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SCHOLARSHIP EXEMPLAR



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

Scholarship 2015 Art History

2.00 p.m. Monday 30 November 2015

Time allowed: Three hours

Total marks: 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 TWO questions from Question Booklet 93301Q: ONE from Section A, and ONE from Section B.

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.

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

SECTION A - QUESTION THREEASSESSOR'S
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No piece of art is ever created in isolation; it is always a manifestation of all the contexts an artist has been exposed to, culminating at the point of conception of the artwork. Art, then, is largely determined by a multitude of powerful influences, ranging from the religious context of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes to the New Zealand culture that inspired the installation art of Bill Culbert. No two pieces of art will ever be the same, then, as all artists undergo a completely individual set of influences throughout their lives and careers."

Perhaps the influence that has affected the largest proportion of works throughout the history of art is that of religion. For centuries, the Church was one of, if not the most powerful force in the Western state, and they held a great deal of money at this time too. As such, they were able to commission a large number of artworks to display God's glory to their often illiterate patrons. Works such as Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel exemplify this. Art could also create a sense of divine order, as seen in Leonardo da Vinci's 1520 rendition of The Last Supper, where Jesus' heavenly serenity is spatially juxtaposed with the disorder of mankind, symbolised by the overlapping forms of his disciples at either side. Yet

one of the most awe-inspiring pieces of art in history - Giotto's fresco paintings on the interior of the Arena Chapel - came about because of a sense of religious guilt. Enrico Scrovegni, the commissioner of the chapel, had committed the sin of usury throughout his financial life and was worried that his deeds may not earn him a place in Heaven. To make right his sins and appease God, he asked the artist Giotto to paint the life, works and passion of Jesus Christ on the interior of his private chapel. Unlike his predecessors who had painted in the Byzantine style, Giotto achieved greater realism and emotional capacity in his work by including a more literal sense of space and (rather than hierarchical figure size) and more detailed expression. This is exemplified in the 'Raising of Lazarus' fresco, where the overlapping figures and incredulous expressions of the onlooking Jews create a realistic impression of wonder at God's mercy to Lazarus. This is the same mercy that Scrovegni hoped God would bless him with as a result of his commission of the chapel. Religion, then, was a powerful influence on art throughout history, and one that inspired many artworks for a variety of reasons. 1)

Economic conditions have also played a powerful role in creating contexts for art, and specifically for the development of art as a medium. In the mid-to-late 19th Century in France, it was the

only way to make a career out of art was to be accepted by the state-owned Salon, which had a strict set of rules; anything non-representational, or with an ignoble subject matter, would likely be denied entry to the Salon's exhibitions, and as a result would likely remain unsold. A small group of artists, including Monet, Renoir and Degas, became dissatisfied with these constraints, as well as the fact that the Salon was for all purposes the only economically viable way of earning a living from their craft. Their new style, which they called Impressionism, was not allowed entry into the Salon; they pooled their resources to create a 'Salon de Refusé' as a result, to gain viewership for their new style of art. This exhibition was exhibited eight times between 1874 and 1886, and gained great popularity in the process. Part of the appeal was the emotional content of the paintings; the impressionists, as noted by a critic, captured 'the sensation of a landscape' rather than strictly representing the landscape itself. This, as can be seen in Monet's 1872 'Impression Sunrise', included using fast painterly brush strokes, and depicting colours as they appeared in a fleeting moment; the paintings were completed 'en plein air' rather than being taken to the studio. One of the reasons for this was due to the fact that they saw colour as being a temporal rather than inherent property of an object. As seen in Monet's 1890-91 'Haystacks' series, the

colour of even a dull subject matter such as a haystack continually changes at different times of the day and year. While this is widely accepted today, it was in complete contradiction to the ideals of the Salon at the time, which as stated controlled the economic conditions for art at the time. However, artists such as Monet played their part in removing this strict economic influence, setting the scene for a more diverse range of influences to follow in coming years. /

