



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Level In
History of Art (9HT0)

Paper 1

Introduction

The standard of responses to all questions on this paper was very similar to last year. The strongest responses to Visual Analysis questions were, again, divided equally between the two parts of the question and were structured in distinct parts to ensure that the requirements of the question were fully met. Candidates are advised to answer the two parts of the question asked and not to write a general response to the image with which they are presented. Several candidates produced repetitive points in their responses; each point should be saying something discrete in relation to the image provided and the question asked. Candidates are reminded that they do not get credit for identifying the style in which a work is painted, sculpted or built, or for the context surrounding the works, as no AO1 marks are available for these questions; this was particularly relevant to the style of the painting and learnt knowledge regarding the building, this year.

Candidates were generally very well prepared for the Themes section of the examination, again this year, with the vast majority meeting the specific requirements of questions. There was evidence of the study of a wide range of highly interesting examples for all Themes; many candidates chose to write about works from beyond the European tradition, above those required by the question. These examples were well understood and integrated into the candidates' arguments. Again, the best responses to part (b) questions focused fully on the specific wording used and developed reasoned arguments. The most successful responses addressed the argument in the introduction as well as throughout the discussion, linking examples and relating them back to the statement and then reaching a definitive conclusion in the final paragraph.

Almost all candidates met the requirement to refer to works pre and post 1850 in parts (a) and (b) of Q04, and part (b) of question 6 and to refer to at least one of their specified artists/architects in response to Q05(b). Many candidates referred to more than one of their specified artists/architects, showing strong engagement with their works. Critical texts were generally well integrated into responses to Q04(b), Q05(b) and Q06(b) but there were still a few candidates who did not include a critical textual response and others who simply added in a quote without engaging with the views expressed by the critic.

Almost all candidates wrote in full sentences and paragraphs and resisted the temptation to bullet-point their answers, which meant that they were able to access the full range of the mark scheme. Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the definitions of terms in the Specification (which can be found in Appendix 1, on pages 41 and 42). The term 'beyond the European tradition' was misunderstood by some candidates who answered Q5(b); some candidates used works which are not landscapes or seascapes in response to Q04(a); some candidates used 3D works in response to Q5(a).

Question 1

Question: Discuss the representation of the figures in this painting and consider how light and tone contribute to the depiction of the scene. Judith Leyster, A Boy and a Girl with a Cat and an Eel, c.1635, oil on oak, 59.4 x 48.8 cm (National Gallery, London).

Once again, this question afforded the best responses of the Visual Analysis section, with candidates showing that they are confident and comfortable when discussing painting and the effects created. Many candidates responded well to the first part of the question, acknowledging the title of the painting and all the figures - both human and animal - depicted. The best responses contained excellent analysis and interpretation of the representation of the gestures and expressions of these figures and the atmosphere of the work. Many employed fluent language in discussing the figures' playful, mischievous demeanour and their ruddy complexions. Some strong answers commented on differing engagement with the viewer and hand gestures. A good number thought the girl was holding onto a chair and few identified that it is, in fact, the cat's tail. Unfortunately, several candidates focused their response on the composition of the work and missed valuable points regarding facial expressions and gestures. Candidates must look closely, and pay attention to the information provided, to avoid exposing mistakes such as identifying the eel as a "knife" or "hook". There were some excellent responses to the second part of the question, particularly in consideration of light, with candidates displaying highly sophisticated understanding of how the directional light served to focus on: the hands; facial features, particularly through contrast with the whiteness of the scarf/ruff; the textures of fabrics; the furry or sleek surfaces of the animals. There was also some strong consideration of the contrasting 'halo effect' of the lit hat brim and bonnet with the more devilish expressions of the children.

Candidate response:

This response gained full marks. The candidate examines the representation of the figures through astute observation and nuanced interpretation. There is an excellent use of comparative language, which enhances the discussion. Light and tone are carefully considered and the way in which they contribute to the depiction is explored in a meaningful manner.

The figures in 'A boy and a girl with a cat and an eel' are foremostly represented as being highly youthful and joyous - this can be seen on their matching expressions of delight, both figures bearing their teeth in wide smiles - their youth is further emphasised by the informality of the poses - the girl on the right seems mid speech, her movement emphasised in her pointed fingers towards the viewer. Furthermore, the informality of the image is emphasised by both of the figures looking not only in different directions but avoiding the viewer's eye line entirely. This gives the viewer a sense of looking into a private, perhaps domestic setting, as both figures look entirely at ease. In contrast to the informality of the sitters' behaviour, both of the children are dressed in adult, uncomfortable looking clothing, contemporary to the time in which this was painted. The boy on the right left sports a large white scarf, a brown suit and an enormous brown hat, whilst the girl on the right has her hair firmly styled back, giving her a rigid appearance in contrast to her happy expression. In his left arm, the boy comfortably holds a grey and white cat, who stares out at the viewer as an intercessor with a solemn expression, his left paw gently pressing back against the boy's arm. This contrast between the human like sadness of the cat and the happiness of the children is evocative of their relationship - it is suggested the children are perhaps using the animals for fun, and neglecting their needs. This is further emphasised by the twisting form of the eel, whom the boy grips onto desperately, demonstrating the enjoyment of the animals with the children.

Light and tone play a large role in this painting. Firstly, the light comes from an unseen light source from the left, its golden tones suggesting it to be a natural light source, emphasizing the domestic scene of the piece. Furthermore, the light shining on the children's faces give them an almost divinely happy glow - this is seen on the boy on the left, whose white paint on his nose, forehead and cheek he looks positively luminous, signifying the happiness and perhaps innocence of the children. Bright white highlights, in contrast to both the overall darkness of the composition and the naturalistic golden light, can be seen prominently on the cat and the eel. The saturated, artificial look of this white, paired with the red undertones seen towards the bottom of the composition, create a sense of cheer or overexcitement, perhaps again referring to the views of the animals. Chiaroscuro, the sharp chasing of shadows, is also used in this painting to provide a sense of drama and fear - this can be seen in the boy's face, whose left half is significantly more illuminated than the right, as well as the background, which shifts dramatically from dark to golden light. Furthermore, the boy's large hat is backlit by the golden light, its glow creating an almost halo like effect to his hat, emphasizing again the innocence of these children. Tone has also been used for facial modeling in their faces - the use of a saturated tone at points in contrast with the yellow tone of their skin amplifies the subtle feeling of underlying fears and treachery. Additionally, the bright white tone is used to unify the composition as it is used in a balanced way in the cloth and animals, as well as the bright white guides the viewer through the composition and emphasizes the presence of the animals.

