's surface.

QUESTION TWO

Composition is the art of arranging elements in a decorative manner.

Justify or refute this statement with reference to art works by a range of artists.

Justify

- Composition involves arranging figures and objects in an art work, and where that composition is organised with the intention of creating a 'successful' or satisfactory effect, it could be said to be 'decorative'. Decorative might also be defined as 'pleasing to the eye', or 'balanced'.
- It is straightforward to find numerous examples of balanced, harmonious compositions where the artist has clearly considered aspects such as symmetry, framing the composition, utilising the picture space, or architectural space, and avoiding impressions of clutter. For example Raphael's *Marriage of the Virgin*, 1504. These are decorative in their ability to please the eye.
- It is more difficult to find examples of 'successful' artists for whom composition is deliberately non-decorative. For example Malevich's *Red Square*, while asymetrical, still floats decoratively on its plain ground with sufficient framing space to avoid any strong sense of imbalance.

Refute

- While compositions are often balanced and well-thought out, most artists did not wish for their compositions to be seen as 'decorative'. 'Decorative' implies a deliberate 'prettiness' in arranging elements and few artists gave that much priority. Even where an artist such as Miriam Schapiro created a symmetrical, pleasing composition

in *Barcelona Fan,* 1979, her key intentions related to her feminist ideas in creating a work of femmage that celebrated the 'decorative' and skilled work of female craftswomen.

- Rather than for decoration, composition is the art of arranging elements in a manner that successfully projects the key ideas an artist wishes to convey. Therefore an artist might place a key figure centrally with less significant figures at the margins of an art work. For example, the figures of Christ and God occupy a central position in Dürer's *Adoration of the Trinity*, 1511, while saints and churchmen are positioned in blocks on either side and below these central figures. As an unimportant observer in the work, Dürer includes himself in the bottom right of the painting.
- Composition in architecture is often strongly intertwined with the arrangement of interior spaces in order that the building functions successfully. Decorative aspects may be limited to parts of a façade or an entranceway.
- Composition in the art of some cultures derives primarily from cultural traditions and rituals rather than being used for decorative effect, eg arrangement of carvings of ancestors in a whare.

QUESTION THREE

Very few artists explore 'colour for colour's sake'.

Discuss this idea with reference to art works by a range of artists.

- The concept of 'colour for colour's sake' could be discussed in terms of
  - colour being a primary agent in a work, and / or
  - colour selected for its aesthetic qualities, and / or
  - colour explored by an artist to determine its potential.
- Colour may be very important in an art work but that does not mean that colour is employed just for the joy of it being 'colour'.
- Colour serves many functions – such functions mean that colour cannot just be considered to be selected for the sake of colour:
  - 'cool' and 'warm' colours create an atmosphere in a work that may be, for example 'rational / intellectual' for cool colours or 'passionate' for warm colours
  - where different colours are contrasted, colour distinguishes one object / form from another
  - symbolic eg black referencing doom or death, yellow referencing light and hope.
- Some artists appear to indulge in colour, for example Kandinsky's exuberant use of colour, but even then colour has a much stronger purpose than just being favoured by the artist. Kandinsky viewed colour as having symbolic values such as in *Improvisation 31 – Sea Battle* where blue is regarded as a heavenly colour.
- Orphic artists explored the potential of colour and how colours were to act on each other reciprocally 'in simultaneous contrasts', eg Robert Delaunay *Circular Forms: Sun and Moon,* 1912–13.
- Colour is important in High Renaissance works since careful selection of colours contributed to the overall harmony of the work, but it was not 'colour for colour's sake' ie colour could contribute to a stable composition through balancing colour weightings.
- Some feminists select colour on the basis of their supposed femininity or masculinity, eg pink as a female colour.
- Colour used for its own sake, as a decorative façade or to decorate interiors, can be seen in some architectural designs. For example the red and yellow spheres that decorate the roof surface of *The Ark*, Doncaster, 2001.

QUESTION FOUR

Subject matter is the principal vehicle through which ideas are conveyed.

Justify or refute this idea with reference to a range of art works.

Justify

- The phrase 'subject matter' may be interpreted in the broadest sense as comprising a narrative, or a depiction of an event or situation, or the content of a work, or the subject (ie the persons featured, as in portraiture). Subjects are based upon, or reference, ideas that are able to be expressed by the artist.
- Subject matter is often employed to document contemporary or historical circumstances and such circumstances are the result of ideas that people had at the time, eg documenting lives of saints expresses ideas about their piety; documenting concerns about contemporary issues expresses ideas on the perceived problems that exist.

