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Level 2 Art History, 2018

91181 Examine the meanings conveyed by art works

9.30 a.m. Thursday 22 November 2018
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine the meanings conveyed by art works.	Examine in depth the meanings conveyed by art works.	Examine critically the meanings conveyed by art works.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should attempt ONE question in this booklet.

Make sure that you have Resource Booklet L2-ARTR.

If you need more room for your answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2-10 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

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

Excellence

TOTAL

07

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Question number: 3

Art work (1): 'The Victors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons' - David

Art work (2): 'Napoleon In His Study' - David

Begin your answer here:

'The Victors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons' by Jacques-Louis David and 'Napoleon In His Study' also by David are two art works featuring powerful and ~~for ordinary~~ men. The artist's use of symbols and ~~meanings~~ in these artworks allow for the viewer to understand wider themes and meanings related to the artist's purpose. Both Neoclassical paintings, these pictures depict scenes of sacrifice for the state and ~~order~~ harmonious order.

'The Victors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons' is a typical Neoclassical artwork painted during the 1789 French Revolution. It depicts a scene in which Brutus has sentenced his own sons to die after they betrayed him by plotting against the Republic. Brutus has made the ultimate sacrifice, choosing the state over his family, and therefore David has depicted him as powerful and virtuous in order to echo Neoclassical ideals. An important symbol in this artwork is the statue of Roma. Brutus sits in the shadow of Roma; pensive and detached. Roma is a symbol of the Republic which Brutus has served. Brutus sits under her, (under her control) and remains detached from the emotion of the moment as his sons are returned to him. The shadow Roma casts over Brutus is also symbolic of the darkness of the deed Brutus has committed. David uses this symbol to show Brutus' power and control. He has not allowed his familiar ties stop him from serving his state and remains in control and calm.

* as he gestures to his head, not his heart.

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This is in contrast to the woman, who are highlighted in the right of the painting. Their curvilinear and dramatic poses are a symbol of emotion and weakness. David is making a social comment on the ideals around women in this era (the era of the Enlightenment). Men were believed to be powerful and assured, whereas women were weak, maternal creatures. Here, David shows them of being unable to make such a sacrifice as they are ridden by emotion. Their pose can also be seen as a link to Roman and Greek antiquity in the dramatic nature of their pose (resembling relief friezes) and the way the cloth drapes over their bodies ~~showing~~. Neoclassical artists showed great interest in human anatomy and often based their figures on Greek or Roman gods and goddesses. Brutus' pose is also a symbol of his power and authority in this moment. One arm is raised with his finger outstretched towards his temple. This emphasises the key neoclassical ideal about reason over emotion*. The sewing basket, in the centre of the table, is a symbol of ~~domesticity~~ domesticity, grounding the sombre subject matter in the mundane setting of the home. The women's close proximity to the basket further highlights Neoclassical thinking about gender roles. The women are creatures of the home, unable to make serious ^{and/or} rational decisions. This symbol further allows for Brutus to appear as powerful, in ^{direct} comparison to the women. David has ~~not~~ deliberately chosen these symbols and ~~make~~ carefully placed them to convey wider themes about the importance of reason over emotion and reflect Neoclassical thinking. The meanings of these symbols and the subsequent affect for the viewer, allow the viewer to see Brutus as a powerful man who has served his country well. //

In 'Napoleon in His Study', David has created another classic Neoclassical painting with several rich symbols that paint Napoleon as a powerful ruler; a force to be reckoned with.

During the French Revolution^{of 1789}, David was very politically involved. Not only did he paint artworks with arguably political messages, such as 'The Victors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons' (showing themes of the state over everything else and reason before emotion) but he was actively involved, his signature showing up on petitions to execute royalists. His involvement with Robespierre however caused him to be ~~imprisoned~~ imprisoned when Robespierre was executed and he narrowly avoided the guillotine. Post French Revolution, Napoleon ordered David to become his First Painter and commissioned many artworks^{from him}, particularly portraits. Today, these artworks are seen as political propaganda as Napoleon insisted David include certain symbols to send messages to the public. In this particular portrait, David has depicted Napoleon working in his study. He appears to have abruptly stood up to pose for the painting amidst work. The carpet is pushed back by the chair and his clothes are slightly ruffled. This concept of a sporadic portrait was far from the truth as David would have spent hours pouring over every last detail. The clock in the background reads 3:14 am and the candlestick on the desk has been burnt to a stump. These symbols are intended to show that Napoleon was working into the early hours of the morning for his people. In this sense, he wanted to show he was different from the monarchy the public despised. He would spend hours working for France, tirelessly putting his country first. This echoes Neoclassical sentiment of

sacrifice for the state being the most virtuous behaviour of all.