Question 2

Question: Discuss the figures and their setting in this work and consider how the artist has created a sense of drama. *Properzia de' Rossi, Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, 1525–6, marble, 53.5 x 54 cm (Museo di San Petronio, Bologna).*

There were a limited number of top level responses to this question as many candidates relied on a purely descriptive account of the scene and/or appeared to be expecting a question focused on material and technique, which they discussed without relation to the specifics of the question. As a result, their analysis of figures and setting and how drama was conveyed through sculptural methods remained superficial or was omitted entirely. Where students read the question and supporting information closely and prioritised visual analysis over narrative summary, their work was notably more focused, informed, and appropriately aligned to the assessment criteria. Higher-level responses approached the figures and setting with a detached, analytical eye, enabling perceptive commentary on the spatial composition, bodily forms, and the physical relationships within the relief. This approach led naturally into the second part of the question, where the best responses demonstrated a strong understanding of sculptural technique—particularly undercutting and the use of shadow to heighten the dramatic impact of the scene. Detailed references to muscular tension, flow of drapery and physical dynamism also helped these candidates to access the upper level of the mark scheme. Several of the strongest responses noticed the hand of Potiphar's wife gripping the mattress and the positioning of her feet in assisting her attempt to restrain the figure of Joseph. Others identified and commented upon the determined facial expressions of the two figures and how this caused tension within the scene.

Candidate response:

This response gained full marks; it is a comprehensive response to both parts of the question which shows excellent analysis and understanding of the figures and their setting. The candidate displays strong observational and interpretative skills in their discussion of the figures and setting, commenting on features such as the hair, sleeves and positioning of hands and feet. The consideration of how drama is created is sophisticated and their discussion of material and technique is purely in response to the specifics of the question asked.

The relief sculpture Joseph and Potiphar's wife (1525-6, marble) depicts two figures in an interior space, probably a bedroom, as the female figure sits on a canopy bed. The female figure is ^{in profile and} seated, partly undressed as her breasts are out, and reaches her ^{right} arm out to grab the robe of the male figure, who is standing in profile and turning away ^{from the girl} to run from her. The girl grasps onto the bed with one arm and her sleeve is rolled up as ^{she is} ~~an~~ ^{undertaking} physical activity. Undercutting of her hair shows that it is pinned up, while undercutting in her drapery creates a sense of movement, which is mirrored in the ~~the~~ man's drapery which flows behind him as he runs away. ~~The canopy of the bed is in high relief~~ The two figures are in high relief, emphasising them as the central focus of the relief as they also take up most of the composition. The leant forward pose of the girl as her arm reaches up to the ^{torso} of the man who is standing creates a diagonal composition, emphasising the sense of movement. The man's left leg is in high relief, while his right leg is in low relief, suggesting he is moving into the picture plane. Deep undercutting of his face and hair shows

a Sombre expression, and shows him her flying back as he moves forward. His left leg overlaps the foot of the canopy bed, creating a sense of depth within the composition. The bed is in mezzo and low relief and forms an opposing diagonal to that of the figures from the top of the canopy to the left corner of the bed. The female figure is placed within this triangle, underneath the canopy, suggesting that she is being left behind as the men move away from the interior scene. A sense of drama is suggested here by the force muscles of the girl's arm as she grasps onto his robe and the bed, actual muscles which are made due to the relative softness of marble allowing for naturalistic detail. The man's legs also appear taut and muscular, as a tension is visible in his left leg, creating a dramatic tension between the figures. This is emphasized by the contrast as she is seated while he opposes her and is standing. Neither figure looks at the viewer, and their expressions are serious, suggesting that an argument has taken place between them. The movement of the figures creates drama, emphasized by the undercutting of the drapery which creates a sense of monumentality aiding the drama of the scene as the man rises higher behind him. The bare breasts of the woman allude to a sexual relationship between the two figures, creating a ~~shocking~~ ^{original} shock for the

Question 3

Question: Discuss the composition of this building and consider how the architectural elements express the building's function. William Van Alen, Chrysler Building (car company headquarters), 1928–30, steel, glass, granite and marble (New York).

There were some very strong responses to this question with evidence of careful consideration of composition and sophisticated consideration of how the architectural elements express the building's function. The best responses went beyond description of composition and analysed patterns in the articulation of the building i.e. how parts relate to one another, and gave well selected detailed analysis of how the building was articulated e.g. the fenestration. Some particularly successful responses contrasted the linear quality of the main building with the more decorative, curved forms of the upper section. The best answers took time to analyse the top section of the building carefully and used specific, accurate vocabulary to do so. The function of the building was best answered where the needs of the car manufacturing company were directly linked with architectural features of the building and directly expressed in relation to the question. High achieving candidates were able to comment on the intense demand for city space, aspirational messages about the nature of the company, and practical considerations for the employees working inside the building. Some particularly strong responses addressed not just the symbolism of the car company but also the corporate 'ladder' structure of the offices. Candidates must avoid inserting what they know about this period of architecture, and indeed this building in particular, where it does not respond tightly to the question. Those who recounted their knowledge of the structure, and its reception on construction, could not be credited for this. A number of candidates appeared to have saved this question for last and clearly ran out of time.

Candidate response:

This response gained full marks; it is a comprehensive response to both parts of the question which shows excellent, logical analysis of the composition of the building where the verticality and symmetry are carefully evidenced through specific features. The consideration of how architectural elements express the building's function is sophisticated, with attention being paid to the organisation of the company, effect of workers and impression presented to the public.

The Chrysler building in New York is a car company headquarters. The building's composition is formal & decorative. It has an extreme vertical emphasis given through its tall structure & high spire. The building is shown in three distinct sections with a wider base, long, thinner midsection & thinner top with a tall spire and subtle elevations. The longest midsection is taller than it is wide providing the vertical emphasis. Each section is virtually separated by mounted eagle head decorations on each corner. Grids of windows scale the centre of the building ^{showing} ~~emphasizing~~ the vertical emphasis.

