

May 2015 subject reports

ART HISTORY

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-12	13-24	25-36	37-50	51-65	66-79	80-100

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	19-23	24-27	28-32

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the work submitted for this component was quite varied and the majority of candidates had pursued a successful cross-cultural comparison as mandated in the nature of the task. There were a few isolated instances, and in some cases many within certain centres, where candidates did not perform adequate cross-cultural comparisons of artworks, suggesting that instances of lack of teacher guidance in terms of the suitability of the work still remain an issue. It might also suggest that interpretations of “cross-cultural” differ from teacher to teacher, centre to centre, or that the overall nature of the task requires clarification.

Candidate performance against each criterion

As in previous years, performance in this component varied widely from center to center, in terms of candidates demonstrating that they had mastered the skill of visually analysing artworks. Many candidates often performed very well in this area and just as often gave visual analysis even more emphasis than warranted by the overall weighting. Stronger students often made clear and specific links between the formal, observable qualities of selected works and others. Weaker students usually didn't go beyond simple description and often showed evidence of being significantly challenged in pinpointing and discussing similarities and differences in the works they selected. Some candidates discussed artistic form with great assurance, but there was a noticeable increase in the number of candidates who found the use of specialised vocabulary a challenge.

Some candidates insisted on quoting sources in reference to visual analysis. As stated in previous reports, the *visual* analysis of critics is of no interest to the examiners and candidates are advised to bring in the opinions of art historians in other contexts rather than in visual analysis. As one examiner put it, ideal visual analysis is the candidate's own assessment of the work. Teachers are encouraged, as ever, to consult their individual school feedback reports for specifics on overall school performance and suggestions for future teaching.

Context and evaluation

A candidate's ability to significantly identify and analyse the original context in which an artwork was created is essential to demonstrating knowledge in this discipline. As with visual analysis (above) this criterion was addressed with a wide variety of levels of success in this year's exam. Many higher achieving candidates showed admirable insight into the nature of the relationships that exist between differing contexts and were able to draw quite impressive meaning and conclusions from these insights. As stated in last year's report, this is a key area in presenting a 'cross-cultural' investigation and if candidates fail to adequately address this criterion, it will often be a result of having not fulfilled the basic nature of the task of conducting such a comparative analysis. Teachers are therefore encouraged to look *carefully* at the IA requirements (and review the markband descriptors for this particular criterion), and draw candidates' attention to what is expected before they begin work on the IA essay.

It is also essential in addressing this criterion that candidates discuss historical context in reference to the guiding research question(s) that they have selected. More accomplished candidates are able to present a balance of both formal and contextual consideration to support their discussions, fulfilling the requirement of 'perceptive analysis' and drawing conclusions that support their ultimate thesis. Weaker candidates frequently misunderstand or disregard the general framework or the time period and culture ("original context") in which the works in question were created or confuse them with what they have come to be understood as meaning today.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that this component represents an ideal opportunity for candidates to bring to bear a great deal of what they have gleaned from their experiences in Theory of Knowledge (TOK) classes, especially as they struggle to deal with problems of knowledge as they relate to the areas of knowledge associated with the Human Sciences. As in the previous year's report, it was noted that in the IA work submitted this year, there was often too little discussion of the problems of knowing about the meaning and function of artworks within the original context within which they were created. Too many candidates' essays gave the impression that there really are no problems of knowing and understanding meaning and function in a historical context at all, when, in fact, the exact opposite is true.

Evaluation of sources

There was strong evidence that candidates were being provided with more guidance and instruction on the proper use of sources this year – an encouraging development. Most candidates provided at least an adequate range of sources for their work and it was clear that they had made significant efforts to understand and incorporate these sources into their own investigations. Still, a few points need to be made about the use of sources, as there continue to be some aspects of candidates' performance against this criterion that are not being fully addressed.

Some candidates (a smaller number than in previous years, but a substantial percentage nonetheless) continued to cite sources in their bibliography that are, ultimately, neither cited nor mentioned in the body of their text. Citing a work in a bibliography and referring to it critically in the main body of the text, as the assessment model envisages, is not the same thing, though many candidates believe that it is. As a general rule, if a work is not cited in the essay, the candidate should consider carefully whether it should be included in the bibliography.