The growing social appreciation for art in its non-representational capacity as a result of the Salon de Refusé's removal of the powerful economic constraints of the Salon paved the way for a number of diverse social ideologies, each with their own ideas on art. One of the most potent social influences on art was that of the growing in popularity of hedonistic lifestyles in Paris, which was notorious as being the 'epicentre of sin' at the time, and drew many young artists as a result. This lifestyle brought the advent of a style known as 'Fauvism', taking its name from 'Le Faus' or 'the wild beasts'. This movement used rich and vibrant colours in a subjective rather than representational manner, to achieve great emotional capacity in art. Matisse's 1905-06 'Le Bonheur de vivre' ('The Joy of Life') depicts a number of nude figures in an Arcadian landscape, manifesting the hedonistic

lifestyle enjoyed by him and other similar artists. The work uses has a distinct focus on yellow and ~~other~~ red hues with very bright values, to connote the vibrancy and excitement of the lifestyle. In addition, the figures are painted with smooth and flowing bodily curves to emphasise their beauty. DeRain said of his art in this style: 'We treated colours like sticks of dynamite'. The overindulgence in these bright and luscious colours represents the indulgent nature of the lifestyle as a whole, with the seeking of bodily pleasures being the main focus of the movement. This is a clear example, then, of how social factors have a powerful influence on art, with the lifestyles of Matisse and DeRain and others in their peer group directly impacting the content and stylistic characteristics of their art. //

Art has also often been utilised to make statements in protest of political decisions or ideologies; when words of the oppressed fail, art can seek a response from those in power. Beckmann's 1918 painting 'The Night' is such an example of how times of political instability can powerfully influence art. It came out of the German political climate as the war was drawing to a close and civilians were taking the full consequences of oppression and poverty that came from their country losing the war. The claustrophobic composition of the painting depicts

men who have presumably entered a house and raped
 and abused the inhabitants. The dull colour scheme, with
 key colours of yellow and red representing sickness
 and violence respectively, is a manifestation of the
 malaise of the society that has been ravaged
 by war, by a government who did not stop
 and seek consent from its people. Beckmann also
 uses dark outlines for the characters in a
 reference to the old Gothic style of woodcuts,
 and to further convey the darkness and horror
 felt by the people. Similarly, Picasso's 1937
 'Guernica' makes a powerful political statement
 regarding the futility of war. It was a result
 of Picasso's horror at the bombing of his
 native town of Guernica in the same year
 as a terror exercise by the Luftwaffe. The
 massive mural utilizes fragmented shapes and forms
 to represent how war can utterly tear a society
 apart, and its monochromatic colour scheme can
 be seen as displaying the stark contrast between
 life and death that humanity is reduced to in
 times of war. This brutal and perhaps animalistic
 quality is manifested in the depiction of a
 bull, standing staunch with a neutral expression
 on its face while the rest of the
 figures are tormented by destruction. This is a
~~repre~~ ^{repre} pays homage to the Spanish nationalist
 tradition of bull fighting; instead of the matador
 prevailing heroically over the bull, however, only

The wall is left standing while humanity is wiped out by its own hands. This twisted sense of fate makes a potent statement about the horrors of war; it may be seen, then, that political decisions regarding war are significant influences on various artworks. //

Finally, a return to our own country's shores displays the more positive influences that culture has on our artists. As a bi-cultural nation, we create an interesting environment for our artists to produce within. Bill Culbert's 'Front Door Out Back', a multi-room piece of installation art exhibited in Venice in 2013, creates a dichotomy of old and new by infusing old, discarded pieces of furniture and other objects with fluorescent light bulbs to create a striking and vibrant piece. The part of the exhibition includes these lights scattered around empty Anchor light-proof milk bottles; this creates a symbolic acknowledgement of both our farming background as a nation and our pride in innovation and Kiwi ingenuity. Commissioner Jenny Harper, who directs the Christchurch art gallery, commented on Culbert's 'transformation of discarded objects... into a sense of "otherness"' and called this process 'uplifting'. Elsewhere, iconic New Zealand illustrator Dick Frizzell's print 'Mickey to Tiki' (no date) creates an interesting conglomeration of the tikanga (culture) of Māori

and Europeans within our country. The well-known Disney anthropomorphic cartoon character Mickey Mouse is connected to a traditional Māori tiki figure by a series of iterated outlines, showing in a humorous fashion how our tikanga is not entirely different from traditional Western culture. The viewer questions themselves: do they see cultural integration as a positive thing that we as a society should work towards? Both of these pieces, then, show how we as a society are capable of producing potent and expressive art that is different from that of the rest of the world because of our culture and the influence it has on our artists. //

This exploration of a variety of artworks, from Giotto to Cubism, has shown that all art is influenced by a number of powerful factors, whether this is religion, economic or political conditions, or society and its culture. The art produced as a result of these influences is inseparable from its context; it must be viewed through the lens of the factors that helped to create it, and only then may it be truly appreciated. //

This essay received 4 marks because despite some confusion over the Salon de Refuses and the Impressionist exhibitions, there is clear evidence of broad knowledge (rather than extensive knowledge). There is some evidence of visual analysis (e.g. Beckman's use of colour and outline) but to achieve a higher grade, more specific analysis would be needed.