~~The section leading up to the spire~~ The composition is made up of geometric forms with a square base & ~~rectangular~~ rectangular upper sections. The fenestration matches the geometric shapes & one level above another. ~~On the final, top section leading up~~ These forms present a sense of order. ~~On the final, top section leading up to the spire~~ more rounded curvilinear forms can be seen, turning into gradual elevations before finishing with the spire. The spire projects extreme vertical emphasis. Fenestration on these top level elevations also becomes triangular, showing

a further ~~break~~^{relation} from the geometric forms.

The building's vertical emphasis is functional as it allows for large amounts of work space in a dense city environment which would be unachievable in a horizontal build. Large amounts of modular fenestration allow for lots of equal natural light for those working inside & the repeated use of granite & marble ~~create~~ project a sense of order, ~~imposed onto~~ fitting with its formal function.

It's formal & geometric design also creates a unified & organized design which fits with a work environment. It's height projects a sense of status and grandness associated with a large company such as this. Balconies ~~on the highest~~ ~~level~~ near the top of the building allow for a viewpoint of the cityscape & workers to get fresh air. Fenestration through the whole building also allows for a view of the city. The use of steel provides structural strength. The high spire also projects a sense of status associated with a large corporate company.

Question 4

Nature proved to be a popular choice amongst candidates and most engaged well with its concepts; it was the Theme which yielded the best responses on the whole, again this year. Most candidates adhered to the requirement to use works from both pre and post 1850 for the two parts of the question, therefore demonstrating their understanding of the depiction of nature across a significant time span. A large variety of works were chosen, covering a wide geographical area and a variety of styles. Works beyond the European tradition were used very well for both parts of the question, despite this not being a requirement for either. Architecture and sculpture, as well as painting, were used confidently throughout the responses, particularly in relationship to patronage. Many candidates showed personal engagement with the works they discussed and demonstrated great appreciation for the skill and innovation of the artists and architects who they had studied, as well as secure knowledge of the contexts in which works were produced.

Part (a)

Question 4(a): Explore how landscape or seascape have been depicted in two works of art. One must have been produced pre-1850 and one post-1850.

Many candidates demonstrated confidence in their chosen examples of landscape and seascape from before and after 1850. The specification stipulates the study of this genre in 2D works and most candidates selected their works well. The most successful candidates selected appropriate works of art from both before and after 1850 and explored them with fluency and contextual understanding. These responses typically demonstrated confident use of art historical vocabulary and rooted their analysis in a well-researched understanding of the period in which the work was produced, including relevant technical and compositional details. Stronger candidates made clear links between the visual elements of each work and its broader social, cultural, or environmental context, showing how depictions of nature reflect changing artistic priorities across time. Pre-1850, the most popular and effective choices were Constable's *The Hay Wain*, Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* and a variety of works by Turner, most of which worked well. Some candidates who selected *The Fighting Temeraire* or *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)* focused too much on the ships and the contextual details of the works and not enough on the sea and sky; in some cases, a lack of engagement with the formal aspects of the works limited the analytical depth required for higher mark bands. Candidates are reminded that AO marks are equally weighted in these questions and that there are just two AO1 marks available for each of their chosen works. Post-1850, Monet and Van Gogh were very popular choices and the exploration of landscape or seascape in works such as *Impression: Sunrise* and *Wheatfield with Crows* was generally very well handled. Poorer choices were sculptural works by Barbara Hepworth, in particular, which are not 'seascapes' and did not allow for developed analysis.

Candidate responses:

This response was placed in the top level of the mark scheme and gained all the marks available for the work pre-1850, Turner's *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*. The candidate balanced the information required to reach each assessment objective perfectly and made interesting links between the context, technique and effect created. They demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding, perceptive analysis and interpretation and in depth critical judgement in their exploration of the depiction of seascape in this work.

JMW Turner's *Snow Storm*, 1842 depicts seascape as overpowering. This is seen in his treatment of the waves, ~~sketch~~ clouds and rain. ^{demonstrating the steam boat} He uses a palette knife and large hog hair brush to sweep ~~across~~ paint across the canvas. We can see the brush marks as he does this, enhancing the sense of overpowering movement about the waves, particularly as we can witness the gesture of his arms as he did this. The dark tones of blues, blacks and browns ^{in the sea and sky} ~~enhance~~ enhance the sense of danger and power of the sea and weather, ~~for~~ and his technique of blurring the clouds together into a confused mass builds on this. Turner in particular was known for his

innovative techniques in painting, smearing, scratching
and even spitting in his works in order to
create the correct effects. Seeing such vigor in
Snow Storm thus proves just how keen he was
in depicting it as powerful. He also depicts the
landscape as greatly confusing and disorienting.
The painting has a circular composition with a swirling
vortex of sea ~~and sky~~ and sky, creating a
telescope ~~effect~~ ^{effect} ~~and~~ ^{as though you are being dropped}
sense of instability ~~and~~ ^{and collapses} depth. However, he
also removes any depth that he has created
by drawing attention to the surface of the
canvas with his thick applications of paint,
particularly in the foreground where the waves are
large and choppy. Thus, this makes his painting
very confusing and difficult to understand,
particularly with the ~~also~~ lack of any clear
linear or atmospheric perspective. The depiction in
this way could be read as reflecting Turner's
own experience ^{and chaotic struggles} as a painter. Painting in a time
when ^{linear} ~~the~~ history painting was favoured over
landscape painting, he ~~suffered~~ ^{suffered} negative
criticism both on his subject matter and
painting technique. In the knowledge of this, the
confusion of his painting then becomes greatly
powerful and impactful.

This response was awarded full marks, with the exploration of the depiction of landscape in Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Cypresses* being particularly impressive in its evidenced assertion of the landscape as a reflection of Van Gogh's emotional turmoil. Again, the way in which it weaves the context and visual appearance together to portray the mood created is highly sophisticated and demonstrates the candidate's personal engagement with, and understanding of, the work.

