

**TJC JC2 Art Prelims 2015**  
**Suggested Answer Scheme**

**Section A**

1. ***White Negress II*** by Constantin Brancusi, 1928.

White marble, black marble, stone, and wood sculpture: 49.5 x 14.5 x 19. cm; black marble base: 36.9 x 36.9 x 25.4 cm; stone base: 53.3 x 50.8 x 42 cm; wood base: 45.1 x 43.2 x 35 cm.

Signed: "C. Brancusi 1928".

Grant J. Pick Collection, 1966.4

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**(a) Discuss the visual presentation of this work.**

**[10]**

*Candidates discuss formal qualities of the work that are visually visible. A mature answer should:*

**AP& I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise reference to the artwork of high interest value to the question.

*Marks are given for each valid point and elaboration. Candidates may offer other perspectives that address formal qualities of the work.*

<i>White Negress II</i> is a work of sculpture created using an ensemble of white and black marble, stone and wood stacked one atop another. The entire sculpture has a broad base that tapers towards the top.
The wooden base of the sculpture is shaped into an hourglass-like form with a flat front, highlighting the vertical grains of the wood.
The visible wood grain brings forth the natural quality of wood as well as its smooth surface.
At the second tier is a block of stone with a pinkish tinge, with the slightly darker gradations visible on its surface.
Smaller than the stone and placed on top of it is the black marble, shaped into a three dimensional cross, alluding to a woman's narrow shoulders.
The smooth and reflective quality of the black marble is evident in the reflection of the sculpture's point of focus.
Moreover, the black of the marble is contrasted against the nude colour of the other two bases, drawing the viewers' eyes to the top of the sculpture and towards the negress head.
The three bases also give the sculpture an angular look due to the geometric shapes of the bases. Moreover, they hint at the simplified form of a woman's body: an "hourglass" figure (as accentuated by the hourglass wooden base), where the hip area is widest and it narrows slightly at the very bottom and top.
The angular shapes of the bases are a contrast to the organic shape of the white negress head.
The white negress head is made up of white marble and though not as reflective, the smooth surface of the marble is still evident and accentuated by the organic form of the negress head.
One can immediately recognise that the white negress is an abstract representation of a woman's head, abstracted to the essence in ovoid form resting atop a cylindrical neck.
Features like lips and a bun on her head hint at an abstracted version of a woman's head.
However, interestingly, although the title suggests a negress (a woman of African descent), Brancusi has chosen to use white marble, playing up the contrast between the title and his choice of material.

**(b) Comment on the artist's use of materials and ideas in this work.**

**[10]**

*Candidates may discuss the artist's choice of materials in relation to his ideas. A mature answer should make links between use of materials(techniques and processes) and ideas and should:*

**AP&I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.

**C&AA:** Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.

*Marks are given for each valid point and elaboration.*

In his art-making, one of Brancusi's preoccupations is with representing the inner, hidden reality of an object. For him, the very essence of objects is in their own intrinsic fundamental nature and Brancusi applies this idea in the choice and use of his materials.

**Choice of materials**

- *White Negress II* is an ensemble of natural elements such as wood, stone and marble into an exploration of abstract form.
- These materials are considered 'traditional' materials commonly used in sculpture, with each material possessing their own unique qualities and essence.
- This work showcases Brancusi's understanding of the materials, for instance, the combination of smooth marble, speckled stone and grainy wood, into a sleek and balanced work of sculpture that, despite the heaviness of the materials, convey great lightness and delicacy.
- The materials chosen may also reflect their connection with the subject matter: white negress; a woman. Solid wood, stone and marble reflect the strength and beauty often associated with women.

**Use of materials / techniques and processes**

- These qualities that are evident in *White Negress II* are achieved through Brancusi's close attention to his materials and making use of techniques processes to bring out their natural qualities.
- Brancusi carved the sculpture himself, a process also known as 'direct carving'. Direct interaction with the sculpture meant that the artist would need to know the properties of the material he was working with: how hard the stone and marble are, in which direction the grain of the wood runs and how well these materials can be polished.
- The properties of these materials therefore define the appearance of the work and Brancusi has attempted to express them as clearly as possible, giving truth to the materials.
- Having carved out the form of the sculpture, the close attention Brancusi paid to the materials is also seen in the meticulous, polished look of the materials, a result of his thorough polishing for days to achieve a gleam that suggests infinite continuity into the surrounding space.

**The 'medieval' and the 'primitive'**

- The notion of direct carving can be linked to African art and to the Romanian folk tradition of wood carving and also propels Brancusi back into the realm of the craftsman, a practice which had started to be lost during the Renaissance.

- Brancusi was also influenced by his visits to a number of ethnographic museums, particularly by the way in which tribal masks and sculptures simplify facial features and rely on a symbolic representation of the face. Faces can be read not just from their life-like appearance, but also from the position of facial features, which is clearly seen in this work.
- Brancusi has carved out the marble to possess just a pair of ovoid, pouting lips placed where lips should be. The bases of the sculpture bring to mind the hourglass figure of a woman, with the widest areas being at the hip region and narrower at the shoulders.
- There traditional, old-world sources of inspiration formed a unique contrast to the sleek appearance of this work.

**(c) How does this work make use of and challenge traditional forms of sculpture?**

**[10]**

Candidates should define traditional forms of sculpture and discuss how this work meets and challenges this definition. Candidates may approach this question with:

- Use of materials – traditional materials and methods
- Abstraction as a non-traditional approach and how this challenges traditional forms of sculpture

Marks awarded for each valid point with elaboration. A mature answer should:

**AP&I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.

**C&AA:** Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.

**PR:** Discussions and arguments are forceful, exploratory, interpretative, sophisticated and personal.

**Definition of “traditional forms of sculpture”**

- What is known as traditional forms of sculpture (prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century) had four main defining characteristics:
  - It is a three-dimensional art form.
  - It is representational.
  - It is viewed as an art of solid form and any empty spaces involved within the sculpture were essentially secondary to its bulk or mass and it had no movement.
  - Traditional sculptors used only two main techniques: direct carving (usually stone or wood) modelling (building up the sculpture from the inside using clay, plaster or wax etc (also casting the modelled form in metals like bronze) )

[Max 2 marks for definition]

**How the work makes use of traditional forms of sculpture**

- As a work of sculpture, *White Negress II*, satisfies the definitions of a traditional form of sculpture.
- It is a three-dimensional form and can be viewed from any angle (although there is an obvious “front” where the face of the white negress is) and it is also a very solid form of sculpture with no negative spaces within in.
- However, the most evident way in which this sculpture makes use of traditional forms is in the use of materials as well as the technique with which the artist has used to make it.

### **Traditional materials**

- This work has made use of materials commonly associated with traditional forms of sculpture.
- Wood, stone and marble are classic materials that possess great durability and are typically used in sculptures prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marble and stone are commonly used for Ancient Greek statues while wood was commonly used across the globe such as for totem poles, indoor statues seen in China, Japan, religious statues in Spain and very widely used in traditional African art, which is one of Brancusi's influences.

### **Direct carving**

- This work was also made by direct carving. The notion of direct carving puts the artist back into the realm of the craftsman, a notion which had started to be lost during the Renaissance. Using physical strength and technical skill with discipline, Brancusi worked on his sculpture, working with the materials to release their essence.
- The process with which this sculpture was made is undoubtedly linked to traditional notions of sculpture making.

