

## SECTION 1 — EXPRESSIVE ART STUDIES — SAMPLE QUESTION

Attempt this question.

1. Identify **two artworks** by different artists that you have studied. These should be based on similar *subject matter* and/or the same *theme*.

(a) With reference to these two selected artworks, comment on:

- *Colour*
- *Composition*
- *Mood and atmosphere.*

Which of the two artworks do you find most appealing? Give **two** justified reasons.

10

(b) Select **one artist** from part (a).

Explain the impact of social, cultural and/or other influences on any of their work and practice.

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## 1(a)

The two artworks that I will discuss are: 'The Scream' (1893) by Edvard Munch and 'The Weeping Woman' (1937) by Pablo Picasso. They are linked thematically because both of them depict figures in distress.

### Colour

Bright red clouds dominate the sky in The Scream. This could be symbolic of anger or torment as the colour red is often associated with these emotions. Munch uses tints of grey and beige to paint the screaming figure's face. These colours look unnatural and give the impression that the figure is ghost-like. The contrast of the red sky with the grey ghost-like figure creates visual impact.

The bright primary colours used throughout The Weeping Woman seem to highlight her pain. Blocks of yellow and green paint are used prominently on her face and hands suggesting sickness (as these colours are often associated with sickness). Picasso paints the central parts of the woman's face a sickly grey colour, suggesting that the colour has literally drained from her face.

### Composition/arrangement

The screaming figure in Munch's painting is clearly the focal point as it dominates the central part of the composition. The diagonal lines of the bridge lead the eye directly to the central screaming figure and to the blood red sky in the background. Wavy lines in the sky lead to the curved lines of the fjord and back to the central figure. This is a very clever arrangement as your eye focuses on the central figure, darts around the canvas and back to the screaming figure.

In Picasso's painting, two viewpoints can be seen at once which is typical of Cubism. The weeping woman's head and shoulders dominate the composition, suggesting that Picasso wants us to focus on the woman's torment and little else.

### Mood and atmosphere

The ghost-like figure in the scream looks distorted and in pain which creates a very unpleasant mood. The blood-red sky creates an eerie backdrop to the figure's tortured mood. The distorted wavy lines of the sky and fjord seem to mirror the figure's anxious mood and create an extremely intense atmosphere.

The pained expression of Picasso's weeping woman is something that can easily be interpreted and creates a gloomy atmosphere. Thick black diagonal lines literally cut up the woman's face emphasising her pain and make the atmosphere unbearably intense.

### Most Appealing

In my opinion, The Scream is more appealing because I prefer Munch's painting style and technique. He paints in an Expressive manner, painting what he feels rather than a photo-realist representation of events. Oil paint is thinned with turpentine and applied very quickly, giving the painting a great energy and vitality. Small linear and wavy brush strokes give the impression of movement and have a very powerful and intense effect on the viewer.

### **1(B)**

An entry in Munch's diary in 1893 recorded the main inspiration for The Scream: *"I was walking along the road with two friends – the sun went down – I felt a gust of melancholy – suddenly the sky turned a bloody red – and I felt a vast infinite scream through nature."*

Astronomers now believe that the red sky was the result of a massive volcanic eruption in Indonesia in 1883 which caused the sky to turn angry and red throughout Europe.

Munch's family life was very unfortunate and the pain of losing family members in tragic circumstances e.g. his sister died of tuberculosis, influenced the dark mood prevalent in much of his work, including The Scream.

Munch was also heavily influenced by Symbolism. This was a literary and arts movement that encouraged the use of symbolic imagery, the imagination and dreams. One of the reasons for the painting's enduring popularity is arguably the fact that the screaming figure is symbolic of the pain and suffering of all men.

The Scream was also influenced by a Peruvian Mummy that was on display in a popular exhibition in Paris in the early 1890's. The pose and facial expression of the mummy closely resemble the figure in Munch's painting.