1899
Vincent Van Gogh's 'A Wheatfield with Cypresses', as a
Post-Impressionist work, uses stylised forms in ^{the landscape} ~~the scene~~
to use the nature as a vehicle to express his personal emotion.
~~In the work~~ The work was created when Van Gogh was a
voluntary patient at an asylum in Saint-Remy, Provence,
after ^{while} recovering from a ~~psych~~ psychotic episode, where he cut
off his ear. We see a provincial landscape, with characteristic

cypress tree on the right, yellow wheatfields and an olive tree in the midground. In the distance are the Apilles mountains. This is the second work in a series of 3, and he did this whilst working at the first and not the actual landscape, suggesting the importance to him to capture the effect of the landscape ^{on him} as opposed to its objective appearance. To this, bright pure colours have been used, for instance the bright yellow of the wheatfields (experimenting with chromium yellow - a new paint ^{here}), which contrast complementarily to the purple of the mountains, creating a vivid scene. Wet-on-wet application of paint, for instance in the vibrant swirls in the clouds suggest a childlike exuberance ⁱⁿ his approach to landscape, ^{perhaps conveying a jolly mood} however, despite the aerial perspective for the mountains, the scene is claustrophobic. This is achieved using ^{thick} impasto for the sky, and there is no alternative viewing but to succumb to the nature. Furthermore, the flicking brushstrokes of the cypress tree and the hatched strokes for the wheatfields convey the wind. Van Gogh called this Provincial mistral wind 'a devil of a mistral', words by his mood. Cypress trees also have connotations of the demonic, and mortality, creating a psychologically intense scene that conveys his emotions, through nature.

Part (b)

'Patronage is not important in understanding works of art or architecture concerned with nature.'

How far do you agree with this statement? To support your answer you must refer to:

- named works of art/architecture from pre-1850 and post-1850
- your critical text(s).

This question produced some excellent responses, which showed strong engagement with the question and secure knowledge of the role of patrons in the chosen works. The strongest candidates used a variety of painting, sculpture and architecture; some suggesting a distinction in the importance of patronage in understanding these different types of works. Others proposed a difference in the significance of patronage in works produced pre-1850 to those produced after 1850. Higher-level responses were characterised by focused arguments supported by a small number of well-chosen examples, typically three or four. These candidates used critical texts to reinforce their points and consistently tied their selected works back to the role of patronage in shaping the work of art or architecture. Where appropriate, candidates interrogated the impact of religious, political or private patronage on artistic production and meaning, and supported their claims through close analysis of form, content, and context. Stronger responses pointed out how patronage was often important, but did not always override the artist's intention. Architectural examples, particularly the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and Antoni Gaudi, were popular, but candidates also effectively discussed works by artists such as Giambologna and Ai Wei Wei. Artworks with no known patron - such as works by Dürer or Richard Long - also served candidates well, but only in instances where there was a clear evaluation of how important a knowledge of patronage is, relative to other factors, for understanding works of art or architecture concerned with nature. Weaker responses tended to list multiple works without fully developing an argument, or indeed to consider only two examples. In some instances, critical texts were cited without clear relevance to the argument, or omitted entirely. Where AO3 was addressed well, it was with consideration of why patronage might not be necessary to understand a work of art but many candidates simply asserted it just was not relevant for a particular work of art. There was some confusion over the understanding of 'patronage', with some students referring to self-patronage instead of recognising an evident lack of a patron. There was an assertion from several candidates that Hokusai's *36 Views of Mount Fuji* were commissioned by his publisher but this is not correct and could not be credited; this led to confusion and erroneous argument in some cases.

Candidate response:

This response was placed in the top level of the mark scheme and shows the candidate setting up their argument that patronage is most relevant in works of architecture concerned with nature. They explore this through their chosen

examples from both pre and post 1850, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of patronage, context and visual elements of the works. The integration of critical texts to inform the analysis of the form of the building in the discussion of Frank Lloyd Wright is particularly impressive. The candidate went on to examine a sculptural work by way of comparison before concluding that patronage is significant in works of art, and particularly in architecture, concerned with nature.

It can be argued that patronage is significant in understanding works of art and architecture concerned with nature, however this arguably applies more to architecture than other forms of art, as the building is catered to the needs of the patron which can be observed in both 'Angkor Wat' (1166-1150) and 'Fallingwater' (1936-39).

Patronage is arguably a primary factor in understanding Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Fallingwater' and a key reason for this is that respecting the patron's needs was ~~a primary~~ the third rule of Wright's rules of organic architecture. In this case, the patron was Edgar Kaufman and his influence is evident in the integration of the building with the natural environment. Not only does the building actually cross a waterfall of the Bear Run river, but ribbon windows running around the building allow ~~the~~ those inside a constant 360° view of nature, allowing them to feel entirely immersed in their surroundings. Furthermore, Watkin's comments that the building "seems to grow organically out of its setting" which can be seen to refer to the contrasting horizontal (dominating the right of the building)

and verandas which occupy the left of the building. These make the house appear to have "grown" because the ~~cantilevers~~ stratified layers of cantilevers on the right appear to look like branches growing out of the left of the house. ~~For~~ On top of this, these cantilevers are balconies, with over half of the house actually being outdoor space creating a smooth transition between interior and nature. These elements of integration with the landscape reflect Kauffman's desire for 'fallingwater' to act as a nature retreat at the place where ~~he~~ his family often holidayed. Practically, patronage is also important for this building - as it was once meant to be lived in, there are three bedrooms for the family of three. Thus in the visual appearance of 'fallingwater' and the practical arrangement, patronage is highly significant for understanding the building.

Meanwhile, the influence of patronage on Angkor Wat may not be as immediately obvious however it is still very important. Primarily the building utilises nature to create a temple dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu. This can be seen in the temple mountain ~~and~~ arrangement: ~~five~~ five ogival towers in the shape of ~~lotus~~ ~~but~~ closed lotus buds are in a quincunx

arrangement, mirroring the contemporary perception of Mt Meru which was considered the celestial home of the gods. Therefore it seems as if the religious context is the most important for understanding the building and its use of nature. However the patron does also play a significant role. Built for King ~~Surjavarman~~ ^{Surjavarman} II, the monumental size of the complex represents his personal desire to show devotion to the gods and reassert ~~at~~ Angkor as the centre of the Khmer empire. Furthermore, the temple points west which was unusual for the time perhaps suggesting that the building served a secondary role as a tomb for the emperor which is reinforced as he is shown many times on the bas reliefs of the temple, once even riding an elephant, thus using nature to reinforce his importance. Consequently, the patron is once again significant in fully understanding the architecture.

