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91181



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Art History 2025

### 91181 Examine the meanings conveyed by art works

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 of the questions 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 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

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

**Excellence**

**TOTAL 07**

## SELECTED QUESTION

Copy and paste the question you have chosen into the space below.

### QUESTION TWO

Select and name TWO art works that depict groups of people. ONE work must be from Plates 1–6 in the resource booklet. The other may be from Plates 1–6 OR may be an art work of your own choice.

(a)

In each of your chosen art works, describe at least TWO symbols or motifs and their meanings.

(b)

Explain how these symbols or motifs were important in conveying meaning about individuals and / or groups of people in this period.

Select your first art work from the resource booklet:

4: Daumier, The Third-Class Carriage

Type your second art work here:

Edouard Manet, A Bar at The Folies Bergere

## PLANNING

motif one - workign class figure  
motif 2 - environment

motif one - bar maid  
motif 2 - environemnt

## ANSWER SPACE

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise response of no more than 750-800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your answer. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

B I U     

Modernisation was defying concern amongst 19th century as rapid industrialisation, technological advancement and the rise of consumerism completely transformed society. The Industrial Revolution particularly revolutionized the world from an agrarian economy to one dominated by machine manufacaturing. The two artworks which convey meanings of groups of people are seen through Edouard Manet's, A Bar at the Folies Bergere and Honore Daumier's, The Third Class-Carriage. Together, these artwork highlight the stark contrast between the lives of working class and middle class due to social inequality.

Throughout Manet's, A Bar at the Folies Bergere, we see the alienation and disconnection experienced by workign class figures, yet also the luxurious lifestyle of the wealthy. The Folies Bergere was a prominent music hall and caberet which catered to the bourgeois.

One motif which portrays aspects of groups of people is the barmaid, Suzon. Despite being surrounded by luxury, leisure and spectacle, the barmaid remains detached, isolated and emotionally distant, which further emphasises the loneliness within urban culture for working class figures. Moreover, her detached, enigmatic facial expression and upright posture portray the emotional toll and alienation imposed by modern life. Her direct gaze towards the viewers creates a confronting atmosphere which could almost be interpreted as a look of disdain. Alongside the barmaid to the right we see a fruit bowl which echoes the barmaid's figure, symbolising how working class are not only objectified, but also treated as commodities within a capitalist system. The oranges particularly expand the complexity of this idea by hinting to the notion of prostitution. During this period of time the social division grew between the classes. While the middle class gained social prominence and status through business profits the working class were left in poor conditions. Manet wanted to expose the modern reality beyond the mask of Parisian entertainment's surface glamour.

Another motif which was important in depicting meaning of groups of people is the environment the barmaid is surrounded by. Dispersed throughout the work, a vibrant artificial lighting hints to the influence of electricity. The invention of electricity was a significant advancement which allowed the bourgeoisie to thrive in the bustling nightlife of Paris for longer, yet this also extended the work hours for workers. This highlights the exhaustion of working class, yet also the carelessness of the bourgeoisie. In the notable mirror background, the middle class are depicted as a blurry, collective mass. The expressive strokes makes it particularly difficult to distinguish the figures from one another. This reflects how the middle class have become so consumed by their newly gained wealth, causing them to lose their individuality and humanity in the process. They themselves have become the spectacle. Through this distorted, perspective which creates an illusion of reality, it challenges the viewer's perception of human connection. The cropping effect created by the countertop extends an infinite pictorial plane, separating the world of the working and middle class. Furthermore, the countertop also acts as an entrapment device. By heightening the stark contrast between the classes it conveys difficulty for working class figures to break free from poor conditions as well as the alienation they face. As an artist undefined by an art movement, Manet captures both the values of Impressionism and Realism through the use of light and desire to expose the reality.

While Manet's artwork focuses on exposing the modern reality of Parisian entertainment, Daumier conveys the vulnerability of the working class. Throughout Daumier's, *The Third Class-Carriage* we see the dehumanising effects of modern transportation and modernisation itself endured by the working class. Due to the Industrial Revolution, the social division grew leaving many. One motif which conveys aspect of groups of people is the three working class figures: young mother, elderly woman and sleeping shoe-shining boy. Together it's almost as though they represent the full spectrum of human life. Portrays how the alienation and difficult realities is passed on from generation to generation, like a never-ending cycle. The scene captures what is assumedly when the figures are in commute from a long day of work. The young mother is portrayed gently holding on to her newborn baby. After overcoming such a draining and emotionally impactful change to her body, it particularly highlights the vulnerability of the mother. Her desperation to provide food for her family is so strong that continues to travel work, even bringing the baby with her. The elderly woman's facial expression portrays hardship and a lifetime of experience. However, despite her old age, she still must work tirelessly representing the exhaustion faced by the working class. Masked in the shadows of the artwork a young boy is portrayed sleeping which emphasises this exhaustion. His young age evokes a sense of innocence, reflecting how harsh the reality was for the working class within this period. Nevertheless, though these figures are pushing their bodies to this extent for income, they remain dressed in worn rags. In addition, the absence of grown men alongside the two women heighten their vulnerability.

Another motif is the environment which the three working class figures are surrounded by. The train itself is a distinct symbol of industrialisation and modern transportation, yet Daumier has portrayed it as an entrapment device. The cropping effect created by the carriage which engulfs the figures creates a suffocating and claustrophobic atmosphere, reflecting the social confinement of the working class in how they are trapped within this life. In the further background we see a collective group of working class figures. Social fragmentation is seen through these figures as though they are closely surrounded by others, none are interacting with one another, conveying the working classes disconnection from reality. To the left, two bourgeois men are dressed in top hats and fancy attire. These figures are the only ones communicating with each other. Another subtle detail which highlights the contrast between these groups of people is how the bourgeoisie are positioned closer to the window, conveying how they have more freedom within their lives. In addition, the muted tones and earthy palette express the grimness of working class life. Daumier wanted to project an honest, realistic representation of everyday life saying, "One must be of one's own time". As a bourgeois himself, he emphasised the vulnerability of the working class to make viewers empathise with them.

Ultimately, both works establish the stark contrast between groups of people within modern life, that being the working class and middle class. the negative implications imposed by modern life. Where "A Bar at the Folies Bergere" focuses on the alienation and disconnection the working class endures due to social inequality, yet also the contrasting luxurious life of the middle class, "The Third Class Carriage" conveys the harsh realities of everyday life for the working class.

**1115 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED**

## Excellence

**Subject:** Art History

**Standard:** 91181

**Total score:** 07

Grade score	Marker commentary
E7	<p>This response is just over the recommended word count but still provides a depth of understanding, interpreting several significant ideas about individuals and groups using art works of a Realist and Modern period in France. The candidate's own work by Manet provides stronger evidence that is expanded on by broader evaluation of working-class vs wealthy people.</p> <p>Both works explore significant themes in relation to the question. In Manet's, disconnection between classes, loneliness in crowded spaces, and emotional detachment of women are founded on an extensive understanding of the work. Daumier's work is in-depth in the themes of generational poverty and using the train as a form of class confinement.</p> <p>Contextual support underpins Manet's work to a greater depth when justifying reasons for meanings.</p>