Refute

- Ideas can be conveyed without the need for the artist to depict subject matter. For example Munch in *Scream* wished to convey the emotion of a scream, which he felt "pass through nature". There is no individual person who is the subject of the work and no elaborate narrative for a person experiencing this scream.
- Semi-abstract and abstract works often contain ideas that cannot be equated to subject matter eg Pollock's *Full Fathom Five,* 1947, references the sea and concepts of depth.
- Not all art media are suited to conveying subjects, yet ideas may still be conveyed. For example, most architecture does not reference subject matter but may express ideas such as grandeur, prestige, modest living, modernity etc.
- Ideas can be conveyed, not through subject matter, but through
  - selection of colours, for example, Hotere's use of black evokes "associations of deprivation or anguish" (Dunn, *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting*, p.120)
  - pattern, for example tribal affiliations
  - motifs, for example Gordon Walters' use of the koru motif.

SECTION B

QUESTION FIVE

Artists respond to the hopes and fears of their viewers.

Discuss this idea with reference to art works by a range of artists.

- Artists have many intentions when creating their works but some focus upon raising the optimism of their viewers, eg Stuart Davis, while some focus upon instilling fear into their viewers eg Bosch.
- A range of religious subjects focus upon the hopes and fears of the viewing congregation. Saints are shown in their martyrdom to illustrate that the worship of Christ is worthy of personal sacrifice eg St. Sebastian's arrows, St. Peter's death on the upside-down cross. Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* illustrates a mass of bodies suspended between hell and paradise where fear is evident in the faces of the sinners.
- Often artists combine hope and fear within one work to illustrate purity and sin, good and evil. For example, in several of Bosch's triptychs where Paradise occupies the left wing and Hell the right wing (eg *Garden of Earthly Delights*).
- Some artists focus more on optimistic subjects eg David Hockney in his *Splash* series, while other artists place more emphasis on pointing out the difficulties people face and therefore may play on the fears of their viewers eg Munch, Francis Bacon.
- Rather than an artist choosing to address 'fears and hopes', commissions often dictate the nature of an art work. For example, portraiture is a genre that frequently exposes the perceived best characteristics of the sitter and any fears or worries the sitter may have are left out of the imagery, eg, Giovanni Bellini's *Doge Loredan* c.1502. There are, nevertheless, exceptions to this, such as the worried looking *Oswolt Krel* 1499 by Dürer, or the downcast Māori depicted by Goldie on the assumption that Māori were a dying race, eg *Tumai Tawhiti: The Last of the Cannibals*, 1913.
- Rather than a response to potential viewers, personal circumstances may lead to artists adopting a particular approach to subject matter. For example, Kirchner's confident works prior to World War I (eg *Figures Striding into the Sea,* 1912) in comparison to those done during the war (*The Drinker Self-Portrait,* 1915).
- Political circumstances often stimulate artists to address contemporary issues, which frequently leads to an acknowledgement of the fears or concerns of their viewers. For example Käthe Kollwitz illustrates political messages through engaging the viewer's emotions and fears, eg *Germany's Children are Starving*. Emare Karaka in *Race Relations Triptych,* 1988, conveys her concerns to the viewers through inclusion of motifs such as the skeleton.
- Artists in modern periods may not deliberately seek to respond to their audience's needs, but their occupation in time and place leads to an understanding of their contemporaries and a natural affinity with their needs, eg Pop artists often echo the mood of optimism that was felt in the 1960s in America – a brash, confident consumer age. New Zealand artists such as Nigel Brown show understanding of the hopes and fears of many New Zealanders, eg his *From Suburbia* series "turns the urban fringe into a stage upon which Everyman plays out his hopes and fears". (W. Brown, *100 New Zealand Paintings*, 1995, p.10)
- Sculptures and buildings normally require substantial investment and therefore may be more purposeful in meeting the desires and needs of those who pay for them. The response to fears may be subtly done by architects who create buildings that provide comfort to their occupiers. For example Le Corbusier may have alleviated the fears of occupants of his *Unité d'Habitation,* 1952, when he included safe play and recreation areas on the roof of the apartment block.

QUESTION SIX

Painting and sculpture are outmoded and unnecessary.

Use a range of art works to demonstrate your views on this statement.