Question 5

Identities proved to be the most popular Theme again this year; a large majority of candidates selected it as one of their two options, which led to the widest mark range of any of the questions. Once again, candidates engaged well with a wide range of identities, from those of artists and architects, to patrons and sitters. Many candidates showed personal responses to their chosen works and the ability to adapt these works of art and architecture to the specifics of the questions asked.

Part (a)

Question 5(a): Explore how identity has been represented in two paintings/2D works. At least one of your examples must have been produced from beyond the European tradition.

This was a straightforward question, which allowed candidates to choose from the range of 2D work which they had studied for the Identities Theme, leading to a wide range of examples being used. Many candidates used paintings by their specified artist, with the work of Vigée le Brun, Van Eyck and Rembrandt proving particularly popular. Candidates who performed strongly on this question selected appropriate 2D works and rooted their analysis in both visual evidence and contextual insight, focusing on the specific identity being portrayed. These responses demonstrated a strong command of subject-specific vocabulary and engaged meaningfully with how identity—cultural, political, ethnic, gender or personal—was constructed through formal elements. A significant number of candidates chose a painting by Frida Kahlo as their work from beyond the European tradition. While many handled this well, the volume of repeated responses led to some superficial or formulaic answers, with many being purely descriptive and not analytical. Several candidates used illustrations by Bichitr highly successfully, however, and these responses were a delight to read. Candidates who could not access the upper levels of the mark scheme either selected 3D works, such as one of the Benin Bronzes, or defaulted to descriptive and narrative approaches that lacked sustained analytical focus, or used two works which were produced within the European tradition. Some candidates mistook Chris Ofili's work to be from beyond the European tradition or used Reynold's *Mai (Omai)* as their chosen work to fulfil this requirement, despite both these artists being British and, therefore, within the European tradition. Souza's *Crucifixion* was another work which was used erroneously as being beyond the European tradition; this work was painted in Britain and draws on European influences and therefore does not meet the specification requirement for this term.

Candidate responses:

This response was placed in the top level of the mark scheme and gained all the marks available for the work beyond the European tradition, Kahlo's *Self-portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States*. This candidate explores Kahlo's representation of her identity precisely, including relevant contextual detail and visual analysis to inform and enhance the argument.

3200
Frida Kahlo's early twentieth century oil on ~~the~~ painting ~~Between the Borderline~~

On the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States is a self portrait

in which Kahlo represents elements of her ethnic identity and her identity as a woman and artist. The painting is divided roughly into two parts.

On the left we see elements traditionally associated with Kahlo's Mexican heritage: a ruined Aztec temple, a "day of the dead" skull, and fertility idols, for example. Below, on the ground we see flowering plants

whose roots ~~stretch~~ down and across to the center of the panel, where they meet the cables approaching from the right. On

the right are ~~traditional~~ elements associated with Kahlo's adopted home, the USA: the robotic machinery, towering chimneys from the Ford

plant and ~~modernist~~ modernist buildings in the background. The ~~robotic~~ machinery sends its cables into the ground to meet the organic

organic roots coming from the left. These two situations to Kahlo's hybrid identity are expressed in Kahlo's depiction of herself

on a pedestal (a constructed work of art) in the centre (on the borderline).

Rather than her customary traditional Mexican outfit, she wears a drab pink dress (suggesting the

influence of colonialism), and ~~pink~~ white laced gloves.

Yet, ~~she~~ by emphasizing features such as her facial hair,

the nipples we can see through the fabric of her dress, and

the cigarette she holds in one hand (and Mexican flag in the

other), she rejects stereotypical or idealized feminine

gender imagery.

soot and then a combination of inter-colour-like pigments in various textures. The whole piece was burnished with gold, giving it a shine which emphasises its role as proof of Shah Jahan's power and the skill of Bichitr. There was too ~~the~~ the identity which the patron desired - of a strong and pious king - is projected alongside that of the artist as a skilled worker.

This response was awarded full marks, with the exploration of the representation of identity in Bichitr's *Shah-Jahan receives his three eldest sons* being particularly impressive. The candidate demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of the context and appearance of the work, exploring meaning in a highly effective manner.

Bichitr's 1628 'Shah Jahan Receives his Sons' (Illustration on paper) is also a work which seeks to present an individual's preferred identity, here reflecting the ascension of Shah Jahan and his new role as ruler. The architectural elements of the composition frame the crowd of nobles and relations, emphasising order and harmony, while Shah Jahan's sons are depicted beside him, some bowing and the youngest behind his chair. Beneath him a globe with two lions and a lamb suggests peace and harmony, while a similar effect is conveyed by the two elephants, who hold between them a gold chain hung with bells. At the centre is a gold platform, gilded and incised with a needle, from which a mullah would have read the first Friday prayer of the reign - epitomising the importance to Shah Jahan of demonstrating religious fervour. The skill ~~attributed~~ Bichitr, who signed the work as a 'servant' - likely exaggeration designed to emphasise Shah Jahan's power - can be seen in the complex use of space and ^{in the design used;} ~~the use of~~ a chaotic underdrawing, followed by outlines of gum arabic mixed with

Part (b)

'The materials and techniques chosen by an artist or architect are the most important factor in depicting identity.'

How far do you agree with this statement? To support your answer you must refer to:

- named works of art/architecture
- your specified artist(s)
- your critical text(s).

There were many interesting responses to this question, which demonstrated candidates enjoying the challenge of considering the importance played by materials in techniques in the depiction of identity in their chosen works. Many candidates proposed the argument that materials and techniques play a greater part in 3D works and/or architecture than in painting and carried this assertion through their selected examples, which often proved highly successful. Some, however, overlooked or dismissed the importance of oil paint or brushstroke, for example, when following this line of argument. The requirement to refer to works by specified artist(s) prompted candidates to explore works by artists and architects they knew well, and which fitted the question perfectly. Quinn, Shonibare and Perry, in particular, were used to support the statement with the work of Hadid, Wren, Rembrandt and Vigée le Brun being frequently used to either agree or indeed to provide a counter argument. Responses were particularly effective when used to demonstrate how medium can enhance conceptual meaning, for example Quinn's use of his own blood in *Self* - the most frequently used work - to emphasise physical and biological identity. Many candidates used this work, in particular, to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of contextual - as well as visual - factors and integrated critical texts well into their argument here. Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* and Perry's *Huhne Vase* were also very popular and well used. More unusual choices of work, such as Sarah Lucas' *Christ You Know It Ain't Easy*, Kara Walker's *Sugarbaby*, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, lifted some essays to the higher levels of the mark scheme. Some candidates found the formation of a counter-argument challenging, finding it hard to decide what the most important factor is, in depicting identity, if it is not materials and techniques. The candidates who did offer a convincing counter argument, based on the importance of the artist/architect's own identity, that of the patron or contextual factors of the time in which they were working, generally produced more compelling essays.