Napoleon wears an elaborate outfit adorned with medals that symbolise his neoclassical power. Below the chair is a scroll of paper ^{READING CODE} which David has placed to insinuate Napoleon was working on the Napoleonic Code; ~~as well~~ a new set of laws for France. ~~His body language~~ David has purposefully placed these symbols in the artwork to convey Napoleon's power and responsibility as leader. The artwork was intended to grow Napoleon's following. Using clever symbols that echo Neoclassical sentiment, David has created a polished artwork that shows the almighty Napoleon in his study. //

David's two artworks are renowned for their strong messages, polished technique and typical Neoclassical features.

David has placed several important symbols within the painting that communicate ~~important~~ messages and showcase Brutus and Napoleon as two powerful men. In this time period a powerful man can be defined by his actions and abilities. Both men have sacrificed their personal feelings for the state - a concept which was highly idealized and venerated, especially during the revolution of 1789. David has used these symbols to convey wider themes about the role of powerful men in this period; they served their country and were strong in both the physical sense of the word and the emotional. The Neoclassical art period coincided with the Enlightenment Era. This was a period in which European philosophers greatly valued the concept of reason over emotion and ideas around democracy began to surface. These ideas were echoed in The French Revolution (1789) and in David's //

Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

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QUESTION
NUMBER

work, the ability for a man to choose reason over emotion was a defining feature in classifying that man as powerful. This ideals that were prominent in this period are evident in David's depiction of two powerful males here

* This clearly shows Napoleon's power in the very literal sense of the word; he is creating new laws, the ruler of this great country and leaving a legacy. //

Excellence Exemplar 2018

Subject:	Art History	Standard:	91181	Total score:	07
Q	Grade score	Annotation			
3	E7	<p>This script is an E7 because it examines how meanings are conveyed in art through description and explanation, referencing specific symbols, motifs in the chosen art works perceptively.</p> <p>Some perceptive critical interpretation about Powerful men in this period is demonstrated.</p> <p>With reference to, The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brutus is depicted as powerful and virtuous, echoing Neoclassical ideals. • Contrasts are made between Brutus and the women in response to Enlightenment ideals of reason over emotion. Depicting men powerful, assured and ridden of emotion in contrast to emotional weak representations of women. • Gender roles and interest in Greek and Roman antiquity used in poses in relation to Neoclassical attributes are eluded to but not expanded on. <p>With reference to Napoleon in his Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides insight into David's role as painter of political propaganda portraits. • Neoclassical sentiment of sacrifice for the state as being the most virtuous behaviour of Napoleon and defining him as a powerful leader of actions and abilities. • Perceptive comments reference David's depiction of Napoleon as a responsible leader for his people. <p>In the conclusion, the student also makes perceptive reference to Napoleon not only being seen as a powerful leader of a country but relating symbols to a man leaving a legacy.</p> <p>Perceptive understanding is demonstrated in interpreting and evaluating meanings with reference to specific symbols, motifs.</p> <p>The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brutus sits in the shadow of the statue of 'Roma'. This symbol represents the Republic which Brutus served and is under her control. It is the symbol of his control over emotions. The shadow is a symbol of the darkness of his deed and control and power in serving the state. • Symbolic references are made about the drama of the male and female poses. Curvilinear and dramatic being weak and emotional against Brutus' pose having authority with his upraised finger pointing to the temple. Other minor symbols of gender comparison are made using the symbol of the sewing basket and woman's work being bound to their home. <p>Napoleon in his Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbols of the clock and candlestick intend to show that Napoleon works into early hours of the morning for his people. Napoleon seen as putting his country first. • Sentiment of sacrifice and virtuous behaviour suggested. • The chair is placed to insinuate that Napoleon has been working on Napoleonic Code; a new set of laws for France. These are symbols of power and legacy of a leader. <p>The candidate has addressed the question describing symbols for each art work and demonstrates some perceptive interpretation of ideas and meanings about Powerful men. Both responses to art works demonstrated depth of understanding of meanings, while using Art History terminology, fluently when expanding description of symbols</p>			

		<p>and meaning. Contextual influences were evenly referenced and supported ideas about Powerful men during the Revolution and Napoleonic Portrait.</p> <p>To reach E8, this candidate needed to have had more breadth of context and understanding of influences across the two works, but in particular, the second art work. Reference to Napoleons Empire and modelling of himself as a classical Julius César, expanding on the propaganda aspects with in the work of representations of soldier, emperor and a man that was self-made in his rise to power.</p> <p>An overall understanding at E7 is demonstrated.</p>
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