Reference to specific

Note: All questions asked for, detailed art works.

If artists and their works can be seen as a product of their contexts and influences, then artists are almost by definition historians: they document and comment upon the state of life through their works. Yet there is so much more to art than just commentary. Art, as 'the most intense form of individualism the world has ever known' (Oscar Wilde) takes the historical contexts it was born out of, and may accept, resist, shape or even or shape these to its own purposes. Certainly, it is inseparable from its context - but while historians document, artists change.

Indeed, at points throughout history, art has served as a historical recollection of events. In Ancient Egyptian society, their beliefs in an afterlife necessitated the appeasement of the gods by reminding them of all the good works completed throughout a powerful man's ~~lifetime~~ lifetime. This was completed using the medium of art; while it may seem strange that in today's economically driven society that art could ever be created without the intention of it ever seeing the light of day, the recollections of their deeds was shut away to become private matters between their bodies and the gods. We have found this

in the excavation of the tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun, who was buried in the 18th century BC; the wall of his tomb was lined with excerpts from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, as well as depictions of his great deeds. The Egyptian ideals of a hierarchical treatment of space are prominent in these depictions. Compared to those around him, Tutankhamun is shown to be much bigger than his followers. This reminds the gods of his earthly power in the hope that this would translate into power in the afterlife. So, too, did the Egyptian sense of register emphasize his power; he was placed in a higher horizontal register than his subjects, as this was a common stylistic treatment of the powerful to again emphasize their status. This art, as a result, was primarily a historical recollection; while some of his deeds may have been emphasised unduly, the primary function of his artist was to recall the deeds Tutankhamun had undertaken to the powers that be. /

While other works have certainly served other functions than historical recollection, it must be remembered that the personal history of an artist will be documented in his or her works whether this is intentional or not, because of the role it has played in their development as people. Salvador Dali showed this in his 1925 Surrealist

painting 'The Persistence of Memory' (1931). In a reference to Freudian psychoanalysis, he depicts his childhood beach on Cape Crous in Catalonia, draped in the shadow of the unseen Mount Pani. Dalí had a very unhappy childhood; he was abused and neglected by his parents, and he metaphorically documents the 'persistence' of these traumatic childhood memories through the symbolism of Pani. The mountain is not seen, but its shadow is still cast over the entirety of the image; in the same way, Dalí argues, even when a memory has been forgotten, it can still subconsciously affect an individual in a negative way, and this is why one's history is so crucial to one's works. This idea is only made more potent by Dalí's 'paranoiac-critical' method he used to create his artworks, where he entered a self-induced hallucination and then 'registered without choice and with all possible exactitude the dictates of my subconscious, my dreams.' This, it was thought, would bypass the barrier of rational thought and allow direct access to the subconscious, a true reflection of the self. As a result, then, Dalí puts forward the argument that an artist is inseparable from his or her personal historical contexts; while the immediate focus of their art may be completely different from documenting their past, this is a reality all the same, so all

artists are in a sense simply historians. ||

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History, however, may provide an impetus for the creation of art that expresses dissatisfaction with its progression. The rising wave of feminist artists in the 1960s and 70s created a movement that questioned the historical male dominance in the field of art, and asked why women were demoted to subordinate roles in society. Often, this was done through the medium of performance art; ~~the~~ this was seen as an ironically accurate reflection of their societal purpose, with their existence apparently only being for the purpose of putting on a performance for men. Jane Antoni's 1972 ^{performance, parodying} 'Loving Care' rejected the Pollockian tradition of liberally applying paint to the canvas, as this was seen as being too phallic. Instead, Antoni used her hair as a paintbrush, to apply paint to a large floor canvas in a 'loving' manner, and one where the process of applying the paint in performance was just as important as the finished result. The method also had the subtext of using hair to mimic a mop, questioning women's subordinate role of cleaning in society. Elsewhere, Eleanor Antin's 'Carving a traditional sculpture' used the metaphor of a 'traditional' carved sculpture to address the issue of how women were often expected to carve their own bodies into a form that was socially acceptable. ~~The~~ The cycle of