Conversely, if a source is cited in the bibliography, the candidate should consider whether (and where) it should be referenced in the essay itself.

Some candidates felt that simply referring to a source in relation to the description of an artwork is sufficient use of academic citation, when it is not.

Lesser achieving candidates, at times, had as few as four sources in their list of works referenced, which is woefully inadequate. Several outstanding candidates made use of a full range of both digital and text-based sources in their investigations and properly cited them. At times, these sources could be from ten to fifteen in number, and all properly referenced within the essay itself.

Finally, it was clear that higher achieving candidates were more able to demonstrate a more comprehensive appreciation of their sources, taking a more mature, scholarly approach, with a clear sense of their own interpretation and opinion evident in the discussion. Lower scoring candidates often merely paid lip service to sources, mentioning them in passing reference without making any solid ties between the nature of the contribution the source makes and the overall investigation the candidate is conducting.

Research, planning and presentation

A clear majority of candidates (certainly higher numbers than in the two previous years) were successful in formulating and investigating a proper cross-cultural comparison in art history. This suggests that most teachers are taking a more active role in helping to guide their students in choosing and planning a proper cross-cultural investigation. There remain (and were usually in higher numbers within specific centres) significant instances of lack of planning and adequate research for the chosen task, which suggests that some teachers need to provide more guidance to their students in this regard.

There were a few surprising instances of candidates having submitted investigations that were entirely outside the realm of art history. Some addressed disciplines other than art, such as industrial design, typography and advertising. Some focused on analysis of art markets and sales trends. Still others were mired in socio-political analysis to the point where the mention of artworks was relegated to mere afterthought. These, clearly, represent cases where significant teacher guidance and help with the adequate formulation of an appropriate line of cross-cultural art historical investigation could have helped.

There was also a marked increase in the number of investigations that featured poor, few or even no illustrations or supporting visuals. As one examiner observed, "There is no excuse these days for the inclusion of poor quality (or the entire lack of) illustrations, as was sometimes the case." In this discipline, where the visual arts throughout history are the focus of study, an emphasis should be on the "visual." The inclusion of good quality imagery to support the main points of the candidate's thesis should be made absolutely *de rigueur*.

Ideally, candidates should be encouraged to select for this investigation at least one artwork that they can examine first-hand. The benefits of having experienced artworks personally, of bringing to bear one's own observational skills upon an actual work, cannot be overstated.

It was noted that a significant number of candidates this year (usually within specific centres) elected to conduct their investigations for this component using artworks that were also the focus of their Paper 1 and (just as often) their Paper 2 essays. This suggests that they are trying to consolidate their knowledge, which (to them, might appear pragmatic and sensible) only serves to highlight the narrow breadth of understanding and knowledge that they have ultimately gleaned from their study of art history. It also imposes strict limitations on their opportunities to expand their understanding and discover for themselves new areas of art history that they have not studied in class.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

As mentioned in last year's report (still very relevant today) teachers themselves should thoroughly review the requirements of this component (the nature of the task) and familiarize themselves with the four assessment criteria so that they can accurately share expectations, from the outset, with their students. They might seek to establish their own best-practice model, maintaining a growing library of previous years' IA essays and sharing these with their students, developing a bibliography of exemplar sources and fostering a culture of critical awareness in their lessons that regularly makes use of proper terminology, description, formal analysis and contextual evaluation. Teachers need to continue to ensure that special attention is paid to the development of appropriate, *cross-cultural* comparisons in the visual arts.

This also includes making certain that candidates maintain a proper focus (avoiding topics that are too general or too broad to allow for substantial analysis and conclusions or that fail to qualify as investigations of artworks from historical periods or cultures). To this end, teachers should make individual candidate guidance a priority in their preparation for this component. The key to a successful comparative essay begins with a proper guiding question, a line of inquiry for this task – one that can, eventually, be answered in as clear and unambiguous a manner as possible. Conversely, candidates should be discouraged from taking on subjects that are so broad that a single guiding question fails to apply. What conclusions can they possibly derive from a line of inquiry that fails to pose any questions? Therefore, an essay entitled "An Examination of the Works of Andy Warhol" (for example) does not lend itself well to addressing this component, even apart from its fundamental lack of a cross-cultural comparison.