### **How the work challenges traditional forms of sculpture**

- This work however challenges traditional forms of sculpture in its representation. Traditional forms of sculpture have long been known to be directly representational of their subject matter: highly realistic and idealistic in representation.
- This work however is non-traditional in its representation of a woman. The subject matter has been abstracted to its purest essence and only punctuated by features that are somewhat recognizable.
- The use of the different materials to form a plinth is unusual: traditional sculptures do not include the plinth, which is considered to be utilitarian in its function to elevate the artwork. Instead, Brancusi shapes and combines the different materials to aesthetically enhance the main component of the sculpture (the top most form of the Negress)

### **Abstraction (non-representation)**

- *White Negress II* is a representation of a woman of African descent, as the title suggests.
- The work's representation of a woman has been abstracted, challenging traditional forms of sculpture where the subject matter is represented in a realistic manner.
- Here, the subject matter possesses no limbs or full facial features or even a torso that looks realistically human.
- However, there are certain features that still support the title, that the subject matter is that of a woman. Her head sits atop a three-dimensional cross, which is reminiscent of shoulders. The face itself contains ovoid shapes that hint at lips, placed where lips should be and another ovoid shape at the top of the head. This second ovoid is reminiscent of women wearing their hair in a bun.
- Overall, the sculpture and its bases hint at the body of a woman, being wide at the hips and narrow at the shoulders. Moreover, the hourglass shape of the wooden base accentuates the hourglass figure normally associated with women.

### **Conclusion**

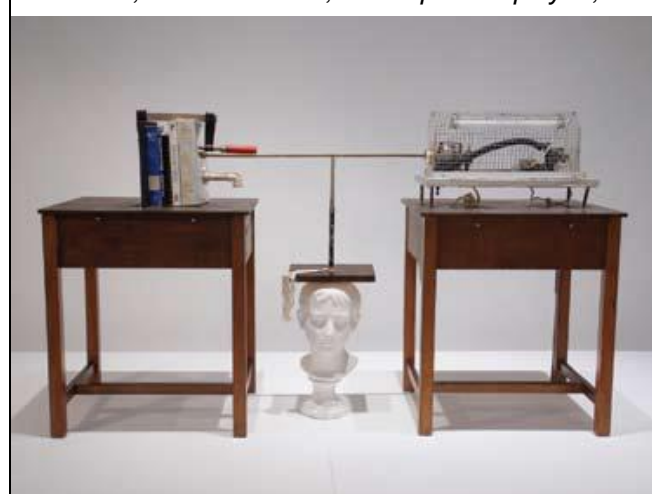
This work therefore makes use of traditional forms of sculpture in its use of materials and techniques of creation while it challenging traditional forms of sculpture in the representation of subject matter.

2. **50cc of Paris Air** by Marcel Duchamp, 1919  
 Glass ampoule (broken and later restored)  
 Height: 13.3 cm  
 Collection of Philadelphia Museum of Art

a) Evaluate the use of the readymade object in this artwork [10]	
<p><i>Candidates are required to define a readymade object, describe the readymade object and analyse its qualities and how it was modified and used in this artwork. As command word here is "evaluate", students are to 'assess' the worth, importance or usefulness of something, using evidence. Make an appraisal of the contribution, validity and effectiveness of key factors in the study. There will probably be cases to be made both for and against. (This term often acts to prompt the student into making a personal judgement, using evidence)</i></p>	
<b>Artistic Perception and Interpretation</b>	<b>Definition of a Readymade:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A readymade is an industrially produced utilitarian object which achieves the status of art merely through the process of selection and presentation, as determined by the artist.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The readymade object in question is a clear glass ampoule containing air from Paris.</li> <li>As a readymade work, Duchamp did not create the glass ampoule himself, but purchased this glass container of liquids and pharmaceutical serums from a pharmacy for his friend Walter Arensberg in New York.</li> <li>The air functioned as a type of souvenir for his friend, after Duchamp transported the object from Paris to New York.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ampoule is a clear glass object with a hooked end leading to a bulbous shell, where the liquid is meant to be stored. It tapers at its base to form a pointed tip. Resembling a teardrop, the object is delicate and fragile.</li> <li>It is a small object that, when placed in a gallery setting, seems inconspicuous and barely visible due to the clear material.</li> <li>Its form is not devoid of aesthetic qualities, but above all, its primary function is to store liquid serums.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labelled "Serum Physiologique" ("Physiological Serum"), the glass vial was emptied of its contents and was sealed again once air replaced its original contents.</li> <li>Visually, there is nothing inside the glass container, but the title <i>50 cc of Paris Air</i> reminds us that the container holds air, and on a molecular level, is not considered to be nothing.</li> <li>Likewise, whether or not the air is from Paris, one cannot know by viewing the object.</li> <li>Duchamp uses an unconventional approach in art creation, selecting the readymade object as a work of art, rather than creating it through the manipulation of raw material.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether it contains 50 cubic centimetres of air or not, the viewer is not able to ascertain this.</li> <li>By keeping this a mystery, Duchamp leaves the choice of whether or not to believe in the title to the viewer.</li> <li><i>50 cc of Paris Air</i> has a clear connection to the concept of measurement; it illustrates Duchamp's toying with the rules, or standards, of measurement.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its precise meaning was rendered even more unstable in 1949, when the ampoule was accidentally broken and repaired, which leads the viewer to question if the title rings true any longer.</li> <li>The air from Paris would have escaped the container, and filled with the air of the place where it was repaired.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given that the contents of the glass ampoule have changed, the title is reduced to a mere idea of what the object contains, and not a factual, indeterminate reality.</li> <li>The idea that invisible substance could be considered to be a material for an artwork challenges the prevailing conceptions of what art is.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creation of <i>50 cc of Paris Air</i> questions the materials that artists can use for creating art.</li> <li>The choice of this readymade demonstrates Duchamp's unconventional approach to art-making. Duchamp highlights the utilitarian function of this ampoule, to contain air from Paris or to the common viewer, nothing, and the aesthetics of a common, industrially made object that viewers are likely to overlook.</li> <li>As the air is not visible, the viewer relies on the artist's title for the truth about the substance of the artwork and cannot merely rely on his/her sense of sight. This makes the idea behind the artwork more important than its actual physical form or qualities.</li> </ul>
<b>b) Consider how this artwork relates to the aims of the Dada movement [10]</b>	
<i>Candidates are required to define the aims of the Dada movement (at least 2 aims) and how the artwork in question satisfies these aims.</i>	
<b>Preamble</b>	<p><i>"Dada does not mean anything.. We read in the papers that the Negroes of the Kroom race call the tail of the sacred cow: dada. A cube, and a mother, in certain regions of Italy, are called: Dada. The word for a hobby-horse, a children's nurse, a double affirmative in Russian and Romanian, is also: Dada."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">--Tristan Tzara</p>
<b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b>	<p><b>Aims of the Dada Movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Dada movement was <u>a protest against the contemporary academic and cultured values of art</u>, everything that art stood for at the time of its conception.</li> <li>The Dada movement <u>turned its back on all artistic, literary and cultural heritages</u>.</li> <li>Rather than conforming to the dominant sense of beauty or aesthetics of its time, the artists of the Dada movement <u>ignored aesthetics and made works that were "anti-art" in nature, challenging the definition of "art"</u>.</li> <li>Artists like Duchamp <u>made use of readymade objects that were industrially made and bore original functions that were negated when they took on the label of "art"</u>.</li> <li>Dada artists also made works ranging from performance art to poetry, photography, sculpture, painting and collage. ‘</li> <li>Dada artworks tend to be <u>cryptic and allow viewers to interpret it in multiple ways</u>.</li> </ul>
<b>Artistic Perception and Interpretation</b>  <b>Personal Response</b>	<p><b>Aesthetic Norms and concept of Beauty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>50cc of Paris Air</i> does not correspond to the aesthetic norms of the day.</li> <li>The art movements before Dada (Impressionism, Romanticism, Realism) focused on the realistic depiction of subject matter, generally depicting objects and life in the visible world. Even the early avant garde movements like Cubism and Futurism, which shared concerns of technological advancement like the Dada movement, differed greatly in terms of the notion of beauty and what was acceptable as art. (Cubism and Futurism, in spite of their avant garde ideals, still held ideas of colour theory) <i>50cc of Paris Air</i> borrows the aesthetic determined by its necessary function as a serum container, rather than one that features painterliness (like the works of the Impressionists et.al) or a representation of real life (as in Realism) but is real life itself.</li> <li><i>50cc of Paris Air</i> creates no illusion about what it is (as in Romanticism), and presents itself in a factual and nearly scientific manner. Therefore, in its rebellion against prevailing ideas of aesthetics, is a work that displays the anti-art tendencies of Dada.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using air and a readymade container as its medium, Duchamp's <i>50cc of Paris Air</i> does not utilize traditional art materials like paint, canvas, wood or stone.</li> <li>• To display air, an invisible substance in this circumstance, as a visual art, is nearly irrational and idiosyncratic, corresponding to the Dada-ist nature of creating irreverent art.</li> <li>• The Dadaists were some of the first artists who used objects that were not made by them, focusing on the idea behind the object rather than (the appearance of) the object itself.</li> </ul> <p><b>Technique/ Challenging the definition of Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a commonplace daily object that was not made by the artist himself, it challenges the notion that art should be made by the artist or bear traces of the artistic technique or skill in the manipulation of raw art materials like paint or wood.</li> <li>• Through the selection of an industrially-made ampoule as an artwork, Duchamp questioned the myth of originality, of the artist as genius. This is in line with the Dada ideology which suggests that everybody can be an artist and that almost anything could be art.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>c) Compare this work to a work by another artist who uses readymade objects. [10]</b></p>	
<p><i>Candidates are required to identify a work utilizing readymade objects, by another artist for comparison. An example could be "Mechanized Learning" by Salleh Japar/ "Temple of the Mind" by Montien Boonma. Candidates are to describe the artwork and highlight areas of comparison, for example, use of materials, form of artwork, techniques employed, ideas conveyed, etc.</i></p>	
	<p><b><i>Mechanised Learning</i></b> by Salleh Japar, 1993.  Mixed media  95 X 59 X 51 cm  Collection of Singapore Art Museum, Singapore</p>
<p><b>Preamble</b></p>	<p>Duchamp paved the way for artists after him to utilize readymade objects as art. Following his lead, artists like Montien Boonma and Salleh Japar used readymade objects in their works to convey meaning or create environments that provide a sensory experience for their viewers.</p>