- In considering the question of whether painting and sculpture are outmoded and unnecessary, one could look at the purposes they serve today, eg paintings still grace offices and homes to decorate the walls and many paintings serve to inspire or comfort the occupants of those buildings; sculptures are still commissioned for parks and private gardens for aesthetic purposes, commemorative purposes, etc.
- The word 'unnecessary' might suggest that society places less importance on art (painting and sculpture) than it once did and consideration could be given to what has replaced it, eg movies, materialism, adventure activities, work.
- The word 'outmoded' suggests that there are now other methods of creating visual images or three-dimensional forms, eg the ability of digital technology to provide alternate methods for creating art works.

- Some art media are better suited than others to adaptation through digital technology eg two-dimensional art works can be created using digital technology whereas three-dimensional art works (sculptures) may be designed using digital technology, but in most cases the work itself needs to be built from tangible materials.
- Digital technology offers scope to the artist to modify works endlessly before their final production.
- When photography was invented it was said that the art of painting would be unnecessary and that painting would die, but it has proven to have staying power. Initially photography only offered the possibilities of black and white images, so it was not in a position to replace the colourful possibilities of painting. Similarly, when film was invented, there was concern that live production theatre might dwindle but the genre still remains. It is likely, therefore, that digital technology will be an additional medium available to artists rather than a medium that renders painting and sculpture as unnecessary.
- Painting and sculpture can adapt to encompass some of the features offered by digital technology. For example, the use of computers to mechanise sculptural forms or the use of digital imaging to form part of a sculpture, eg Jaume Plensa's *Crown Fountain*, Millennium Park, Chicago contains a giant LED screen within two glass-brick towers. Digital technology enables the projection of a continuous play of various faces of Chicagoans onto the sculpture.

QUESTION SEVEN

Art is about interpretation not imitation.

Examine this statement through a discussion of a range of art works.

- The word 'interpretation' may be explained in terms of the way an art work acquires meaning whether intentionally by the artist, or as a consequence of the reading given to it by the viewer.
- The word 'imitation' may be explained in terms of the objectives of artists from some eras and places to recreate or translate an image, or idea, in art media such as painting or marble. It may also be regarded as a falsity – a mere copy.
- It may be argued that it is very difficult for artists to 'imitate' things that exist around them since the materials they use are rarely those of the original object. Paintings cannot imitate real things, unless those things are two-dimensional. The medium of painting enables illustration or representation of real things.
- Some artists have deliberately made or painted mock objects to bring such objects to our notice. For example, Super-realist artists such as Richard Estes and Duane Hanson have created art works that appear to imitate real life, but inevitably their works are an interpretation of life that goes beyond mere imitation since these artists select imagery and re-work it. For example in Duane Hanson's *Tourists*, 1970, he makes a selection of clothes and accessories for the tourists to wear.
- The strive for naturalism in Renaissance times was important, but it was selective naturalism, for example interpretations of biblical subjects set in environments that had the appearance of being natural settings but were manipulated to suit the subject, eg Piero della Francesca's *Discovery and Proving of the True Cross* references Italian Renaissance architecture in the buildings on the right, and illustrates the town of Sansepolcro in the upper left. Such physical circumstances did not exist in near proximity in the real landscape.
- The desire of Ancient Greek sculptors to depict the Gods inevitably led to an interpretation of their ideas on what Gods and Goddesses looked like, which generally resulted in idealised images of humankind.
- When architects adopt styles from the past, architecture comes close to imitation, for example Neo-Classical or Neo-Gothic designs, but materials, or layout, or scale, or details differ from the original Classical models.
- Photography offers the capacity to capture real-life moments but the resultant art works are not imitation – they are 'real' images of events. Manipulation of such images through framing, collaging, altering contrasts and colour etc take the works beyond any suggestion of 'imitation'.

QUESTION EIGHT

The function of art is to educate and question.

Use a range of art works to demonstrate your views on this statement.

Views in support of the statement:

- The didactic role of art is significant for some art periods and movements, eg it plays an important role in the Renaissance period to inform viewers about biblical stories (eg Bosch's *Temptation of St. Anthony)*, or about contemporary events (eg Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*)
- A great deal of art serves to inform the viewer. For example, Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* provides information about the 39 women represented in the place settings through careful selection of symbols representative of each woman. Viewers may have a little or a lot of knowledge about these particular women, but the place settings will have added to that knowledge.