Finally, as also advocated in previous years, it has proved helpful for teachers to encourage students to look further afield in selecting artworks with which to make their cross-cultural comparison. It is often the case that the most interesting essays involve comparing some of the most widely disparate works (many from outside the western canon of art history). Additionally, teachers might find it useful to encourage a certain personal link on the candidate's part to the essay. A majority of the most engaging written submissions in recent years focused on comparing artworks, objects or traditions that had personal meaning/relevance for the candidate. Focus on the criteria-based expectations should not be overlooked in this, however. Teachers need to bear in mind the IA requirements and keep their candidates on task accordingly, both before the students begin writing and when reviewing them after submission. Teachers need to keep in mind that they may (and should) advise on the candidate's first draft.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-5	6-7	8-10	11-13	14-16	17-20

General comments

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

While most candidates were able to make at least an adequate attempt at visual analysis and to make use of a few basic art historical terms relating to form, style or technique, many had difficulty in defining what the original context for a work might have been. Many also found it a challenge to go beyond repeating statements that they had learned by teachers or other sources. Quite a few candidates had difficulty in making arguments about the possible meaning or meanings of works of art and in providing evidence in support of the claims they were making. For many, there was a basic difficulty in communicating why it might be difficult to establish an accurate context for some works of art and then of interpreting the meaning of the work in that context.

Still, the primary difficulty for candidates in this component continues to lie in *differentiating between the two questions*. While a higher percentage of candidates followed instructions and wrote two distinct essays, there was often repetition between the two responses. It was commonplace for candidates to answer question 1 with a discussion of visual analysis and then go on to repeat much of what they had said in their answer to question 2. Similarly many candidates made comments about meaning, significance and context in their first response (to the question about formal analysis) and then repeated much of what they had said again in their second response (which should address context, meaning and significance).

Finally, a slightly higher number of candidates this year seemed to struggle with finding a balance between attempting to recite what appeared in many cases to be a memorised list of facts they knew about a work and working these into their own observations and analysis. It seemed that many of these candidates were eager to tell what they knew, as opposed to how they knew it or why they thought that way, clearly allowing their responses to be guided by a bulleted series of conclusions that were unsupported by the rest of their answer. This suggests that significant preparation (or coaching) is occurring in some centres but without the appropriate level of formal and contextual understanding of selected works to enable candidates to demonstrate real understanding with a holistic, well-organised response.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The best-prepared candidates were able to both describe and analyse the formal aspects of their chosen artwork and then comment specifically on style, techniques used and materials employed. They were able to establish a convincing context for their chosen work with reference to specific historical, social, political or economic events (many included relevant

dates) and to explore the problems and limitations of trying to interpret these works within that context. Most candidates were able to show that they understood that they were expected to address both formal and contextual issues surrounding their selected works and most made efforts to ensure that both of these tasks were addressed. Most understood that the works selected had a meaning and a function within their respective contexts, but some had difficulty discussing these.

Some preparation was evident this year in the fact that a number of the candidates (especially within certain centres) had selected the same artworks for their Paper 1 responses that they had focused on for their Internal Assessment essay. As noted in the IA report (above), this kind of preparation is not conducive to the aims of this course of study and should be avoided.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The number of candidates erroneously answering the individual questions by making reference to two different topic artworks was very low this year, suggesting that teacher guidance and exam preparation for following the directions for this component are being given appropriate attention.

A separate note is required for topic questions:

Topic 1: *Statue of a Kouros* (c. 590-580 BC). Naxian marble. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This was a moderately popular choice for many candidates. In addition to describing visual aspects of the work, most candidates were able to go on to identify the material from which it is carved and mention the advantages to using this. Some were able to discuss specific stylistic developments from both earlier Egyptian and Greek *kouros* figures and relate these to the context of Archaic period Greece. Higher achieving candidates discussed the use of Archaic period schema and wove that discussion into a larger one about the development of naturalism in Greek art, making use of both preceding and subsequent sculptures (named and dated) to support their conclusions. A few insightful candidates related this to the general period of political and economic prosperity that characterised Greek life in the 4th to 6th centuries BC. They used proper terminology, such as funerary monument, *kouroi* and *contraposto*. Weaker answers focused on describing the figure and noting that anatomical details were emerging without accounting for any basis for these developments. Lower scoring responses frequently lacked proper understanding of basic art historical terminology.