<b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b>	<b>Description of artwork</b> “Mechanised Learning” by Salleh Japar is an assembly of ready-made objects that include books, a plaster cast head similar to that used in still life drawing, desks similar to those in a classroom, a clamp, a motor and a mechanical apparatus that seem to be drilled into the books.
<b>Artistic Perception and Interpretation</b>	<b>Comparison: Technique</b> The artists make use of ready-mades in different ways: Duchamp selected a readymade ampoule without modifying it while Salleh Japar took several readymade objects and composing them into an assemblage. Salleh Japar’s selection of materials is more specific to the object’s meaning, while Duchamp was toying with ideas of challenging standards (artistic, scientific measurement) through a work that demonstrated Dada ideas.
	<b>Comparison: Ideas Conveyed</b> Both artists use ready-mades to convey ideals they subscribe to as a message to viewers. Duchamp wanted to challenge the norms of art and question the myth of artist as genius in his selection of a non-unique object as art, while Japar, in his work assembled several found objects, making use of the meaning and function of each object individually and together as a whole to convey his message on the Singaporean education system.
<b>Artistic Perception and Interpretation</b>  <b>Personal Response</b>	<b>Ideas in “Mechanized Learning”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through his use of several ready-mades, Salleh Japar offers a harsh commentary on education systems that emphasized rote learning, forsaking deeper understanding, especially so in the 1990s.</li> <li>• This reflects Salleh Japar’s interest in systems of knowledge and its production, dissemination and consumption of information in a post-colonial context and his use of signs &amp; symbols.</li> <li>• The subject of Art Education is one of the systems of education in question, symbolized by one of the books being violently drilled – The Principles of Art, R.G. Collingwood.</li> <li>• A plaster cast head similar to those used in still life drawing classes becomes the “centrepiece”, enhancing the effects rote learning places on the human head.</li> <li>• This is emphasized by what looks to be a metal board resembling a mortar board, an icon of graduation from an educational institute.</li> <li>• Furthermore, the motor and drill, both mechanical apparatus, has sinister overtones of the force with which knowledge is being drilled into learners, enhancing Salleh Japar’s negative reaction towards an education system that emphasizes rote learning</li> </ul>
	<b>Ideas in “50cc of Paris Air”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the use of an invisible substance, the artwork has a scientific stance that challenges the idea of measurement. As the viewer cannot see or ascertain the measurement of the air within the container, or the volume of the container, Duchamp plays with the standards, leaving the viewer a choice of whether or not to believe it the truth of the title.</li> <li>• Duchamp’s work convey the anti-art ideas of the Dada movement, being irrational and irreverent. Here the object is presented to contain air from Paris. Air in itself is not unique, and is only distinguished by its air from Paris, where the work was not displayed. (The work was transported to New York and given to Duchamp’s friend, Walter Arensberg) Even so, viewers are not able to see the differences in the air (of New York and of Paris).</li> </ul>

## **Section B**

### 3. ***Two Figures*** by Chen Wen Hsi, c.1950s.

74.5 x 59.4 cm

Oil on Canvas

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### ***Indian Men with Two Cows*** by Cheong Soo Pieng, 1949.

Oil on canvas marouflaged onto masonite board

75.3 x 104.5 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

<b>a) Compare and contrast the formal qualities of the two paintings. [10]</b>	
<i>Candidates are required to describe the works and compare the formal qualities (elements of art, principles of design) of the works. E.g. colour, composition, line, texture, etc.</i>	
<b>Artistic Perception and Interpretation</b>  <b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b>	<b><i>Two Figures</i></b> by Chen Wen Hsi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depicts two human figures positioned frontally.</li> <li>• The figure on the left, painted in a dark blue-black shade wears a loose shirt and a printed fabric bottom while he clings onto a pole or pillar. The eyes of the figure's face is hollow and the facial features are stylised/ simplified.</li> <li>• The brown-skinned figure on the right, wears a large straw hat while holding on to a pale stick. The clothing worn by this figure is a shade of lilac</li> <li>• Chen has integrated his interests in Cubism and Expressionism with confidence and flair. Breaking the figures into angular facets accentuates their ruggedness and the rough-and-ready nature of their lifestyle. Coupled with his expressionistic brushwork, the canvas is filled with movement as light bounces off the myriad surfaces.</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Indian Men with Two Cows</i></b> by Cheong Soo Pieng <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows a pastoral scene of two Indian men herding over two cows.</li> <li>• Unique perspective: the background of a kampong house and surrounding fields are placed at the top of the canvas</li> <li>• The bodies of the men, as well as the forms of the tree are painted with simplified forms.</li> </ul>
	<b>Use of colour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chen's use of exaggerated colours, of contrasting light and dark shades (e.g. dark blue skin and bright yellow hat), brings forth the intensity of tropical heat and light.</li> <li>• Cheong's colour palette is evidently warmer as lighter shades dominate the image, creating a lighter and more peaceful atmosphere that lacks the drama of Chen's painting.</li> </ul>
	<b>Use of line</b>