- Art works often educate their viewers about the viewpoint of the artist. For example Kirchner's views on city life are expressed in his rather repressive city scenes of Berlin women. He questions the increasing industrialisation of Germany and its effects on Berlin and other cities.
- Imagery is used in advertising to 'educate' the viewer about the benefits of a product. The relationship between the product and its uses to mankind are often emphasised. Details of the product's potential benefits are illustrated. Richard Hamilton highlights this function of imagery in his mock creation of a manufactured item *The Critic Laughs.*
- Renaissance artists frequently depict subjects that question matters of faith, eg St Anthony's faith is tested and questioned in Bosch's *Temptation of St Anthony*.
- Modern artists often question government policy, eg Hotere in his *Aramoana* series.
- Artists might also question the nature of art and its audience, eg Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* 1917.

Views in opposition to the statement:

- The didactic role is often less important than it may seem, since the potential viewers are often the patrons who have commissioned the work to celebrate an event that they are already very familiar with, eg Pope Julius II himself directed the selection of the subject of the *Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple* for his private audience hall in the Vatican.
- Many Renaissance works were commissioned for private, or limited viewing in the homes of wealthy merchants or key Church figures. Such men were usually well educated, so their primary reason for having the works was not "to educate" but to demonstrate their status and wealth and capacity to extend patronage to eminent artists, and to decorate buildings.
- Educating and questioning may not be essential since viewers may have a range of prior knowledge and understanding of issues that is brought to bear when viewing the works. In many cases artists rely on viewers to have a contextual knowledge to recognise the messages in the work, hence the function of art may not be to 'educate' but to reiterate viewpoints about an issue.
- Most Renaissance viewers would have been well aware of principal figures in both biblical subjects and works with contemporary references. The repetition of key biblical stories, and an oral tradition of religious knowledge, would have meant that viewers would know key associations and messages in the works they viewed. For example the figures of the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary would have been instantly recognisable to followers of the Catholic faith.
- In various cultures the art is understood from generation to generation and is learned through a lifetime, not necessarily because artists have the intention to educate, but because the traditions of a culture are known.
- Art has other functions beyond 'education' such as decoration, celebration, commemoration. For example Duccio's *Maestà* 1308–11 was commissioned to celebrate and decorate Siena's Cathedral; the building of the Doge's Palace, Venice 1348–1427 symbolises the republic.

Response to questions (marked for each question)

Performance Descriptor 1	Performance Descriptor 2	Performance Descriptor 3	Performance Descriptor 4	Not Achieved
7–8	**5–6**	**3–4**	**1–2**	**0**
Exceptional knowledge & understanding of discipline **Shown through eg:** • **Highly developed critical response to art works & contexts** (eg perceptive/ searching analysis and synthesis) • **Comprehensive knowledge** – depth and breadth of knowledge relevant to question • **Critical reflection** on evidence from varied sources • **Confidence in knowledge, understanding & judgement** (eg astute evidence, expansive argument, considered interpretations) • **Independence & originality of approach/response** (eg lateral thinking, alternative ideas, flexibility)	**Exceptional knowledge & understanding of discipline** **Shown through eg:** • **Highly developed critical response to art works & contexts** (eg perceptive/ searching analysis and synthesis) • **Comprehensive knowledge** - depth and breadth of knowledge relevant to question • **Critical reflection** on evidence from varied sources	**Extensive knowledge & understanding of discipline** **Shown through eg:** • Broad relevant knowledge • Depth of understanding • Well developed critical response to art works/ contexts • Reference to appropriate evidence (May be some irrelevancies at this level)	**Broad knowledge & understanding of the discipline** **Shown through eg:** • Breadth of knowledge • Reference to evidence • Skills of critical response to art works / contexts (responses in this group are often generalised rather than specifically detailed, there may be weak engagement with topic, they may not address all sections of question – they will reference some specific works)	**Question not addressed** • Lacks evidence of critical response
(7s may be a lighter on critical response, response may be less even)	(5s may not be able to sustain response, critical response may be uneven)	(3s may be marked by poor choice of examples, uneven critical response, will show some evidence of extensive knowledge)	(1s – response more descriptive, uneven, may be insufficient works/artists, inaccuracies)	

Communication of arguments (marked across paper)

7–8	5–6	3–4	1–2	0
Outstanding communication skills, ie argument: • is mature, confident cohesive and focused on the question • demonstrates clarity of thought • is expansive and sustained in both questions • shows flair	**Excellent communication skills, ie argument:** • is confident cohesive and focused on the question • demonstrates clarity of thought • sustained in both	**Effective communication skills, ie argument:** • is coherent and relevant • demonstrates some clarity of thought • is sustained in both questions	**Clear communication skills, ie argument:** • is coherent • is generalised • clear communication in both	**Communication lacks clarity**
7 – not sustained / lacks flair	5 – not sustained / uneven	3 not sustained / uneven	1 not sustained in both	