Topic 2: *Equestrian portrait of Marcus Aurelius* (161-180 AD). Bronze. Musei Capitolini, Rome.

This was a more popular choice for many candidates. The strongest answers showed a familiarity with both particular materials and techniques associated with bronze casting and the details the work represented, as well as discussed the possible meaning and function of such an image within the context of Imperial Rome in the second century. Better responses also showed a clear sense of having considered the sheer scale and impressiveness of this sculpture in relation to a human scale and its original, very public setting. Weaker responses ignored materials and techniques or showed confusion about basic aspects of the casting process, such as the difference between cast vs. carved sculpture and the level of naturalism that is attainable at this scale because of it. Higher achievers discussed historical problems in attributing the sculpture (first to Constantine, then to Hadrian and finally to Marcus) and related this to larger issues of context and problems in interpretation.

Topic 3: *David Keeping his Flock*, (10th century). Folio 1v from the *Paris Psalter*. Bibliotheque National de France, Paris.

No candidates responded to this work.

Topic 4: Pietro Cavallini, *The Last Judgment* (c. 1295). Fresco. Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome.

No candidates responded to this work.

Topic 5: Donato Bramante, *The Tempietto of San Pietro in Montorio, Rome* (c. 1502-1510). Exterior and ground-plan.

Disappointingly, there were only a handful of answers that addressed this Renaissance work. Higher achieving responses were thorough in their formal analysis of the temple, using appropriate terminology and identifying strong visual elements of Bramante's small masterpiece and even calling attention to various materials and architectural devices used. These went on to relate this work to the context of the Rome of Pope Alexander VI and the rising dominance of Spanish patronage that his papacy brought to the city. They also drew on previous and subsequent works by Bramante (especially his design for the new St. Peter's basilica) and drew formal links between these and the Tempietto. Weaker responses focused on describing the work, occasionally relating it to ancient Roman influences and often succumbing to rambling discussions about whether or not Saint Peter was actually crucified on the spot it marks.

Topic 6: Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance* (c. 1664). Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

A very popular choice for candidates, Vermeer's painting garnered a variety of levels of response. The strongest answers paid attention to the many small details in the work and to the interpretation of their possible significance for the artist and/or the potential patron or buyer in a predominantly Calvinist culture. A few of the more insightful responses also considered the image, its details and its jewel-like quality in relation to Vermeer's use of the *camera obscura* and further related this discussion to larger contextual issues, such as the economic prosperity that the Dutch nation enjoyed during Vermeer's life and the growing interest in scientific devices and their impact upon popular culture. Weaker answers often proceeded through a list of possible iconographic elements of the work without showing any evidence of the artist or the time and place in which the work was produced.

Topic 7: Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770). Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

There were a high number of responses to this image, most of which easily identified the work and attempted to describe it as representative of either the Neo-Classical or Romantic periods (stronger answers discussed the possibilities of both and allowed this debate to play out in their response). Better quality responses also discussed the work in terms of the degree to which it might be an accurate representation of historical events or in what ways and for what reasons art historians might want to treat it more critically. Stronger answers discussed in detail the importance of this work in relation to declining imperialism in Europe and the role of the artist in seeking patronage through the Royal Academy with handpicked subjects. Weaker answers tended to focus on describing the composition and relating what is observed with what is known of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the demise of General Wolfe (though very few were able to actually name the battle, or the war, for that matter). Many weaker responses showed evidence of confusion as to the nature of the battle, who was fighting it and what they were fighting for. A number made up elaborate narratives to explain the presence of the Native American ranger in the image.

Topic 8: Sir Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection, Cookham* (1924-1927). Oil on canvas. Tate Collection.