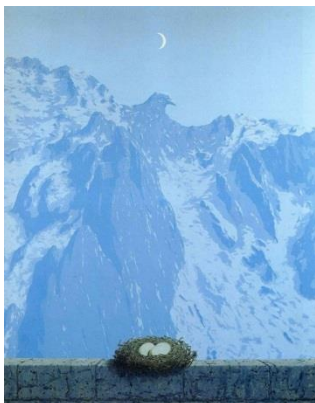
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The artist Chen uses broken line to depict the forms in his painting, without distinguishing the subject's original forms. Both soft and solid forms are rendered with the same line qualities, except for the patterns on the fabric worn by both figures.</li> <li>Cheong uses undulating, wavy and organic lines to depict the forms of nature.</li> </ul>
	<b>Use of paint</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both artists utilize painterly qualities (evidence and emphasis on the use of paint and its inherent qualities): unblended forms and white highlights in Chen's figures rendered in thick paint (angular, broken forms) or uneven application of paint in Cheong's tree trunks.</li> <li>Cheong uses thinner paint that allows parts of the canvas to show through. In Chen's painting, the paint is layered on thickly, in certain parts, in an impasto style that</li> </ul>
	<b>Composition/ Arrangement of subject matter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chen's painting conveys a sense of immediacy with its closely cropped composition. The figures are not depicted in full, with the tops, sides and legs cut out of the frame.</li> <li>In Cheong's work, the subjects are harmoniously combined as the fluid forms meld into each other. Cheong features more of the landscape and surroundings in comparison to Chen, who leaves out the surroundings and focuses only on the figures. The feature of other smaller subjects creates a sense of space as the scale changes from the central subjects in the foreground and the secondary details of the landscape in the background.</li> </ul>

b) Discuss the influences evident in the two paintings. [10]	
Candidates are required to identify the influences evident in each work and provide evidence in the paintings of such influence. To go one step further, students can also name artworks by artists that were referenced by Chen and Cheong and point out similarities in their approaches (e.g. treatment of subject matter, colour choices, use of line, ideas, etc.)	
<b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b>  <b>Personal Response</b>	The works by both Chen and Cheong have incorporated Western and Eastern influences in their works, namely, <b>the works of Western Artists like Cezanne, Gauguin, Picasso (School of Paris)</b> and the <b>Eastern techniques of rendering with Chinese ink</b> . The choice of subject matter was influenced by the local lifestyles in South East Asia (Singapore/ Malaysia/ Bali)
	<b>Two Figures</b> by Chen Wen Hsi
	<b>Primitivism</b> influenced the stylisation of the the facial features. Reference to Oceanic/ African Art led Picasso to stylize his forms, especially in terms of simplifying or exaggerating facial forms. Cheong narrowed the space between the eyes of his figure, emphasising the long, aquiline nose of the figure. Eyes were rendered in black, like in sculptures from Oceanic and African tribes.
	<b>Cubism</b> (associated artists: Georges Braque/ Picasso) involved the combination of multiple viewpoints into a single plane, resulting in the angular fragmented forms which allow for these to merge. While Chen did not merge multiple views of the single subject, the use of these angled lines is evident in his treatment of the light purple clothing worn by the figure on the right, which nearly resembling creasing of a stiff garment.
	<b>Indian Men with Two Cows</b> by Cheong Soo Pieng
	<b>Cezanne</b> influenced the presentation of Cheong's painting: there is a similar elevated perspective seen in Cezanne's works.
	The bare bodies of the Indian men have also been painted in a similar manner to everything else in the painting, such that they bear a striking resemblance to the trees in the foreground of the painting.

	<p><b>Gauguin</b> may be an influence in the garish and non-naturalistic sense of colour. Rather than reflecting the actual colours of these subjects in reality, Cheong uses colour without reference to reality. Chen, in his choice of skin colour (blue-black), also uses the unnaturalistic colour to enhance the drama of the scene.</p>
	<p>In the same way as Cheong, <b>Gauguin</b> used tree trunks or natural elements to bisect his composition in “The Agony in the Garden”. The tree trunk is centered so as to divide the space or create a break in the flow of the image in order to heighten the dynamism.</p>
	<p><b>Cloisonnism</b>, which influenced Gauguin’s use of dark outlines is evident in the works of both artists. By enclosing the forms in thick, dark lines, the forms are flattened and given a graphic appearance.</p>
	<p>Both artworks demonstrate influence <b>of the surrounding environment</b> in the choice of local subject matter. Chen depicted the local people working in a rural setting, as inferred from the choice of the hat and attire, which could resemble a batik print sarong. Cheong chose to represent Indian men watching over their herd, surrounded by greenery.</p>

<p><b>c) Which painting demonstrates the Nanyang style more effectively? Why? [10]</b></p>	
<p>Candidates are required to define “Nanyang Style” and build an argument about how <b>one</b> of the paintings demonstrate the style more effectively. Reasons can be drawn from the previous question, especially in terms of the influences of Western/ Eastern styles.</p>	
<p><b>Cultural and Aesthetic Appreciation</b></p>	<p><b>Definition of Nanyang Style:</b></p> <p>The term Nanyang refers to the southern seas or the South China region of which Singapore and Malaysia are a part. It also refers to a synthesis of styles from the School of Paris, comprising art movements such as Cubism and Fauvism, with Chinese ink painting traditions. Artists painting in this style depicted local subject matter as they saw it.</p>
<p><b>Personal Response</b></p>	<p><b>Cheong's painting demonstrates Nanyang style more effectively because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of Eastern calligraphic techniques are more evident in the style of outlining the forms</li> <li>• Organic forms shows pictorial harmony, a concept emphasized in Chinese art</li> <li>• Composition and difference in scale demonstrate the sense of space that is also evident in Chinese painting</li> <li>• The subject matter is more relevant, depicts a rural Nanyang lifestyle more clearly than Chen's painting</li> <li>• The use of unnaturalistic colour shows the incorporation of Gauguin’s influence, especially in the fiery red trees.</li> <li>• Choice of media (Oil on canvas) is Western but subject matter (Indian men) is distinctly local.</li> </ul> <p><b>Chen's painting demonstrates Nanyang style more effectively because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The angular forms clearly demonstrate Cubist influences</li> <li>• The use of thick black outlines show the influence of Cloisonnism</li> <li>• Figures are illustrated to be wearing clothing that demonstrates S.E. Asian heritage/ cultural practice of batik</li> <li>• Close cropping and framing of subject matter is distinctly Western, shows influence of photography or the snapshot moment.</li> </ul>

4. **Le domaine d'Arnheim (The Domain Of Arnheim)** by René Magritte, 1962.  
Gouache on paper.  
35 x 27 cm.  
Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium.  
© 2008 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



- Caught in a Barrier of Sharp Rock** by Lucia Hartini, 1992.  
Oil on canvas.  
200 x 230 cm.  
© 2015 IndoArtNow Gallery.



**a. Assess the ideas expressed in these works.**

**[10]**

Candidates should offer judgement on the ideas that are evidently expressed in these works. Candidates should discuss how these ideas are expressed with evidence from the works. A mature answer should:

**AP&I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.

**C&AA:** Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.

**PR:** Discussions and arguments are forceful, exploratory, interpretative, sophisticated and personal.

Candidates may offer varying interpretations with concrete evidence from the paintings. Assessment of ideas can be made in terms of clarity of ideas expressed.

- Both works are surreal paintings of landscapes, incorporating animal elements.
- Surreal paintings typically contain unrealistic settings/surroundings/scenery painted in a realistic manner.

