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91182



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 2 Art History 2025

91182 Examine the influence of context(s) on art works

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine the influence of context(s) on art works.	Examine in depth the influence of context(s) on art works.	Examine perceptively the influence of context(s) on 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.

Select and name TWO art works with a political context. 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)

Using your chosen art works, describe the influences of the political context.

(b)

Explain how this context has influenced the characteristics of your chosen art works.

Select your first art work from the resource booklet:

1: David, Napoleon Crossing the Alps

Type your second art work here:

Vigee Le Brun, Marie Antoinette and her Children, 1787

PLANNING

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.)

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In the late 18th century and early 19th century French politics were in upheaval, revolutionary ideas were circulating as the people of France became disillusioned with the Monarchy, significantly caused by the economic state of the country. Art throughout history has been a tool to shape public perception and achieve political aims especially in times of instability, most significantly illustrating this is Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun's 1787 portrait of Marie Antoinette and her Children, and Jacques-Louis David's 1801 equestrian portrait, Napoleon Crossing the Alps. By understanding the political context from which these artworks were created by we can understand the significant characteristics that are crafted to achieve specific goals.

Marie Antoinette and her children, is a 1787 portrait painted by Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun, painter to the queen, her task was to rehabilitate the queen's image and strengthen public support in King Louis XVI's monarchy. During this period the state of France was declining fast, France's involvement in the Seven Year War with Britain and support for the Americans in the Revolutionary War drained the treasury, these burdens were passed onto the third estate through disproportionate taxes, this estate was comprised of 98% of the population, all those apart from the nobility and Roman Catholic clergy. The French people were immersed into poverty, and bad weather conditions and government deregulation on the domestic grain trade created famine, revolutionary sentiment began to grow

as people became more outraged with the monarchy's lack of care and frivolous spending. Marie Antoinette commonly depicted in a state of queenly elegance and beauty became a symbol of the Monarchy's dismissal and greed. This view on Antoinette was caused by numerous factors, largely it was her galmourous potrayl, it was said she would order 300 new gowns a year, and she was susepcted as treasonous for her Austrian blood and apparent involvement in the fraud of the diamond necklances, commenky knwon as the diamond necklance affair. King Louis XVI aware of growing resentment to the monarchy, instructed Le Brun to paint a poitrait of his wife, moving away from usually depictions towards a more naturalistic and relatable manner, in an attempt to regain public support and quieten the masses. The poltical context of anger and resenment prompyed the creation of this artwork, and through undertanding the context, several key characteristics of the artwork are highlighted in their attempt to achieve the potllical aims of the monarchy. Marie Antoinette is depicted sourrounded by her children, mirroing Madonna and baby depictions of the Virgin Mary, capatalising on the hevaily ingrianted rleigious beliefs in 18th century France. The inclusion of her children, highlight Marie's maternal role, a subejct of much criticism when she failed to produce a heir for seven years. Le Brun reminds the public of Marie in achieving her purpose of birthing the next line of kings, additionally she humanises Marie with the potaryal of her as a mother, using the neoclassical and enlightenment ideas of civic virtue and gender roles. Antoinette is painted in less elaborate fabrics, comapred to earlier potratiure of her by Le Brun, she is represented as more grounded and natrualistic, the red of her dress is reminiscent of a potrait of King Louis XV's wife, whow as known for her genrosity, piety, and public admiration. An empty cradle is placed next to Antoinette, alluding to the death of her 11 month baby, Princess Sophie, this reveal loss by Antoinette was deisgned to connect with the public's humanity, appearing relatable to the high rates of infant mortality of the 18th century. The poltical context in shaping the artworks characteristics was of most significance, by adding a likeness to Antoinette, the King hoped it would lessen revolutionary ideas ciriculating, however a slight empahsis on Marie Antoinette's queenly authroiuty was also included in the painting, in the background behind a hung curtain the hall of mirrors is visible, the most known aspect of the Palace of Versailles, this was used to remind the public of her title, and that it deserves loyalty and respect. Le Brun shifted away from the usually Roccoco infleunced elebaroate depcitions of Maire Antoinette to a natrualistic and humanising potrayl of the queen, using Neo Classical tehcniques and elightement values of civic virtue, maternal role, triangular compostion aswell as religious allusion to resinate with the public, and reinstae the publics poltical loyalty to the reigning Bourbon monarchs.

