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VISUAL ART: PAPER I: Preliminary exam

Time: 3 hours

100 marks

Examiner: Mrs Z Cloete

Moderator: Ms B Donnelly

Date: 20 September 2023

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

1. **ANSWER ALL 5 QUESTIONS.**
 2. This question paper consists of 13 pages.
 3. Number the answers correctly according to the numbering system used in the question paper.
 4. **Start with Question 5 and please allocate approximately 50 min of your time to answer Question 5.**
 5. Read each question carefully before constructing your response.
 6. Where a question states **AND/OR** you are allowed to discuss ONE aspect or of ALL the criteria mentioned.
 7. Write in a clear, creative and structured manner, using full sentences and paragraphs according to the instructions of each question. The listing of facts/tables is NOT acceptable. I.e. No marks will be awarded for lists of facts or diagrams.
 8. Selected words have been included as footnotes to clarify your understanding of certain terms used.
 9. Information discussed in one answer will NOT be credited if repeated in other answers. Cross-referencing of artworks is permissible.
 10. **Underline the names of movements/modes of working, artists and artworks.**
 11. Write neatly and legibly.
 12. Answers must be completed in the Answer Book provided.
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QUESTION 1 VISUAL LITERACY

Study Images A and B, read the text and then answer the questions that follow.

Use Images A and B for QUESTION 1 ONLY.

Image A

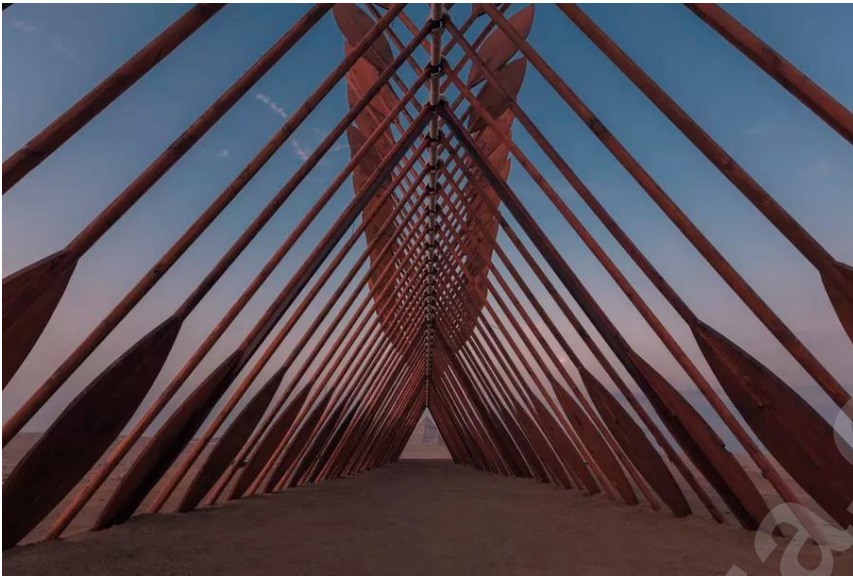
Sherin Guirguis, installation view of *Here I Have Returned*, 2021. Photo by Hesham Al Sayfi. Courtesy of the artist and Art D'Egypte.

A team of nine Egyptian women founded in 2016, has staged annual pop-up exhibitions at Egyptian heritage sites in the past few years. While there are obvious cultural diplomacy aims behind these stunts, there's also a fascination with time and the timelessness of juxtaposing the ancient world with the contemporary. Abdel Ghaffar calls this obsession "a space-time continuum."

In 2021 they held an exhibition at the Pyramids of Giza entitled "*Forever is Now*", an apt title considering the history of the pyramids which have existed for 4500 years.

The ancient Egyptians saw death as a temporary interruption rather than the end of life; it was simply part of the journey towards the afterlife. The Giza pyramids are not only breath-taking because they are monumental and an ingenuous feat, but also awe-inspiring because of their spiritual significance and the fact that they have resisted the ravages of time.

Image B



Moataz Nasr,
installation views
of *Barzakh*,
2021. Courtesy
of the artist and
Art D'Egypte.



Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr's powerful piece *Barzakh* presents a series of oars joined together to form a triangular corridor. Inspired by the solar boat of the Egyptians, made to carry the souls of the pharaohs to the heavens, the work allows spectators to get a glimpse of the pyramids in the distance — perfectly framed by the triangular shape created in Nasr's installation. He also drew perspectival lines with his teepee-like oars forming an open triangular shelter. He was influenced by Andalusian poet-philosopher Ibn Arabi's concept of the *barzakh*, which denotes a borderland or liminal¹ space. His structure felt like a portal, referencing the solar barque used to carry the soul of pharaohs. The pathway became tighter as you walked from one end to the other. "It's a divide between worlds," Nasr said, "between black and white, day and night. It's also a sign of growth, moving from one form to another, like a creature exiting its shell. The paddles are a way of going through time—up to the sky and back into the earth."

Nasr explores traditions and new globalism, questioning geopolitical and social development in the Middle East and Africa.

¹ Liminal: a transitional stage of a process.

- 1.1 How did the artist create a sense of balance in the artwork depicted in **Image A**? Justify your answer. (2)
- 1.2 Compare the use of space in **Image A and Image B**. Include how the artist has integrated the pyramids in the artwork. (4)
- 1.3 Both artworks are placed in the same setting, but each artist used vastly different mediums and approaches. Analyse how each artist's choice of medium affect the way we experience and interpret **Image A and Image B**. (4)
- 1.4 In your opinion, which artwork resonates more with you in juxtaposing the ancient world with the contemporary in "a space-time continuum"? Give reasons for your choice. (3)
- 1.5 Which of the artworks depicted in **Image A or Image B** is more effective in recalling a pre-historic or an ancient civilisation? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
- [15]**

**QUESTION 2 TWENTIETH CENTURY ART FROM DADA UP TO BUT
EXCLUDING CONCEPTUAL ART OF THE 1970s**

Study **Image C**, read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Image C



Image C

FRANK STELLA

UNTITLED

1968

Acrylic and graphite
on canvas

174.9 by 174.9 cm.

Private Collection

The 1960's tendency known as OP Art was uncompromisingly abstract. Op Art aimed to explore the effects of different kinds of retinal stimulation, using closely spaced black and white or coloured patterns. In line with other modern developments, Op Art sought not to provide the illusion of representation - one of painting's traditional roles - but to make the viewer question his or her processes of seeing.

- 2.1 Choose **TWO** artworks, from TWO different artists and movements, that is in line with the aim of Stella's work in **Image C**: works that are not an illusion of representation, but make viewers question their processes of seeing.

Select your works from either Dada, Surrealism or Abstract Expressionism.

For each of the **TWO** artworks selected, write down the name of the artist, the title of the work and a brief description of the artwork. (4)

2.2 For each of the selected **TWO** artworks in question 2.1 analyse how they are not an illusion of representation, but rather make viewers question their processes of seeing. (8)

2.3 Motivate how Stella's artwork in **Image C** as well as **BOTH** the artworks selected in question 2.1 relate to the IEB practical theme of Resonance. (3)

[15]

QUESTION 3 CONCEPTUAL AND INTERNATIONAL CURRENT ART

Read the text below and then answer the questions that follow.

Last winter of 2009 Jerry Saltz, senior art critic for New York Magazine, walked into a gallery and found himself greeted by a chorus of actors. "Welcome to this situation," they said. "My urge was to run out because I was so scared," he recalls. The six actors then began to recite quotes based on a famous painting and discuss their meaning. At one point, an actor turned to Saltz, asking his opinion. "I gave an informal answer and the performer called me out on it. It was the best thing I saw all year," Saltz says, "and the most shocking."

This Situation by the acclaimed British-German artist Tino Sehgal, offers visitors a unique and constantly evolving live experience that radically expands ideas of what art can be. Sehgal creates works that are constructed situations which question the traditional subject-object relationship of visual art. He takes language, singing, dancing, and other modes of behavior as his artistic material, often generating immersive artworks that are felt more than they are seen. Interaction between the visitor and the work takes a central position, and focus is placed on ephemeral* gestures and the nuances of the audience's experience, rather than any material objects. In Sehgal's works, "interpreters" act out various episodes that may comprise conversation or choreography, often involving the visitors.

The artist prohibits photographic or video documentation of his pieces, and no catalogues, fliers or press releases are printed. He then sells the right to re-enact the same situation/happening to a gallery. The sale is finalised as a spoken agreement without any paperwork, written instructions or script. People have to remember the instructions. His prices range from between €25,000 , and €70,000.