<b><i>Le domaine d'Arnheim (The Domain Of Arnheim)</i></b>	<b><i>Caught in a Barrier of Sharp Rock</i></b>
<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This painting by Magritte is based on Edgar Allen Poe's story "The Domain of Arnheim:"</li> <li>• "Arnheim" is a German word meaning "home of the eagle".</li> <li>• The story is, in brief, Poe acting as our tour guide through the human mind and soul. The unprecedented beauty and serenity of Arnheim--the domain of the soaring eagle--is accessible to each individual who follows the path Poe blazes within the realm of imagination. He states that "in landscape arrangements alone are the physical nature susceptible of imagination." (<a href="http://worldofpoe.blogspot.sg/2009/10/domain-of-arnheim.html">http://worldofpoe.blogspot.sg/2009/10/domain-of-arnheim.html</a>)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This painting is one from the beginning of her career, which spanned from the beginning of the 1970s until 1993, where she painted works containing powerful symbols.</li> <li>• Her works during this period were characterized by cosmic landscapes and symbols, as seen by the crane, rocky mountaineous landscape and planets in this painting.</li> <li>• Hartini's works often deal with feeling trapped in cultural traditions and societal expectations of male-dominated and Muslim Indonesian society, where Hartini is a female Catholic artist.</li> <li>• Nature is also a recurring theme in her paintings and this painting could be a reflection of that as well as a return to her birthplace: the mountains of Temanggung in Central Java.</li> <li>• Her preoccupations are highlighted in the composition and subject matter of this painting.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Interpretation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The idea of this painting depicting the domain of the eagle is expressed in Magritte's clear representation of the eagle as part of a mountain landscape. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here Magritte's surrealism brings forth a realistically painted mountain with one peak depicted as an eagle's head, indicating the beauty and majestic of an eagle, similar to that of mountains.</li> <li>• The mountain spans horizontally outwards to the left and right of the painting, as though the eagle is spreading its majestic wings.</li> <li>• The notion of the eagle guarding its domain is also seen in the painting.</li> <li>• With the nest of eggs in the foreground, it is as though the eagle is spreading its wings and protecting its offspring.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The crescent moon at the top of the painting, with its horns pointing left (eastward) indicates a waxing (growing) moon. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The idea of a waxing moon painted on the same picture plane as unhatched eggs suggests the notion of growth, where the unhatched eggs will eventually grow into the beautiful and majestic eagle and in due time, guard their own domain.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Interpretation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The crane suggests a representation of Hartini as a Catholic female artist feeling trapped in cultural traditions and societal expectations of male-dominated and Muslim Indonesian society, where Hartini is a female Catholic artist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The slender form and colour of the crane suggests an embodiment of the female: it's slender form similar to that of a woman, a vulnerable prey distinguished from its surrounding by its whiteness, which denotes purity.</li> <li>• In this painting, the crane is caught in sharp rocks, paralleling Hartini's preoccupation with feelings of entrapment within her own society.</li> <li>• The jagged rocks also suggest the rough and dangerous nature of the environment in which Hartini is living in during that period of time: by the 1990s during Suharto's reign, the New Order's authoritarianism and widespread corruption were a source of discontent in the nation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hartini's depiction of natural landscapes and planets suggests a manifestation of her childhood fascinations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a young girl, she often dreamt of flying away to the sun, moon and stars. Often, when she was distressed as a child, her older sisters would take her outside to look at the shining lights behind the mountain.</li> <li>• These fascinations and vivid memories lend to the inspiration behind the depiction of the painting's cosmic landscape of planets, stone, water and clouds.</li> <li>• However, due to the depiction of subject matter, instead of offering solitude, the cosmic landscape adds to the perilous environment of the painting with its</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	tumultuous looking clouds and sharp, jagged rocks. The planets beckon but the crane is confined to the sharp rocks, where freedom and the opportunities for expansion are constrained.
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**Assessment**

Both works have successfully made use of subject matter and symbols to express their ideas. The realistic representation of subject matter makes them recognisable and, combined with unrealistic and imaginary settings, both artists are able to bring their ideas across clearly.

However, although both works make use of similar colour schemes (monochromatic blue), Magritte's use of blue reflects a more calming environment than Hartini's use of darker shades of blue. Coupled with her subject matter, Hartini's painting has a more melancholic feel.

*Candidates may offer alternative views with sufficient and significant details and evidence/elaboration drawn from the paintings.*

**b. Compare and contrast the use of realism in these works.**

**[10]**

*Candidates should provide the definition for realism and compare and contrast how these works use realism (why and how).*

*A mature answer provide in-depth comparisons between the two paintings and:*

**AP&I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.

**C&AA:** Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.

**PR:** Discussions and arguments are forceful, exploratory, interpretative, sophisticated and personal.

*Marks given for each valid point with sufficient evidence/elaboration.*

**Definition of realism**

Realism is the representation of a subject matter in nature or of contemporary life in a manner that is truthful, detailed and accurate without any idealisation or embellishment. It rejects imaginative idealisation in favour of a close observation of outward appearances.

**Use of realism in both works – Similarities and differences**

- Both paintings portray subject matter in a realistic manner. These subject matter, individually, are accurately portrayed with detail, as they would be seen in real life.
- Both paintings make use of realism to portray the artist's ideas:
  - Magritte's idea expressed is unique to the painting itself while Hartini's idea expressed is a preoccupation she expresses in most of her other works
- Unlike Magritte, Hartini's use of realism is more fantastical than that of Magritte's
  - Due to the composition of subject matter, Magritte's landscape is more realistic than Hartini's. A brick wall could be situated at the foreground, behind which a mountain can be seen, whereas one would be hard pressed to find a crane flying in a landscape with highly visible planets.

<p><b><u>Le domaine d'Arnheim (The Domain Of Arnheim)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magritte's painting is a representation of the ideal and fantastical landscape as describe in Edgar Allen Poe's poem.</li> <li>• His use of realism, much like Hartini's, is a representation of the imaginary into reality.</li> <li>• However, unlike Hartini's use of realism to convey a direct message, Magritte's realistic elements in the painting can either be read as symbols or they can merely be a set of realistically painted elements put together in an imaginary setting.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magritte's use of realism allows each individual elements in the paintings such as the nest of eggs, the eagle and the mountain to be read as symbols or not. Here, viewers are allowed to have their own interpretation of the painting if they are not familiar with the content in Poe's poem.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Caught in a Barrier of Sharp Rock</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By realistically painting her subject matter in an unrealistic setting, Hartini presents to us reality in the context of a dream or illusion.</li> <li>• This painting makes use of realism to represent an imaginary and subconscious scene into reality.</li> <li>• By representing her subject matter in a realistic manner, she is able to convey her message of depicting a woman's state of mind and emotion within the environment around her.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is done through the realistically painted subject matter which act as symbols: the crane symbolising a woman, the sharp rock as the tumultuous environment around her, the cosmic landscape as the subconscious and imagination she longs to escape to.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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c. Which of these works is more effective as a surreal painting?	[10]
<p><i>Candidates should state the definition of a surreal painting. Definitions may include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Characteristics of a surreal painting.</i></li> <li>2) <i>Function of a surreal painting.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Candidates should then state which work is more effective and why (must make a stand). Conditions for effectiveness may include but not limited to the following points:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>The painting satisfies characteristics of a surreal painting</i></li> <li>2) <i>The painting is effective in conveying a message / is highly interpretive because it is recognisable/relatable</i></li> <li>3) <i>The painting is able to evoke a feeling</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Candidates must make a stand as to which painting is more effective and why. Marks are given for each valid point and elaboration/evidence.</i></p> <p><b>AP&amp;I:</b> Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, illustrated by ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.</p> <p><b>C&amp;AA:</b> Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.</p> <p><b>PR:</b> Discussions and arguments are forceful, exploratory, interpretative, sophisticated and personal.</p>	
<p><b><u>Definition of a surreal painting / What makes a painting surreal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A surreal painting often juxtaposes realistically painted and recognizable subject matter in an unrealistic or imaginary settings. Furthermore, objects may have qualities that they do not have in real life.</li> <li>• A surreal painting often uses a symbolist approach. The use of recognizable subject matter in unrecognizable settings allows for wider interpretations and</li> </ul>	



viewers are able to make their own meaning.

- Dream imagery is often seen in a surreal painting, aiming to show the subconscious state of mind, therefore allowing viewers to discard rational thought to read and understand that painting.