Candidate responses:

This response, which was placed in the top level of the mark scheme, sets out the argument in the introduction and engages with it throughout its chosen examples. Using works by specified artists and architect, the candidate provides a very well-evidenced, balanced argument. The discussion of each work is fully focused on the specifics of the question; contextual knowledge and visual analysis, as well as critical texts, are integrated intelligently to enhance the

argument throughout. The consideration of Perry's *Huhne Vase* is particularly impressive.

Materials and techniques makes up a large factor in directing the meaning of vases depicting identity, though ~~the arguments suggested by Grayson Perry~~ also often contribute to other more important factors that denote identity. This is seen in Grayson Perry's "I am a Man" (2014), who uses bronze to allow a reading of power and strength to an assertive declaration of masculinity. Similarly, in Zaha Hadid's "MAXXI" (2010), the use of material contributes to shape to the identity of the building as both Modern and Roman, though there are perhaps other aspects of the building that contribute to its identity more, such as Hadid's own identity or her artistic influence from Roman civic culture. ~~Richard Bogle's "Huhne Vase"~~ Grayson Perry's "The Huhne Vase" (2014), on the other hand, relies on material and techniques as the most important factor in conveying the identity of Chris Huhne.

In Grayson Perry's "The Huhne Vase", material contributes significantly to the portrayal of identity within the work. The vase is made of ceramic - a "low art medium" linking to Perry's own identity and working class background in Essex - which intrinsically denotes connotations of fragility and humanness. This is perhaps what Perry wants to convey - in his book "The Descent of Man", Perry describes Chris Huhne (who the vase is about) as a "decent man", whose "identity has remained largely unexplored". ~~To Huhne~~ Huhne has no identity, explaining the fragility of ~~the~~ Perry's portrayal of Huhne, announcing then a the fragility of Huhne's masculinity, power, and hubris. The ~~vase~~ vase incorporates the Japanese technique of *kintsugi*, using gold to repair cracks - even after the scandal, Perry presents Huhne as "repaired", immediately covering up, and refusing to take any blame or shame in his actions - though these cracks are still ^{now} visible on the surface of the vase. Its polished rings represent the superficial shine of Huhne's hubris. The iconography on the vase, in overall symmetry and modularity to convey a repetitive sense of structure and order, includes phallic

and quasi symbols, the number plate 'H41NE', and a spell camera, all of which relate to Huhne's scandal - thus the "portrait is an collageist oil, using iconography and material to convey the gaze of Huhne's identity in the eyes of Piers."

This candidate provides an excellent counter-argument, asserting that patronage and the relationship between artist and sitter is, in fact, more important than the materials and techniques used in depicting identity. Again, contextual information, critical texts and visual analysis are intertwined to produce a highly convincing argument.

However, the role of patronage and the sitter is also hugely important. Marc Gaudier-Breusk's 'Mirothe Head of Ezra Pound' (1914, marble) was intended to 'capture certain emotions which I get from your character' (Gaudier-Breusk). It does this by presenting Pound as a godlike, timeless figure, monumentalised by simplification and his leadership qualities suggested by his mass of helmet-like hair. Pound, as - leader of London literary society, got Gaudier-Breusk involved in the Vorticism movement.

which sought to capture truth in emotion and simplification, and the close relationship between artist and sitter can be seen in Gaudier-Brezka's ironic undermining of Pound's request that the statue be 'virile' by having the rear resemble King male genitals. Although it could be argued that the materials and techniques are also important - ~~the~~ the statue was directly carved, with deep undercutting emphasising Pound's virility, while Pound purchased the (very hard) marble Lonsdale ~~Marble~~, the relationship between sitter and ~~person~~ ^{artist} is clearly more important. A similar example is Antonio Canova's 'Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker' (1806), which was commissioned when the emperor was still just consul, in 1802. Although the use of mostly seamless Carrara marble, polished using Canova's special process of ^{roughs} ~~graining~~ ~~stone~~ followed by a purple stone and sham leather, ~~and~~ contributes ~~to~~ to the idealised and classical air of the sculpture, more important is the suggestion that it is 'essentially political' (Johns) - Canova distilled Napoleon for looking from Italy, and the fact that the statue was, as Napoleon put it, 'too athletic', is probably proof that it was ironic in its idealisation and designed to emphasise Napoleon's arrogance. ^{this shows once} ~~the~~ ~~shows~~ the importance of the relationship between sitter and artist, ~~and~~ suggesting that in some cases it is more important than materials and techniques.

Question 6

War was the least popular of the three optional Themes again this year. Once again, those candidates who did respond to these questions demonstrated personal engagement with their chosen works and the issues surrounding the effects of war. There was a wide range of works selected, with those produced beyond the European tradition being used confidently in many responses despite there being no specific requirement to do so in either part of the question, this year.

Part (a)

Question 6(a): Explore how war has influenced two works by your specified sculptor/3D artist.

Candidates responded very well to this question, with Deller, Moore and Canova eliciting impressive responses, though few were able to explore the influence of war in Canova's *Theseus and the Minotaur*, convincingly. The strongest responses examined relevant works by specified sculptors through a focused, analytical lens, exploring how war had influenced both the thematic content and the formal decisions behind the work, including materials, scale, and technique. These candidates consistently tied their analysis back to the context of conflict, demonstrating both historical understanding and technical insight. When choosing to write about Deller, candidates invariably used the same two works. Sometimes, candidates were seduced into writing about the specific influences of war, such as uniforms and the bombed-out car, but then lost steam when it came to higher order critical reasoning. The best candidates recognised that *It Is What It Is* poignantly and urgently addresses the dangerous disconnect that war can engender between nations and between people and *We're Here Because We're Here* seeks to address the fact that war often generates stultifying memorials that do not create space for real physical and emotional grief; the work of an artist such as Deller requires this level of engagement. Generally, weaker responses offered broad, descriptive accounts of the artist's life and intentions or used invalid works, such as those by Lutyens, who is a specified architect.