Another fairly popular choice for candidates, this Spencer masterpiece elicited a variety of responses. Higher achieving answers identified the work as a possible altarpiece and discussed the religious aspects of the work in relation to Spencer's upbringing in Cookham and the personal message of faith that he conveys in the image, even identifying his friends and relatives (and Spencer himself) in the painting. Some rather insightful candidates also related this to Spencer's limited palette and hybrid surrealism/cubism. Some went on to consider how Spencer embraced such religiousness at a time when religious imagery in art was losing popularity and allowed various socio-political and economic issues (depression, deflation, mass unemployment and the decline of British influence abroad) to account for this. Weaker answers got lost in descriptive analysis and were often unable to discuss meaning or function of the imagery in relation to Spencer's larger context.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Paper 1

- Teachers should continue to encourage their students to address the two questions, (a) and (b), in separate, distinct essays. Students who attempt to answer both questions in a continuous essay invariably fail to address the questions adequately (or lose track of what they are trying to say).
- Teachers would do well to ensure that students understand the distinctions between the two questions and the nature of what each of them asks.
- As noted in previous reports (and still very valid), to do well on this task candidates need to be able to learn to analyse and dissect the visual components of works of art – they should be taught how to do this in class, avoiding formulaic approaches to learning this skill while emphasizing that a personal connection can and should be made with the work. Training the eye by practicing on works of art with which the candidates are unfamiliar is the best way of doing this.
- Teachers should not encourage (or coach) candidates to make use of the same artworks in their Paper 1 responses that they used for their IA essay.
- Teachers should encourage candidates to write in distinct paragraphs and remind them that, ideally, each paragraph should embody a specific thought or a number of closely related thoughts.
- Candidates should be encouraged (by their art history teacher and their TOK instructor) to make links between what they learn in art history and what they learn about the problems of knowledge in TOK. This can only help students understand more the problems of knowing about a context in the past and the difficulties in interpreting the meaning of a work produced in that context.
- Teachers should, whenever possible, highlight the fact that art historians can (and do, often) come to different conclusions about the same works of art. Teachers should encourage students to get engaged with the question when this happens and to draw their own conclusions based upon their understanding of as much of the contextual evidence and scholarship as they can uncover.

- It is recommended that candidates, whenever possible, be given the opportunity to practice with past paper writing. By practicing exam conditions and/or paper writing, it is hoped that candidates will become more familiar with the expectations of the exam instructions and questions, as well as help reinforce better handwriting skills, minimizing problems with legibility and basic essay structuring.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-15	16-22	23-29	30-36	37-48

General comments

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

It was encouraging to note that far fewer candidates failed to follow the directions accompanying this component in this exam session. In past years, the number of candidates significantly referencing two or more different topics in a single response was cause for concern. Teachers were urged to prepare students for this issue by familiarising them with the directions and expectations prior to the real exam. This advice appears to have been heeded. While the number of candidates not following these instructions dropped significantly this year, a small number (estimates are less than 5 percent) of those taking this exam failed to follow the directives as stated, resulting in only partial credit for their overall Paper 2 mark. Thus, following instructions remains an important issue in regard to this component and one that can be addressed with appropriate preparation of candidates.

As in previous years, a few candidates answered more than one question from the same section, though this number remains quite small. There were a few candidates who answered all three questions with reference to the same topic. Candidates must be taught the process of how to go about following the instructions on the exam. Instructions should be read aloud from the cover of the exam sheet and all candidates should be given the opportunity to ask for clarification before beginning the exam. More specific recommendations regarding this are to be found below under "Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates."

It was encouraging to see that fewer candidates suffered from attempting to draw upon too many examples in their responses, as has been an issue in the past. However, a number of responses clearly could have achieved more with less. Often, such responses significantly refer to four or five works and address vast periods of time (even bridging several topics). Candidates should continue to be encouraged to narrow their focus to two or three carefully selected examples in their responses and confine their analysis to these only.