*[Max 1.5 mark for definition]*

### **Section C**

5. Compare how two of the following artists have expressed their ideas in abstract painting [30]

**Piet Mondrian**

**Willem De Kooning**

**Chua Ek Kay**

**Anthony Poon**


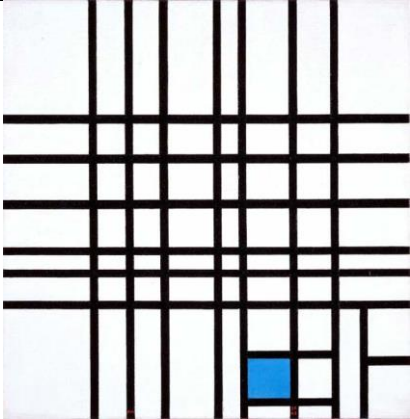
Candidates are required to assess works in paint by **any two** artists listed and identify the ideas. As the question states “how”, students have to mention the techniques employed by the artists to create the works. Students should mention at least two artworks as examples.



#### **Common Pitfall**

Students may fail to address the techniques used by the artists (techniques include media manipulation, material usage and image planning/ creation, i.e. composition, sketching). Students may also fail to analyse, e.g. focus on the general ideas of the works without pointing out visual qualities/ elements in the work that convey deeper or more specific ideas.

#### **Sample thesis statements**

- Artists like Mondrian and Poon derive their **inspiration from nature** and depicted these **elements of nature in the simplest forms** possible.
- Chua and De Kooning use **expressive, painterly techniques** to convey **emotion and liveliness** in their works.

Artist	Ideas	Suggested Work 1	Suggested Work 2
<p><b>Piet Mondrian</b></p>	<p>Mondrian wanted to create a painting that portrayed the essence of nature in the purest form as possible. He believed that one can get to the essence of something by ignoring its surface qualities and reducing elements of less importance. This preoccupation was influenced by his Theosophic beliefs that <b>pure abstraction was a pursuit of truth</b>. Theosophy also believes that everything in the universe is connected and thus, in essence, can be reduced to the same components. This intention is further emphasised in his work when Mondrian presented this work with a title that gives no clue to the audience as to the subject matter.</p> <p>This led Mondrian to found a new artistic style called "De Stijl", also known as Neoplasticism. Dutch artistic movement</p>	 <p><i>Tableau No. 2/Composition No. VII</i> 1913 Oil on canvas 105.1 x 114.3 cm</p> <p>In his early work, Mondrian simplified forms to express nature. He gradually eliminated subject matter in his painting, and sought clarity, purity and order by reducing his forms to squares and rectangles, and by restricting colour to the primary colours, along with black and white. This painting does not have the rigid and purely geometric form of his later works, still retaining the painterly qualities that were inspired by the Cubists. Patches of paint can be observed to be unblended and unevenly applied, allowing some black lines to show through the grey layer, while obscuring some of them.</p>	 <p><i>Composition No. 12 with Blue</i>, 1936-1942 oil on canvas 62 x 60.3 cm National Gallery of Canada</p> <p>Mondrian began the painting in 1936 while living in Paris, and finished it in 1942, after moving to New York where his compositions became dense and dynamic, reflecting the energy he encountered in the bustling metropolis. This painting is typical of a work of the De Stijl movement, characterised by the horizontal and vertical line, the colour blue, one of the three primary colours used by Mondrian, as well as non-colours such as black and white can be seen in the painting. Using the black horizontal and vertical lines of even width, Mondrian has created an irregular grid and filled a square in blue. Mondrian worked out his composition using tape which also allowed him to keep the edges of his lines straight.</p>

	<p>founded in 1917 which expresses the utopian ideal of spiritual harmony and order. It advocates <b>pure abstraction and universality by reduction to the essentials of form and colour.</b></p>	<p>Mondrian broke down his motif—in this case a tree—into a scaffolding of interlocking black lines and planes of colour; furthermore, his palette of close-valued ochre and grey tones resembles Cubist canvases. Yet Mondrian went beyond the Cubists' degree of abstraction: his subjects are less recognizable, in part because he eschewed any suggestion of volume, and, unlike the Cubists, who rooted their compositions at the bottom of the canvas in order to depict a figure subject to gravity, Mondrian's scaffolding fades at the painting's edges.</p>	
<p><b>Willem De Kooning</b></p>	<p><i>"I'm not interested in 'abstracting' or taking things out or reducing painting to design, form, line, and colour. I paint this way because I can keep putting more things in it - drama, anger, pain, love, a figure, a horse, my ideas about space. Through your eyes it again becomes an emotion or idea."</i></p> <p>- De Kooning</p> <p>De Kooning wanted his paintings to express ideas in his painting that were <b>connected to his personal struggle of painting.</b> Often he</p>	 <p><i>Excavation</i>, 1950 Oil on canvas 205.7 x 254.6 cm The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, United States of America</p> <p>De Kooning's painting techniques are clearly displayed in his brushwork and how he handles the paint on the canvas. Like the paintings in his 'Woman' series, "Excavation" was constructed through a series of</p>	 <p><i>Woman, I</i>, 1950–52 Oil on canvas 192.7 x 147.3 cm</p> <p>Woman I is a painting of a female figure .He applied newspaper to the surface to keep paint workable for long periods, and when he peeled it off, the imprint often remained, leaving further evidence of his process. Although De Kooning never conceived the pictures as collages, he employed the technique as a springboard to begin many of</p>

	<p>would try to express the immediate <b>emotions or thoughts</b> in his <b>gestural strokes</b>.</p>	<p>drawing and painting, scraping paint off, drawing again and repainting.</p> <p>De Kooning began by drawing on the canvas the intricate shapes of geometrical forms and fragments which slowly took shape over several months of work. He constantly worked and reworked on the painting, applying thick layers of paint, scraping it off and repeating the process until he was satisfied with the final product.</p> <p>The applying and re-applying of paint is evident in the rough and somewhat angry vigour of the work, most especially evident in the line work which alternates between rough and thick and thin and feathery, with some lines showing the remnants of paint scraped off.</p> <p>The revealing nature or lack of cover of previously painted layers of the work, hint a parallel to the title of the work, of layers being 'excavated' to reveal what is beneath.</p> <p>De Kooning's treatment of subject matter encompasses a precarious stage between abstraction and figuration. Through his working and reworking of the painting, black outlined-shapes can be read as fishes, torsos, birds, noses, jaws; the seemingly ever-present eyes and teeth floating around the canvas, though not immediately recognisable. Furthermore, de Kooning's figures in the pictorial space reveal a semblance of Cubist influences in the angularity and sharp-edged outlines that de Kooning painted. As such, his treatment of subject matter is a caught between the figurative and the abstract, whereby viewers do not immediately recognize what is being painted yet, given time to flit between various areas in the painting, are able to discern various humanoid and animal forms.</p>	<p>the pictures in the Women series by pasting magazine images of women's smiles in the position of the mouth, though this element rarely survived in the finished product. This use of popular media as inspiration is in some measure a precursor of Pop art, which developed as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism.</p> <p>Woman I is noteworthy not only for this process, but also because it embodies two major themes in de Kooning's work. The first is the depiction of the female figure. The woman depicted in Woman I is wholly unlike anything seen in Western painting - she is highly aggressive, erotic and threatening. Her frightening teeth and fierce eyes are not those of a stereotypically submissive, Cold war-era housewife, and De Kooning created her in part as a response to the idealized women in art history, such as Ingres' <i>Odalisque</i> (1814). Secondly, the work is an important step in De Kooning's lifelong exploration of the relationship between figure and ground. He causes the woman's form to blend into the abstract background by using brushstrokes that draw the ground and figure together. He also used similar pigments (whites, and fleshy pinks) for both the upper body and the space surrounding it; hence the woman dissolves into the background, the setting of which, typically, is indiscernible - a space de Kooning described as a "no-environment."</p>
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**Chua Ek Kay**

Chua Ek Kay worked mostly in Chinese ink, studying Chinese painting with Fan Chang Tien (of the Shanghai School) in his adulthood. Chua learnt Chinese calligraphy as a child and also practiced writing Chinese poetry.

