

Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

The exam plates provided candidates with a wide range of art works to choose from. The quality of the online responses was strong and the suggested word limit helped candidates focus on quality rather than quantity.

Candidates made good use of the contextual information – in the form of supporting images and notes in the resource booklet – in the construction of their responses, giving them visual and written information to work from, as well as encouraging them to analyse the visual features in more detail.

The majority of candidates across both digital and paper-based exams demonstrated good contextual and art historical knowledge in the areas that they had studied, and many candidates produced genuine personal responses in their own voice.

Candidates appeared to be familiar with the plates, with a significant number being used in responses for the Meaning and Context papers.

Question 7 – the Open question – allowed candidates to use both Renaissance and Modern topics and was particularly popular this year. Most candidates brought together a range of information that they had studied for their chosen art works. Being able to use two art works from different areas of study also allowed candidates to write more broadly and show their knowledge of art works across time.

Part B: Report on standards

91482: Demonstrate understanding of style in art works

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- described and explained the treatment of stylistic characteristics in each of their chosen art works and identified similarities and/or differences
- attempted to provide reasons for the similarities and/or differences, but these reasons were generalised or inaccurate
- focussed on Part B of the question and not writing a substantial response in Part A. For example, candidates provided information about the time and place in which each artist was working, but did not give a full enough description or analysis of the treatment of their chosen stylistic characteristics in each art work to reach Merit.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- selected art works that were not included in the resource booklet
- selected stylistic characteristics that were not included in the question, such as “colour”
- described stylistic characteristics from each art work, but did not identify or explain similarities and/or differences
- provided a response that was too short to constitute a full explanation of stylistic characteristics, or was incomplete
- provided a response that analysed meaning and/or context rather than style.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- described and explained the use of stylistic characteristics fully in both art works, and identified appropriate similarities and/or differences
- gave appropriate reasons for the stated similarities and/or differences. At high Merit (M6) these reasons were justified.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- answered both Part A and Part B of the question fully and comprehensively
- showed convincing and/or insightful understanding of how the time and place (i.e. contextual factors) that the artist was working in affected their chosen stylistic characteristics in Part B of their answer
- used art historical language and vocabulary confidently and appropriately.

Standard specific comments

Some candidates misunderstood some terminology. For example, the term 'media' required candidates discuss the use of materials used by their selected artists/art works. However, candidates used media with an understanding of 'social media', which resulted in confused responses.

Some candidates selected inappropriate stylistic characteristics for their chosen art works. For example, "Modernist Design" is a stylistic characteristic found in design-based and architectural works and involves features such as an emphasis on horizontal and vertical lines, lack of ornament or mouldings, a "machine aesthetic", functional forms. Some candidates attempted to apply this stylistic characteristic to paintings such as Matisse's *Blue Nude* or Fahey's *Final Domestic Expose – I Paint Myself*, and were unsuccessful.

Some candidates demonstrated misunderstanding of basic art historical vocabulary, such as the terms *tone* and *media*, which prevented them from giving an explanation of the treatment of that characteristic. *Tone* refers to the light and dark values in an art work used in rendering either realistic forms or an abstract composition, but some candidates incorrectly used tone to refer to the feeling or atmosphere of the art work. *Tone* is related to hue or colour, but to discuss the hues of the art work without discussing their tonal value does not constitute an explanation of the artist's treatment of tone. *Media* in art history refers to the materials used by the artist to create the art work and how they were used. A small number of candidates attempted instead to discuss how the art work related to news media or social media.

91483: Examine how meanings are communicated through art works

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided more of the descriptive explanation of the features than the explanation of the relevant meanings conveyed, or discussed the meanings and contexts in detail without using sufficient features from the art works as supporting evidence
- included some minor inaccurate information and/or uninformed analysis in their response
- answered the question directly
- explained relevant meanings of two named art works that were appropriate to the constraints of the question. For example, art works that contained saints, or art works that showed evidence of Humanism
- made links between the features of the art works and their meanings
- related their answer to the specific theme in the question.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not address the specific theme in the question
- did not discuss the correct artist(s) or art works for the question
- did not explain in sufficient detail how meanings are constructed
- drew insufficient connections between the features and the meanings
- demonstrated a lack of understanding of art historical terminology or concepts
- described the subject, styles or contexts of art works without sufficiently explaining the meanings of any features of the art works.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- selected art works that demonstrated a depth of understanding of the question

- linked a number of features for each art work to their meanings, to provide a complete picture of the meanings of the art works
- provided specific detail in their explanations about artists and art works
- included basic or generalised contextual information in their response
- provided a more coherent response to the question but lacking in contextual information to reach Excellence
- often included contextual information, but did not clearly explain the contextual information in relation to how meanings were constructed in the specific art works.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- critically chose art works that were appropriate for the specific question
- evaluated why the construction of meanings is significant in relation to the wider perspective of art history and contexts
- explained how meanings are constructed in relation to art movements and contexts in a precise and informed way
- provided comprehensive explanations of the features linked to the meanings conveyed with an evaluation of how and why, well informed by relevant contexts
- included more evaluative information in their conclusion, rather than providing a mere summary of the information already provided
- produced an equally strong response to each of their two selected art works.

Standard specific comments

Candidates at lower levels of achievement often benefited from using the plate image in their answers.

Candidates need to focus on the explanation of relevant meanings within art works rather than the context(s) for this standard. It is also important that sufficient features are discussed from the art works to explain how these meanings are conveyed. Absence or lack of features will result in a Not Achieved grade.

Some candidates presented seemingly prepared answers about common themes in their area of study, which they struggled to link to the set question.

91484: Examine the relationship(s) between art and context

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded to their chosen question using relevant art works while sufficiently explaining or clarifying the relationship(s) between the context and the art works to demonstrate understanding.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- described aspects of art and/or a context but were nonetheless unable to answer the question with relevant art works or explain the relationships between their chosen art works and context.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- directly addressed their chosen question using relevant art works while focusing on the context
- discussed the relationships between the context and art works using detailed explanatory language while integrating supporting evidence to demonstrate a depth of understanding.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated perceptive understanding in a well-structured, fluent response to their chosen question using pertinent evidence
- discussed a range of relationships between art works and the context in depth
- consistently demonstrated comprehensive knowledge using analytical and evaluative language.

Standard specific comments

Candidates tend to perform better when they use the structure of their chosen question to shape their response.

Some candidates attempted to make a prepared response fit their chosen question, often with the result that their response relied on an explanation of

technical aspects or a narrative of the art works while veering away from the question.

Some candidates responding to Question 5 wrote about mass production when the context was around mass media.

Evidence from digital responses was often more concise.

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Previous years' reports

[2019 \(PDF, 294KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 112KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 49KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 220KB\)](#)