The proper use of dates remains an issue that a vast majority of candidates still find challenging. As stated in the previous report, Art History is a study of art through the ages, and the use of

proper dates and terminology is fundamental to the discipline. Though it varied significantly from center to center, a number of candidates found using appropriate dates and titles, as well as art-related vocabulary in their essays, challenging, which suggests that teachers should emphasize the importance of these in the future.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

While achievement across the range of topics was quite varied, it was quite clear that there had been some solid preparation of candidates in relation to topics 1, 2, 5 and 6. At the highest levels, the better-prepared candidates had been introduced to texts by different art historians who considered the same artworks but arrived at different conclusions. This awareness that two or more art historians had considered the same questions in relation to the same works of art but offered different answers was key for most of the well prepared candidates. They were able to consider different points of view and take a critical approach to these sources in their responses. These candidates were familiar with how art historians have tried to piece together evidence to define what might have been the historical, social, political or economic context of works from different periods and cultures. They were able to use art historical terms with clarity and ease. They were familiar with what was denoted by key terms such as style, form, iconography, patronage, techniques and materials, but were also aware of the ambiguities or connotations of these terms. The best-prepared candidates appreciated the difficulty of knowing with certainty what, for example, a work of art may be said to have meant in its original context.

Quite a few candidates were well prepared to describe the works they had selected for discussion and recalled, with quite specific detail, many of the significant aspects of form that they presented. This suggests thorough exposure to images and regular reference to details that can only result from teacher-led discussion and study.

Finally, as noted in the IA and Paper 1 reports (above) some preparation was evident this year in the fact that a number of the candidates (especially within certain centres) had selected the same artworks for their Paper 2 responses that they had focused on for their Internal Assessment essay and Paper 1 responses. As noted in the reports (above), this kind of preparation is not conducive to the aims of this course of study and should be avoided.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The breadth and variety of questions in this component this exam session was similar to those of recent years and, as in previous exam sessions, left candidates a great deal of freedom both in interpretation and strategy of approach. The spread of responses for each of the ten questions from the entire pool of candidates was somewhat less evenly distributed than in previous years, with questions 1, 5 and 8 being most popular choices for response and questions 3, 7 and 10 generally, though not entirely, avoided.

Question 1

This question asks the candidate to consider form and style and to discuss the extent to which the command of these contributes to the lasting impact of a work of art. It uses the term “masterpiece” without defining this, which of course leaves the possibility of determining a definition up to the candidate. Stronger responses offered a definition, or at least considered aspects of “masterpiece” as they relate to the question. It also begs the question of the relationships between both form and style and allows the candidate to develop their own approach to these. Finally it leaves open the notion that other aspects, besides command of

form and style, might actually contribute to the elevation of a work to the status of a masterpiece. Most importantly, it asks candidates to discuss whether or not this is the case. Higher achieving candidates did so. Lower achieving responses usually failed to do so.

Question 2

This question asks the candidate to consider the nature of “style” and to offer up their very best analysis of formal qualities of two chosen works to demonstrate how these conform (or do not conform – a few candidates attempted to make the opposite point) to a particular style. Stronger responses did not take “style” as a given and sought to define this term in ways that might allow them to more confidently address the relationships between formal qualities and the conventions of a particular period. Some candidates took this as an invitation to discuss how or why styles within specific periods change over time, and many of the lesser achieving responses tended to get lost in discussions to this effect as their focus drifted away from analysis of form and focused instead on contextual issues.

Question 3

Question 3 was a less popular choice among candidates, but those who selected this question were faced with the challenge of evaluating a statement concerning the role of iconography in *sacred* art. The question did not define sacred and left the parameters of that term up to the candidate to delineate. Stronger responses, of course, noted the use of the term sacred, sought to define this and limited the scope of their discussion to artworks that could be considered sacred. Weaker answers disregarded the term altogether and made the mistake of trying to discuss how an awareness of iconography is important to the understanding of all art in general. Stronger responses noted that the claim begins with “It is not possible...” and formulated discussions that sought to evaluate whether this was true. Some weaker answers omitted any evaluation of the claim. Some focused on only one work, where the question mandates two. Stronger answers also distinguished between this question and Question 5 (below), which poses a related question but without the focus on iconography and aimed at aesthetic appreciation (not understanding). Many of the strongest responses went on to compare their two selected artworks as well, to reinforce their conclusions.

Question 4

This was a challenging question on several levels. First, it asks the candidate to discuss whether one of the essential tasks of art historians (drawing conclusions about the original context of a given artwork through an examination of that work’s iconography) might be compromised by *underlying assumptions* that viewers in the original context would have shared with the artist. Higher achieving responses recognised this challenge and rose to it, seeking to define what underlying assumptions might mean and then using examples of these to build a discussion about the validity of the claim. Many stronger candidates also noted that the key phrase here lies in the first three words in the question, “Is it possible...” referring to the task of detecting what those underlying assumptions might be. They therefore built their discussion around the premise that it either was or was not possible. Weaker answers either failed to take note of this or lost sight of it in efforts to show that iconography was, in fact, something real and was used in the art of the past.