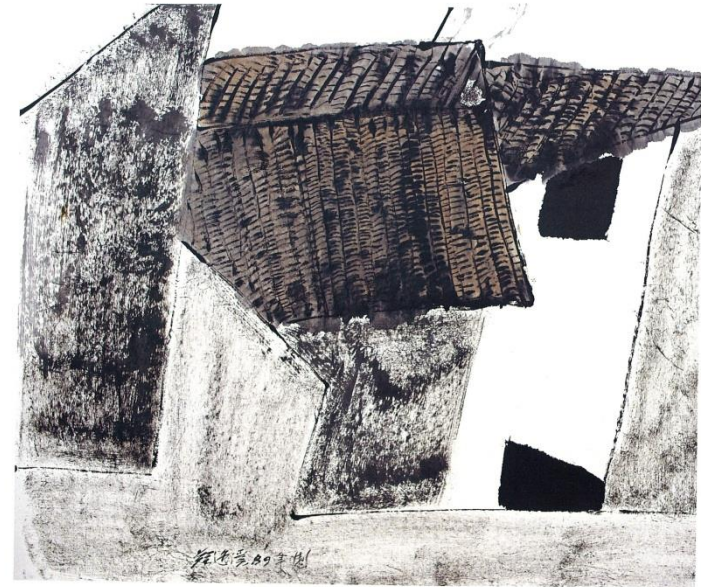
Instead of painting based on the traditional genres of Chinese painting like landscape, flowers and birds or people and characters, Chua chose to **paint from his direct surroundings**, depicting the urban cityscape of Singapore. This is a major break away from the iconography and traditions of Chinese ink painting (many of the subjects in Chinese ink painting carry symbolic meaning or bear Taoist influence) Having grown up in Chinatown after moving from China, Chua painted this environment of old



Street Scene at Jalan Sultan 1997 | Ink and colour on paper, 97 x 91 cm

*Street Scene at Jalan Sultan (1997)*

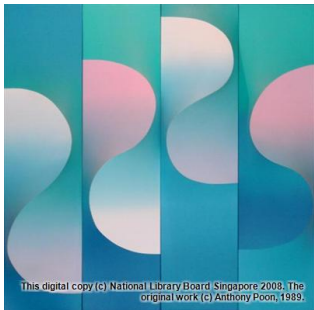

Rather than depicting objects that are significant in Chinese culture, Chua decided to paint a street scene at Jalan Sultan, a historical district that has Malay Muslim heritage sites. Pictured here is the mosque at Jalan Sultan. This scene, while having a slight abstract slant, is recognizable due to the loose strokes depicting the distinct dome and minaret of the mosque, stacked tiles on a slanted roof with hatched lines, as well as the bold black strokes marking the lamp posts and the shophouses lining the street. There is some semblance of perspective, albeit inaccurate with the diminishing shophouses towards the centre of the painting (format nearly a square) where the



A Composition of Angular Forms 1989 | Ink and colour on paper, 97 x 115 cm

*A Composition of Angular Forms (1989)*

Using the visual vocabulary that he had developed for his paintings of Singapore street scenes- a block of black to represent a window, dry brushstrokes for the rough textures of the shophouse façade and repeated short lines and black daubs underneath a layer of brown ink to depict the roof tiles- Chua Ek Kay developed a complex and dynamic composition of interlocking facades and rooftops of shophouses. It is possible that Chua was influenced by Western Cubist paintings which take on multiple viewpoints, flattening elements of the subjects on a single pictorial plane. Using Chinese ink and brown ink to create this piece, his colours follow the Chinese ink painting conventions of muted colour (near monochromatic palette). However, his composition

	<p>shophouses combined with the skyscrapers in the city's business district. Chua was hailed as the bridge between Asian and Western art for <b>his blend of traditional Chinese art forms and Western theories and techniques</b>. In his abstractions, he also broke away from pictorial conventions of Chinese painting, especially in his use of colour and the use of negative space.</p>	<p>mosque is sited. Light and finer lines indicate cables suspended across the street. Loose brushwork and bold lines cast shadows over the left side of the painting. With light brown washes of paint, Chua colours the dome. This painting has a light feeling with the disconnected brushstrokes giving a sense of pulsating movement. Even as Chua leaves out the pedestrians and human traffic on this street, he maintains a sense of life through the variation of visual weight, black blocks are interrupted by finer and swift ink strokes. In line with the tradition of painting a "feeling" or a sentiment of a landscape in Chinese ink painting, Chua translates an urban cityscape, with a distinctly multi-cultural flavour, into a painting that captures the blend of east and west.</p>	<p>strays far from the conventions of pictorial composition of Chinese ink painting. Chinese ink paintings, typically, leave plenty of negative, unpainted space on paper to reduce the noise in the work or allow viewers to focus on certain subjects in the work. Chua's painting has little negative space- most of the painting is filled up except for a small area above the rooftops or the façade outside the window.</p>
<p><b>Anthony Poon</b></p>	<p>Poon is interested in the <b>abstraction of nature</b>. His work explores the <b>movement</b> depicted in visuals, especially like those in the field of Optical Art (e.g. depicting optical "vibrations"). He is also interested in the <b>removal of the presence of the human hand</b> through mechanical processes and precision. Poon's work investigates how</p>	 <p><i>PR8-G6 on 6P Waves</i> (1989) Acrylic on Canvas</p> <p><i>PR8-G6 on 6P waves</i> is a 3-dimensional painting with gradations of blue, pink and green depicting a segmented curve on each of its 4 panels. Poon has</p>	 <p><i>Red Frequency Waves</i>, 1985 183 x 183 cm, Acrylic on canvas Collection of Singapore Art Museum</p> <p>After a period of exploration with shaped canvases, Poon returned to the square canvas in the series, Colour Frequency Wave Series, in which he explored the curvilinear form of a frequency wave.</p> <p>He uses analogous colours in this painting – different shades of red, ranging from a light pink to a deep maroon. These</p>

	colour can be adopted as a form of visual language, and how the human eye perceives colour.	used an armature as a base on which he has stretched canvas so as to create a wave protruding from the canvas that enhances his painting of waveforms. Poon's work makes use of colours that are in the same colour family, the blues blend smoothly into the other colours as even the pink used is a cool pink that has blue undertones.	colour explorations and combinations of colour and form were inspired by the industrialization of Singapore during the early 1970s. Using the iconography of emerging skyscrapers, Poon translated the motifs of escalators into patterns of blocks and curves that flow diagonally throughout the image. The use of a circle helps to frame the image and direct the viewer's focus. The vertical panels and repetition of the diagonal wave motif creates a sense of undulating motion that moves up and down and sideways. The juxtaposition of the multiple tones used in the painting illustrates the discontinued or interrupted motion.
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6. To what extent is time-based media effective in expressing the ideas of Bill Viola and Nam June Paik?

[30]

Candidates' answers should:

- Have depth and clarity
- **MUST** make a stand as to what extent (large or small) – “certain” is a vague answer
- Include a definition of “time-based media”
- Define what is meant by “effective in expressing ideas”
- Provide brief background to both artists.
- Make use of works by both artists to illustrate their points and as evidence for their main points.
- Address how time-based media is effective.

**AP&I:** Show ability to draw attention to and critically appraise significant details, supported with ample accurate and precise references to artworks/artists of high interest value to the question.

**C&AA:** Show a broad familiarity with relevant artworks/artists and social and cultural backgrounds.

**PR:** Discussions and arguments are forceful, exploratory, interpretative, sophisticated and personal.

Marks are awarded for every valid answer with elaboration and evidence.

**Introduction & Definition**

“Time-based media” refer to mediums which use the passage of and the manipulation of time as the essential element of representation, together with any chosen subject matter. In art, time-based media includes specific references to experimental film, video art and installation, sound, performance and multimedia computing. It also develops critical awareness through close studies of moving images, contexts, histories and expressive use of technology and the human body.