*ephemeral: temporary, lasting for a short time

- 3.1 In what way does *This Situation* by Sehgal radically expand ideas of what art can be as opposed to what art gallery visitors would traditionally expect? (2)
- 3.2 In your opinion is the contract between the artist and the buyer of *This Situation* as well as the selling price for this work justified in terms of what is happening in the International Contemporary artworld? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
- 3.3 Write down **ONE** artwork by **ONE** different Conceptual AND/OR Contemporary International artist whose artwork are more felt than seen as is the case with *This Situation* by Sehgal.

Provide the name of the artist, the title of the artwork and a brief description.

(2)

- 3.4 Discuss how your chosen artwork in question 3.3 is more felt than seen. In your answer refer to mode/medium, subject matter, possible viewer response, process etc.

(6)

- 3.5 Write down **ONE** artwork by **ONE** different Conceptual AND/OR Contemporary International artist whose artwork is more seen than felt.

Provide the name of the artist, the title of the artwork and a brief description.

(2)

- 3.6 Discuss how your chosen artwork in question 3.5 is more seen than felt. In your answer refer to mode/medium, subject matter, possible viewer response, process, etc.

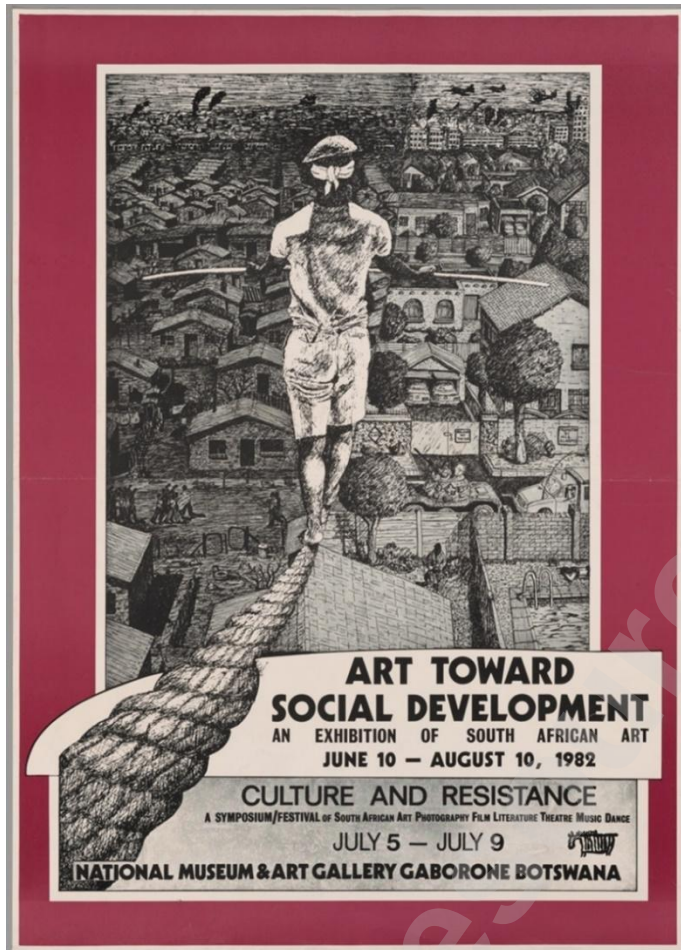
(6)

[20]

QUESTION 4: RESISTANCE ART IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE APARTHEID ERA (Circa. 1950 – 1994 CE)

Read the text below, study **Image D** and answer the questions that follow.

Image D



Thamsanqa (Thami) Mnyele (South African, 1948-1985) & Gordon Metz (South African, born 1955), **Art Towards Social Development**, 1982

Portraying an artist walking a tightrope between the black and white realities of apartheid South Africa, this poster advertises the exhibition **Art Towards Social Development**, held during the Festival of Culture and Resistance. Organized collaboratively by Medu and other South African artists, the exhibition was among the first to assess the intersection of art and politics under apartheid.

Thamsanqa Mnyele was a South African artist associated with the anti-apartheid politics of the African National Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement. In June 1976, Mnyele, Fikgile and Ben Arnold held an art exhibition at the Dube YWCA. In describing the exhibit, Mnyele wrote: *"It happened at a crucial time, when we had to make a decision and take a stand to say: were we involved in the struggle and life around us, or were we merely producing "pictures"? ... Our exhibition was attended by thousands of people. In South Africa, as far as I know, not so many people attend art exhibitions, especially not people from the black sector. We the artists were very excited because it meant we communicated, you know, something clicked."* (Staffrider 1980 Sept Oct, p.41)

The Dube exhibition, located physically within the June 1976 uprising, received no attention in the Johannesburg art world, or in the press. But it became a signpost of a new attitude towards the arts, one which permeated resistance culture for the next decade and a half.