Question 5

One of the most popular questions on the exam, this question was sometimes answered in pairing with Question 3 (above). However, this question asks whether or not knowledge of the original context of a work of art detracts from or adds to one’s *aesthetic enjoyment* of the piece. Many responses discussed how knowledge may or may not add to the enjoyment of a work, but few talked in concrete terms as to what this might mean. Stronger answers recognised the need to perhaps define what aesthetic enjoyment might mean in terms of the overall appreciation of a work of art. Some very insightful candidates discussed the difficulties in

knowing what the original context of a work of art might be and used clever examples of works that defied clear understanding of their original context. Some of these even concluded that aesthetic enjoyment of a work can exist independently of contextual knowledge, or came to the opposite conclusion (that not knowing increased/decreased enjoyment) based on problems of knowledge. Weaker answers omitted discussion of aesthetic enjoyment, or took this to mean “understanding” (i.e. it helps to know that the dying man is General Wolfe, because otherwise one cannot understand the painting).

Question 6

This question posed a challenge to candidates by requiring them to consider the differences in viewing art when it was produced in its original context as opposed to viewing it as themselves, as young art history students today. This should have prompted a discussion of the differences in contexts and stronger candidates remained focused on just such an exploration. Many responses gave examples of how different it might have been to view a work in its original context, but few talked about why this difference might exist or attempted to account for such differences, as higher achieving answers did. Many of the weaker responses took this as an invitation to examine two works of art without considering their original context, which is not the nature of this task. As in Question 5, stronger responses identified the difficulties in attempting to ascertain the conditions of original context and a few even concluded that the question was ultimately unanswerable, given the problems of knowledge (and showing remarkable insight into the nature of some of the most fundamental questions that continue to persist in the discipline of art history).

Question 7

This question was universally avoided. Responses to this were extremely rare, perhaps for two reasons. First, the question asks the candidate to consider the role of the *workshop* in artistic production. The term is left without definition and that might have intimidated some candidates. It leaves the defining of the key term in the question up to them, thus contributing to the second reason for this question’s difficulty: it is incredibly open. One or two bold candidates actually proceeded to define *workshop* as meaning “the artist’s studio” or “workspace”, and discussed how importantly selected artists considered their working environment (discussing lighting, cleanliness, furniture, etc). The question can be assumed to refer to the socio-economic institution of the artist’s workshop in the medieval period and renaissance (but extending well into the seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries). Artists took on apprentices, trained them, allowed them to work to varying degrees on commissioned works for patrons and ultimately were responsible for the passing on of artistic traditions, stylistic developments, technical and process skills and countless other aspects of visual expression. However, very few candidates actually understood this and responded accordingly, which is troubling.

Question 8

This question was exceedingly popular, especially in certain centres. It asks the candidate to consider the role of the artist and the patron in the production of at least two works. It avoids the problem of openness (unlike Question 7) by further inviting the candidate to think in terms of use of symbolism, use of materials, or even propaganda. A surprisingly high number of candidates responding to this questions lost credit in their responses by simply (or rather vaguely) referring to patrons such as “the royalty” or “the Catholic Church.” Patronage needs to be cited as specifically as artistic attributions, especially in response to questions like this that expressly address the role of the patron. A number of strong responses were able to focus in on the contributions of both the selected patron and selected artist (weaker candidates often focused primarily on one or the other) drawing evidence from various sources in order to establish original context and making conclusions about decisions made by both in the production of the selected work. Higher scoring candidates recognized the need to “compare and contrast” the roles and the contributions made by both parties and formulated their discussions around a proper comparison. Weaker candidates made little distinction between

the roles of either and tended to focus their discussion around how both were working towards the same ends, evidence of which sometimes was presented in the selected artworks.