Nam June Paik and Bill Viola are two artists who make use of time-based media, specifically video art and installation, to effectively express different themes that each of them is concerned with. While both artists employ the use of video as their primary medium, the approach which both artists take are as drastically different

as the themes they explore.

This essay seeks to discuss the extent of effectiveness of time-based media in expressing the different ideas of both artists through:

- 1) Time-based media's ability to manipulate time
- 2) Its ability to manipulate subject matter as moving images
- 3) The inclusion of sound/soundscapes
- 4) Viewer interaction

*[Candidates may approach the question using other valid main points. Candidates may also state in the opening paragraph which artist's use of time-based media is more effective.]*

**Nam June Paik**

**Background & themes**

- Nam June Paik was initially interested in television from a composer's perspective. He found that problems of music, performance and television were closely linked by a set of shared principles that therein lays a destructive nature of one-way, passive delivery systems for electronic media.
- Much of his video work were directed towards the activation of television audience
- Before the rise of video art, Nam June Paik saw television technology developed to make audience passive consumers.
- He wanted to humanize technology by opening the role of producer to whoever had the need and/or desire to activate a relationship to television.

**Bill Viola**

**Background & themes**

- Bill Viola is instrumental in the establishment of video as a vital form of contemporary art, and in so doing has helped to greatly expand its scope in terms of technology, content, and historical reach.
  - For 40 years he has created videotapes, architectural video installations, sound environments, electronic music performances, flat panel video pieces, and works for television broadcast.
  - Viola's video installations—total environments that envelop the viewer in image and sound—employ state-of-the art technologies and are distinguished by their precision and direct simplicity.
- Viola uses video to explore the phenomena of sense perception as an avenue to self-knowledge.
- His works focus on universal human experiences—birth, death, the unfolding of consciousness

**Topic Sentence 1**

Unlike paintings or sculpture, time-based media has the ability to manipulate time and therefore allow NJP and Viola to stretch the boundaries of art-making and the expression of their themes.





**TV Buddha** by NJP, 1976

Television monitor, video camera, painted wooden Buddha, tripod, plinth

Installation dimensions variable Buddha:  
75.0 x 36.0 x 36.0 TV monitor: 32.0 x 32.0 x  
32.0 cm

Gift of the John Kaldor Family Collection  
2011. Donated through the Australian  
Government's Cultural Gifts Program



**Quintet of the Astonished**  
by Bill Viola, 2000,

Video Installation, colour  
video rear projection on  
screen mounted on wall

- NJP's *TV Buddha* comprises of a statue of Buddha placed in front of a television monitor with a closed-circuit video camera directed from the top of the monitor onto Buddha; Buddha silently observes himself on the screen in an infinite temporal loop.
  - The recording of a "life" object transferred onto a TV screen from which the object views itself blurs the boundaries between real time and recorded time.
  - Suspension of time is evident, allowing viewers to question the reality of time suspended and making them aware of such notions.
- Bill Viola's *Quintet of the Astonished* features a group of five people standing close together as they undergo a wave of intense emotion that threatens to overwhelm them.
  - As the sequence begins, their neutral expressions begin to change as the emotion, different for each person, overtake the group and builds to an extreme level. After some minutes it finally subsides, leaving each person drained and exhausted.
  - The five individuals experience the rising emotional energy independently, with no acknowledgement or direct interaction with their companions, other than occasional physical contact due to their close proximity.
  - The group stands before a neutral background with no suggestion of the outside world.
  - In the course of the event they do not move from their original positions and no one leaves the frame.
  - Extreme slow-motion playback makes visible the smallest details and subtle nuances of expression, creating a subjective, psychological space where time is suspended for performer and viewers alike (Bill Viola: *The Passions*, John Walsh ed., The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, p72).
- Through the manipulation of time, which is the essence of time-based media, the latter is hence effective in expressing NJP and BV's ideas of opening up the human consciousness and perceptions towards emotions, thus humanizing technology.

**Topic Sentence 2**

Time-based media is also largely effective in manipulating subject matter as moving images, giving artists like NJP and Bill Viola the ability to effectively express their ideas.



**Electronic Superhighway** by NJP, 1995

Fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound approx. 15 x 40 x 4 ft. Smithsonian American Art Museum Gift of the artist

© Nam June Paik Estate



**Magnet TV** by NJP, 1965

Modified black-and-white television set and magnet, overall: 38 3/4 x 19 1/4 x 24 1/2 in. (98.4 x 48.9 x 62.2 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase, with funds from Dieter Rosenkranz

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- *Electronic Highway* is a time-based work that spans an entire wall and beyond, bordered by neon outlining the monitors that contain augmented, flashing images as though seen from a passing car.
  - This installation brings to mind the enormous scale of a nation that confronted NJP when he first came to America. The neon lights outlining each monitor, representing each individual state, recalls multi-coloured maps of places that beckon Americans to the open road. Different colours suggest the distinct identity of each state.
  - Paik's work, with each state broadcasting different manipulated images, suggests the America that was once diverse in a now homogenized Internet society.
- *Magnet TV* is a work featuring NJP's altered television image using a magnet. The magnetic field interfered with the TV's electronic signals, distorting the broadcast image into an abstract form.
  - This work allows viewers to move the magnet and manipulate the image on the television. Through the transformation of the image, NJP is challenging the notion that the art object is a self-contained entity and expressed the process of instant feedback, where the viewer's actions have a direct effect on the form and meaning of the work.
  - The interactive quality of the work parallels the audience involvement that is essential to performance art, which is also a time-based media, accentuating the participatory nature of the art.



**The Crossing** by Bill Viola, 1996

Two-channel color video installation, with four channels of sound; 10 min., 57 sec.; performer: Phil Esposito  
16 feet x 27 feet 6 inches x 57 feet (4.9 x 8.4 x 17.4 m)  
overall

Edition 1/3

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Gift, The  
Bohen Foundation, 2000

- While NJP manipulates his images onscreen, Bill Viola's manipulation come in the form putting his subject matter through various elements and the slowing down or speeding up of time.
- *The Crossing* revolves around a freestanding, double-sided projection screen. On one side, a man walks in slow motion out of the blackness to eventually confront the viewer at over life-size. Dripping water from above gradually becomes a torrent, overwhelming the figure, whose form is eradicated. The scene replays after the water dissipates. On the reverse side, the same man approaches, this time to be consumed by rising flames. Part violent destruction, part peaceful transcendence, *The Crossing* is indicative of Viola's use of nonspecific spiritual processes drawn from a host of disparate belief systems.

Time-based media is therefore highly effective in allowing artists like NJP and Bill Viola to express their ideas as the medium allows artists to manipulate images, subject matter and time to suit their themes and ideas.

**Topic Sentence 3**

Time-based media also allows artists to make use of sound, an essential element in video art. The presence of sound adds to the effectiveness of time-based media.



**Tristan's Ascension (The Sound of a Mountain Under a Waterfall)** by Bill Viola

2005

Video/sound installation

Performer: John Hay

Photos: Kira Perov

Courtesy Bill Viola Studio and Kaldor Public Art Projects

- In this work, Viola installed a video in St Carthage's Catholic Church and one of the elements he made use of was surround sound. Shown in a continuous loop (with another work, *Fire Woman*, the inclusion of surround sound makes this time-based work an immersive one. Moreover, set in a very apt setting, it brings forth even more Viola's lifelong engagement with the human condition into ancient themes of life, love and death. The two installations were derived from Viola's creation for Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

**Conclusion**

Time-based media is therefore effective to a large extent in expressing the ideas of Bill Viola and Nam June Paik. The ability for the medium to be manipulated in terms of time, imagery and sound allows for an entirely new dimension in expression. Viola and Paik have both used these abilities to their advantage in bringing forth their ideas.