Candidate responses:

This response gained full marks for its comprehensive exploration of the influence of war on Canova's *Memorial to Admiral Angelo Emo* and *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*. The candidate combines strong contextual knowledge - of war, subject and artist - with detailed analysis and interpretation to provide excellent critical judgement in evaluating the influence of war in each work.

Canova's *Memorial to Admiral Angelo Emo* (1794) is a work that memorialises Emo's contribution to the war effort and Venice's naval strength. It has been seen by critics like John as a 'memorialisation of Venice's great naval strength ~~and~~ with political nostalgia at a time of uncertainty'. Thus, Tutton and Falke's comparison of the work to the esteemed sculpture lends the work a sense of dignity. Firstly, the work borrows a 'style' format from Greek-Roman traditions, reminding Venice's naval strength in decline by looking back to Ancient civilisation. Emo is also portrayed with the dignity of a Roman senator, with his face rendered realistically demonstrating age and wisdom. This reflects Emo's continuous contribution to the war effort against the Barbary pirates; he has invested the floating batteries in his lifetime that enabled Venice to protect themselves from foreign intruders. Thus, this achievement is glorified in the work with the floating battery depicted in the foreground. To draw attention to it, a winged victory

It depicted standing on the left to reflect the heroism associated with Zeno's achievement. ~~The last of figures~~ is depicted to be in the act of engraving Zeno's name on the stone, unlike the other ~~and~~ victory figures and commends him, reflecting his ~~winning~~ ~~off~~ naval achievement through referencing the sea climate. The battle ships depicted in low relief at the back also serve as a reminder of war. This monument not only reflects Zeno's personal achievement, it also reflects the Venetian's stark aim to represent the strength and power of the war effort, now ~~the~~ slowly being eroded by the invasion of Napoleon calling an imminent threat.

Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker (1802-1806) was a commission by Napoleon himself to Canova, aimed to demonstrate his control over Italian art & culture and to assert domination. The work has been seen, however, as an "ironic condemnation of the imperialistic warmonger", and it has been seen as such. Napoleon is depicted in 'rude', towering at 3.45m tall, which can be seen as a mockery to Napoleon's physical shyness. He is also depicted in an extremely idealized manner, with slight contrapposto reminiscent of the Polykles, and in a dignified manner, with his left hand holding a staff and right hand holding a gilded orb - onto which Nike, the Goddess of Victory stands. This has been interpreted as ironic and reflective of Canova's bitter retaliation at Napoleon's imposed commission - as Canova only reluctantly took on the commission with Paul VII's advice not to anger Napoleon since they were negotiating a peace concordat at the time. Nevertheless, the sculpture could also represent a genuine pacifist message with Napoleon as an allegorical peace maker. However, this is overshadowed

by the dramatically artistically-filtered depiction, to which Napoleon reacted extremely negatively against, and it was never put on display as Napoleon was embarrassed by the nudity. The sculpture is a reflection of how Napoleon's attempt to exert power over an Italian artist as a sign of conquest backfired, even though Napoleon has ~~also~~ already successfully conquered a lot of Italian land by the beginning of the 19th century.

This response also gained full marks, for its engagement with the poignancy of Deller's creations and the influence of war on the artist and his works. The candidate demonstrates excellent knowledge of the circumstances surrounding each of the works and of Deller's intentions in producing them.

Jeremy Deller's 'We're here because we're here' is a conceptual performance installation work categorised as an 'event' and therefore stylistically difficult to define but aligns to post-modernist principles. It is based on the Battle of the Somme which took place ~~November~~ 7 July - November 1918 and was one of the bloodiest battles in British history. The title is poignant and ~~illustrates the futility of~~ alludes to the futility of war, with ~~it represents~~ the words 'We're here because we're here' were sung ~~to~~ to the tune of God Save the King, the only words spoken by the ~~the~~ untrained volunteers. Boys aged 15-352 from ~~a~~ backgrounds ranging from deepfarmers, GCSE students, doctors, lawyers, ~~etc~~ teachers, social workers, etc participated wearing the uniform and kit from the Battle of the Somme, ~~and so~~ they travelled throughout the UK carrying cards that would ~~be~~ state a name of the soldier, regiment and the day of their death. ~~with~~ ~~white~~ ~~illustrating~~ Jeremy Deller described these cards as 'little ~~small~~ tombstones' with every volunteer representing one of the 15 regiments that participated in the battle of the Somme.

Many people who lost loved ones in the war would report sightings of their loved one in uniform, ~~that was~~ ~~inspired~~ Heller likely took inspiration from this as he did from John Singer Sargent's 'Gassed' 1919.

Jeremy Deller studied Art History for his BA, ~~and~~ so history is integral to his ways of working. His work is uniquely collaborative and interactive, drawing inspiration from the accounts of victims of war and bringing it to the public. The scale of the work was technologically innovative, stretching from Snettland to Plymouth and operating from 7am to 7pm. This work illustrates and highlights the tragedy and fatality of war, by bringing the scale of the victims to the public who are silent (as decided by Richard Norton who collaborated to support the project).

Part (b)

Question 6(b): 'Works of art or architecture concerned with war have more significance if seen in the place they were produced or commemorate.'

How far do you agree with this statement? To support your answer you must refer to:

- named works of art/architecture from pre-1850 and post-1850
- your critical text(s).