In 1979, Thami became a leading figure within Medu Art Ensemble and a committed ANC cadre. On June 14, 1985, Thami Mnyele was shot dead by South African Defence Force (SADF) soldiers outside his home in Gaborone.

- 4.1 Select **TWO** relevant **South African artworks (circa 1950 – 1994)** by **TWO different** artists whose work drew attention to issues around the socio-political injustices during the apartheid era.

(4)

For **EACH** of the **TWO** selected South African artworks, provide the name of the artist, the title of the artwork and a brief description.

- 4.2 Explain how the subject matter used by the artists in your chosen artworks exposed the issues around social injustice and state oppression at the time.

(6)

- 4.3 In what way did the medium and materials used by the artists in the chosen artworks assist to convey the message to the marginalised and repressed people of South Africa at the time?

(4)

- 4.4 What aspects of the artworks would appeal to a wider international audience with limited exposure to the realities of living in a repressed society?

(3)

- 4.5 The Medu Art Ensemble produced over one hundred posters during the time it was active. These provide information that is difficult to find due to apartheid's censorship laws controlling information in the country at the time. Would you consider these posters as works of art or merely methods of communication to the masses? Refer to **Image D** in your answer.

(3)

[20]

QUESTION 5 CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN ART (POST 1994)

Study **Image E**, read the text below and write an essay in response.



Image E
Lorin Sookool
“Woza Wenties!”
Liverpool Biennial
2023

Image E

Lorin Sookool’s ‘Woza Wenties!’ (2023) uses dance movement to trace and unpack the violent erasure of her Black identity during her schooling in South Africa. Through a creative process that engages with the political through a very personal, embodied experience, Sookool embarks on a journey of remembering, restoration and repositioning her Brown body. The artist uses dance to examine the complex and nuanced conditions of her ‘Colouredness’, a specific experience of Blackness within the South African socio-historical, political and cultural context. By interpreting the dancing body as a previously colonised state, Sookool intends to understand her erasure by deconstructing the colonial projects undertaken in many South African schools post-1994. Using dance movement as a tool to symbolise a body under duress, Sookool references colonial and modernist systems of dance techniques and uses improvisation as a means to decolonise the body.

Present an essay of approximately FOUR pages in which you critically consider Contemporary South African artists who use their art as a means to decolonise the body. In your discussion, mention how the selected artists use different aspects in their artworks to comment on personal and political experiences to decolonise the body through remembering, restoration and repositioning.

Select **THREE** Contemporary South African artists and **ONE** artwork by each selected artist to develop and substantiate your argument.

(I.e. total of three artworks discussed)

Mark allocation for Question 5	
3 artists	6 marks
3 titles with brief descriptions of works	
Relevant facts <i>(Please note: Write 6 facts to achieve 4 marks per discussion of each artwork.)</i>	12 marks
Development of argument	12 marks

[30]

Total: 100 marks

Reference List

1. Images and Text adapted for Question 1
Source: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-pyramids-giza-unprecedented-exhibition-contemporary-art>
Accessed 11 September 2023
2. Text adapted for Question 2
Fitzpatrick, K (ed), *World Art . The Essential Illustrated History*. 2006. Flame Tree Publishing: London
3. Image for Question 2
Source: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/contemporary-art-evening-auction-3/frank-stella-untitled>
Accessed 14 August 2023
4. Text adapted for Question 3
Source: <https://moadmdc.org/exhibitions/tino-sehgal-this-situation>
Accessed 10 August 2023
5. Text adapted for Question 3
Degen, N. Making and selling ephemeral “situation art”. Financial Times, 14 February 2009. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/8d4928dc-f96e-11dd-90c1-000077b07658>
Accessed 10 August 2023
6. Image and text adapted for Question 4
Source: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/thamsanqa-thami-mnyele>
<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/244084/art-towards-social-development>
Accessed 11 September 2023
7. Image and text adapted for Question 5
Source:
https://artafricamagazine.org/umoya-the-sacred-return-of-lost-things/?utm_source=ART+AFRICA
Accessed 08 August 2023