Question 9

This was a moderately popular question, though it featured several challenges to the candidates who elected to respond to it. The task in this question is to discuss whether an artist's *increasing* use of *stylized* techniques and materials can lead to a greater – or lesser – degree of realistic depiction. The first challenge is to recognise the key role that the term “stylized” is playing here. The second is to consider how an artist can increasingly make use of stylized techniques and materials. The third challenge is to consider all this in relation to what “realistic depiction” might mean. Higher achieving candidates acknowledged that realistic depiction is not an absolute and that this can, in fact, remain a matter of opinion. Further, they pointed out that stylized can mean a number of different things as it relates to different materials and techniques. A high number of the responses to this question referenced the use of the *camera obscura* (Vermeer) or photography (Caillebotte), not surprisingly. A few attempted to do both and received only partial credit for referencing two different topics. Most responses concluded that artists tended to hone their realistic depiction with these devices. Very few attempted to argue the opposite.

Question 10

This question was not a popular one, but produced a number of interesting responses. Candidates had to consider to what extent changes in technique and the evolution of artist's materials have gone hand in hand. A number of lower achieving responses considered changes in technique and then considered the evolution of artist's materials in turn, but few discussed them as having influenced each other or having gone “hand in hand.” Higher achieving answers, many of which cited the development of the *kouros* figure in Greek art and the development of large-scale bronze casting in Greek and Roman art, looked carefully at how technical advances and changes in materials in the original context of the selected works led to new ways of understanding form and style, citing specific examples and comparing works to support their conclusions. They also looked at how the opposite occurred, with developments in form and style affecting the way that materials and techniques were applied. Weaker responses often mistook this question as asking whether it was possible for technical developments to change the way artists worked.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Though it was clear from the dramatically reduced numbers of candidates who failed to follow directions on the exam that they were receiving better guidance and preparation, there remain candidates who are not being adequately prepared for following the instructions and responding to the questions in this component in the proper fashion. Therefore it is important to reiterate that teachers need to be reminded that these questions are designed to test a candidate's knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of visual arts and architecture throughout history (Sections A to E). One response is to draw upon imagery from one Topic (1 to 8), while the other two responses are to draw upon imagery from a different Topic. This is to test the candidate's general awareness of art from more than just a narrow historical range or culture. It is absolutely necessary for candidates to respond in the prescribed manner so that the fullest evaluation of their performance against the syllabus material can be made. **Candidates therefore need to continue to be warned of the risk of not following these instructions, which includes only partial or no credit for answers that do not comply with the above parameters. This is an issue that can be eradicated with simple, straightforward instruction and guidance by teachers. It**

is recommended that all teachers of this course make efforts to eliminate this issue by the next (2016) exam session.

- In a related issue, because the exam is meant to test a candidate's general awareness of art from more than just a narrow historical range or culture, it is imperative that teachers discourage candidates from using the same two or three artworks for all three components of the course's assessment, as has been happening in certain centres.
 - As ever, examiners would like to see well-structured responses, which answer the questions offered; a wide-ranging knowledge of the context in which works of art were produced; deployment of a high level of visual analysis when describing works of art; complex ideas; argumentation backed up by appropriate sources (i.e. an awareness of what art historians and critics have written on the subject); and expression of the candidates' own personal opinions. To achieve this, it is essential that candidates read the individual questions carefully and answer them in their entirety.
 - It is highly recommended that teachers introduce their candidates to examples of art historians considering the same or similar questions in relation to similar or comparable works of art, but offering different answers. These should be presented as models for how the candidates themselves might formulate their own responses to the exam questions, as they could provide excellent insight and guidance into the nature of the art historical process.
 - Teachers should review the markband criteria used to assess the Paper 2 exam, familiarize themselves with these and then share the same with their students. It is imperative that students understand the various criteria and the expectations that go with them in order to understand what they will need to do on the exam in order to achieve the highest markbands.
 - Finally, it is important to remind teachers to familiarize themselves with what their students are learning in Theory of Knowledge classes, in order to help them to make practical connections between this subject and that part of the IB core. The idea of personal and shared knowledge is particularly appropriate and relevant to the discussion and study of art history. Similarly, problems of knowledge, especially those impacting the Human Sciences, are of tremendous importance to the discipline. Finding parallels between what students learn in both subjects will only enhance their experience in both classes and help to expand their own awareness and knowledge of the material being covered.
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