Following the French Revolution of 1789 with the abolsihment of the monarhcy and then the reign of terror France's poltical scene was extremly unstable, radical poltical factions had gained immense power and the future of France was unknown. Military leader Napoleon Bonaparte took power in 1799 with a coup'd'teat, but it was critical that he appeared legitimate and strong in the face of the French public, in order to consolidate his full political power. Jaques-Louis David produced a peice of political propoganda, depciting Napolean in an idelaised manner on a military expedition, his 1801 painting, Napolean Crossing the Alps, serves to strnegthen Napoleans image by potryaing him as capable, and ready to lead France in a time of poltical turmoil and uncertainty. This was achieved through key characteristics of the artwork, firstly an equestrian potrait was histoiclaly used to depict royalty and emperors, notably Julius Ceaser, this immediatly paints Napolean as alike these figures. The use of strong diagonals is prevalent in thsi artwork, his horse rears upwards, his cape and arms is raised as he moves up the mountain, the strong use of diagonals create a sense of movement, David potrays Napolean as ready to progress France, Napolean directly looking at the viewer invites them to join him in his poltical ambition for France as their leader. Symbolically, the sky is dark and thunderess, Napoleans position appears he is heading out of the strom, out of the poltical instability France has suffered from for years. Through the dark clouds light shines down upon Napolean and his horse, this is represntitive of the divine right to rule, the belief that God chooses kings, because Napolean is not a royal he has to prove his legitamacy in ruiling, the captalising on strongly held religious beleifs through divine light contributes to his convincing of the public. France public were in need of a strong leader to take them through into the next century, and the state of poltical instability perfectly allowed Napoelan to rise to power, "I found the crown of France on the floor and picked it up", he said, however in order to wear the crown he must win the publics support. Napoleans name is etched into the rocks in the lower left side of the canvas, alognisde the names Charlamange and Hannibal who were great military leaders, David by association adds Napoleans name to great lineage, both leaders took the same path over the alps, Napolean is following in their footsteps. Napoleans military attire reinforces his projection of stregth, contorl and authroiuty, he stated he wants to appear "calm on a fiery steed". However, this depcition fo Napoelan was far from the truth, in relaiaty Napolean travelled across the alps in a trench coat and on a donkey, accrualty depicted in Paul Delaroches 1950 paiting. The idealisation and hero making of Napoelan was needed to insitll the beliefs of strenegth in his character with the public. David has strategically created characteristics int he artwork that contribute to the hero making image of Napolean, he uses Neoclassicla values such as order and reason through his composition, while highlighting Napoleans enlightenment's traits, virtue and self scarafice.

Both artworks are pieces of political propaganda designed to shape public opinion and strengthen power. Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Jacques-Louis David were both critically aware of the political and social climate of their time, resulting in the specific construction of elements that would favourably paint their subjects before the public, they both capitalised on the engrained religious beliefs that governed many's logic and values, and they both show the influence of the Neo Classical movement and its accompanying enlightenment values. The political context of France preceding David's, Napoleon crossing the Alps, allowed for a more accepting reception by the public of Napoleon's authority, following social unrest throughout the reign of terror where 17,000 people were executed. David's ability to encompass the core revolutionary values and paint Napoleon as a manifestation of such is outstanding, Napoleon's strength and control represents the desire for French progress and nationalistic spirit.

1399 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

Excellence

Subject: Art History

Standard: 91182

Total score: 07

Grade score	Marker commentary
E7	The candidate has explained with some insight the political context within which both of their chosen art works were made. Through a discussion of subject matter, style, and form the candidate has shown some perceptive understanding of the political context. They have used description and some hard facts as evidence to further emphasise their understanding of the political context.