There were some extremely thoughtful responses to this question and it was pleasing to see candidates engaging so well and really thinking about their chosen works in the context of location and its significance. The most successful responses contained a well-reasoned argument that was grounded in compositional and contextual analysis of three to four selected works. Strong agreement with the statement was made with reference to significant architectural and sculptural examples, especially those by Libeskind, Lutyens and Whiteread. Candidates were able to successfully demonstrate how site and location contribute to a work's emotional, political, or cultural significance. Convincing counter-arguments were provided through the universality of works such as Picasso's *Guernica* and various paintings by Goya, in particular. Iri and Toschi Maruki's *Hiroshima Panels* were also used convincingly by several candidates. In the strongest responses, critical texts were referenced to reinforce points rather than sit apart from the discussion, with quotes embedded fluently within the wider argument. Some candidates, however, failed to explore the significance of location in relation to the artwork's purpose, or their argument was undermined by incorrect knowledge of the location of the conflict or, indeed, the creation or display of an artwork. A small number of candidates failed to recognise, or adhere to, the requirement to reference works both pre and post 1850, which prevented them from being able to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Candidate response:

This response was awarded full marks, which testifies to the quality of engagement with the question and the works chosen to answer it. Here, the candidate produces an excellent argument in support of the statement through the architecture of Lutyens and the memorial sculpture of Whiteread. Context is very well understood and used to inform the significance of each work in its place to act as a permanent reminder of the conflict that has taken place there. Visual analysis and interpretation are used to enhance the argument and critical texts are well integrated to add strength and depth.

Although, location most certainly plays a role in further enriching the message ~~and~~ interbed by in architecture and more so does so better due to it being within the fabric of the location. In Lutyen's Sir Edward Lutyen's Thiepval memorial in Spunnes, he not only reclaims the conventions of the arch, but also reclaims the actual battle site to commemorate and respectfully dignify human sacrifice. The structurally, it ^{resonates} is this idea too, it is ~~is~~ not ornamental, consisting only with a series of arches atop one another, creating a monumental structure. This creates a sense of permanence, and perhaps immortality due to its form, solid and unmerable scale. Moreover, its lack of decoration further creates a sense of discipline in its form, making it ~~be~~ stern, blunt and contemplative without traditional arches and their

'delusionary' ~~celebrated~~ elaborate and opulent columns and friezes. The red brick used was originally from Lille (France) perhaps highlighting the Anglo-French relationship within the battle. Moreover, the white Portland stone and red create a stark contrast to the wide green lands that surround the area, making it perhaps reflective of the inescapable, and thus, one cannot help but look and admire. A tragedy resultant of war and conflict.

The location is within the actual battle fields and around and within the arch ~~now~~ gravestones and engraved names surround it, none are placed higher, highlighting an equal dignification and commemoration to the soldiers. ~~It is~~ The ^{by structure} ~~landmark~~ thus becomes one whereby people reunite to commemorate and reflect on the battle on the actual battlefield, allowing us to really reflect on the realities of war.

~~Gen~~ ^{British} TV host and ~~the~~ writer Gavin Stamp commented on how it 'does not glorify war... but dignifies it' and this can be seen structurally. But the ^{real} ~~real~~ dignification truly comes from how Lutyer's reclaims the actual land, allowing the fallen soldiers to collectively be commemorated on the land which today has been lost away. He ~~is~~ ~~a~~ reminds us of the battle by using its location alongside its symbolic details to further embody ~~his~~ ~~to~~ his and the commissioner of the Imperial Graves Commission's desire to create

a contemplative and reflective unitive spot to ^{reflect} on war's brutality.

Similarly, Rachel Whiteread's Judenplatz memorial does something similar in which she uses the environment around to ~~see~~ reinforce the message she desires to embody. Judenplatz in Vienna was actually a site in which a synagogue was burnt down during Jewish persecution, thus, she almost rebuilds this destroyed Jewish heritage by ~~create~~ rebuilding a memorial dedicated to a similar eradication of Jewish identity. Moreover, the area is surrounded by urban, Viennese houses, ~~almost~~ disrupting an 'aesthetic' view of the town belated with the stark, white, cold concrete ~~the~~ casted library. Like in Jutyer's arch, one cannot avoid the structure ^{and} ~~which~~ ~~into~~ ^{this}, consistently reminds us of its message. The ^{memorial} ~~for~~ consists of unopened casted books. ~~The~~ She plays with our notions of books and their meaning as by denying us of a title, we are unaware of the story within. Just like how the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were stripped of ^{telling} their own stories ~~the~~, she reflects this with the titleless books. Moreover, books contain ~~has~~ anecdotes, history, recordings of identity and figures and they can only be accessed when opened, yet here, they are shut, unperusable and thus we will

never be able to discover their story, ~~and~~ Alternatively, this may mirror how Jewish victims were stripped of their identity during the Holocaust, demonstrating the realities of Jewish massacres in the second world war. Furthermore, Whiteread's ~~interested~~ ^{careful} use of casting concrete is distinct in her work, allowing invisible spaces to be seen, and thus, in relation to the memorial, she allows unseen history or identity to be revealed to us. Although, like the unnamed spaces, the casted door is unoperable, teasing us, making us of that we will never discover what is inside, ~~and~~ mirroring how Jewish victims were never able to discover their future. What makes this memorial so potent however, is its location, Judenplatz was an area where a synagogue was burned down, thus aligning and showing many parallels of Jewish persecution and oppression. Moreover, its stark contrast of concrete assaults the comfort of tourists and traditionalists as its cold, hard concrete surface juxtaposes with the traditional buildings around it. It thereby acts as a ~~form~~ ^{permanent} reminder of her message ~~and that fulfills her desire to make memorials hurt~~ ^{as "it should hurt"} as it is inescapable, immortal and unmovable.

Paper Summary

- The standard of responses was as expected and in line with previous years.
- The enthusiasm and perceptive observation evident in many of the responses to Visual Analysis questions was encouraging.
- There were fewer rubric errors made in relation to previous years and most candidates selected relevant works that met the requirements of the questions.
- Once again, a wide variety of interesting and relevant examples were selected by candidates and their engagement with these works was excellent.
- The confidence in discussing the works of specified artists/architects and works from beyond the European tradition was impressive.

Based on performance on this paper, future students should ensure that:

- They read and process the information given about works of art and architecture in the Visual Analysis questions to avoid supposition and errors regarding elements of the specific works.
- In response to Visual Analysis questions, they focus their answer on the two parts of the question asked and do not write a general response to the image with which they are presented or discuss elements such as composition or materials and techniques, where this does not form part of the question.
- They understand the difference between 'horizontal' and 'vertical', as confusion of these terms can severely impact the marks that can be awarded for Visual Analysis questions.
- They understand the term 'beyond the European tradition' and that this does not encompass the work of BAME British artists or subjects who are not of European origin.
- They read the requirements of the question carefully to ensure that they use 2D or 3D work, or works pre and post 1850, where this is specified.