148 photographs of her own nude self while undergoing a strict diet regime can be seen as a fragile recollection of this similarity between sculptural carving and dieting, while the monochromatic colour scheme reflects the mundane nature of such an activity. As a result, then, while art is certainly a product of its historical context, it has the key ability of being able to make a statement about the historical roles its ^{artists have} ~~has~~ been ~~exposed~~ forced to adhere to, and the social change that ~~may come as a result sets art as an~~ activity apart from simply recording this history. //

Sometimes, however, changing history is not enough for artists; they can want to completely obliterate history to create a radically changed society. The Futurism movement, conceived in Milan just before WWI, stated in its manifesto the objective of burning all books and destroying museums to initiate a society where progress, automation and velocity were the key tenets. The statement that 'war is the only hygiene of the world' in Marinetti's manifesto was reflected in the art of the time. Boccioni's 'The City Rises' (1910) showed a blurred depiction of a horse out of control in a city; fast, pointillist brush strokes combined with bright and vivid colours give the viewer an impression of total speed and loss of control. Similarly,

The Dada movement that arose out of the horrors of WWI argued that the historical notion of 'art' had no place in a society where man was capable of such violence and atrocity. Marcel Duchamp's 1917 'L.H.O.O.Q.', comprised simply of drawing a mustache on Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, sparked outrage at the time because of its flippancy and disrespect for the Renaissance masterpiece. Yet the act shows Duchamp's desire to overturn the historical significance of 'fine art'; a society so brutal was, in his eyes, unworthy of being graced by such art, and that he was required to 'sweep and clear' (Tzara, Manifesto) to make art a more faithful representation of society. In this sense, then, it can be seen that it is possible to fully reject all of the historical contexts that have contributed to art, and to do the exact opposite job to that of a historian by startlingly society afresh. //

Finally, some artists have chosen to reject the sense of historical depiction in their art through their focus on simply representing emotional states and capacities in their work. The style of Neo-plasticism, championed by Piet Mondrian, broke art down into its simplest elements of simply line and colour, with the simple objective of making the viewer take a break from

the passage of time and to simply observe. This is evident in his 1937 'Composition with Red, yellow and blue' where only horizontal and vertical lines and primary colours are used. Though a sense of order is not immediately evident, Mondrian mathematically balanced all parts of the painting. Often, large gaps in the lines were offset by areas of colour; this had the effect of distributing the visual energy around different parts of the painting. For example, despite a large yellow area at the top left hand side of the painting, the eye is more naturally attracted to the bottom half of the painting with its closely spaced lines. In addition, although from a distance the paintings look as though they could have been printed, close observation shows brush strokes and small unevennesses in colour values are evident. Rather than being seen as any imperfection, this provides a clue towards how closely Mondrian expected viewers to observe his works. As his colleague Theo van Doesburg stated, 'We speak of concrete and not abstract paintings because nothing is more concrete than a line, a surface.' Through this 'concrete' depiction of the most fundamental elements of art, Mondrian invites us to stop, forget our contexts or personal history and take time to observe - an act rarely undertaken in the present day society. Through this As a result, his composition made of restricted subject matter

achieves almost complete dislocation from the external influences of history, and focus rather on the internal state of the viewer through its meditative nature. //

Art, then, while certainly influenced by historical contexts, it is made distinct from historical recollection because the artist is given the choice of what to make of these contexts. He can record it exactly, he can reject or improve the nature of its implications, or he can free himself of its shackles by focussing on other, more simpler aspects. The artist is given the same historical contexts as the historian, but he is able to affect these contexts rather than placidly accepting them. //

This essay is a 5 because there is evidence of extensive and accurate knowledge. There is also some high-level visual analysis evident in the deeper discussion of the Mondrian work. Had this depth been applied to other works also, the essay would have achieved at a higher level because the analysis would be more consistently well-developed. All information is relevant and integrated fluently.

The essay argument is logically developed and focus on the question is maintained throughout, although sometimes unevenly over the two responses.