

Chapter 2 – Developing Visual Literacy

Multiple Choice Questions

1. In *The Treason of Images*, the artist combines awareness, creativity, and communication by encouraging the viewer to look closely at an object. The artist is:

- a) Lorna Simpson.
- b) Duane Michaels.
- c) René Magritte.
- d) John Ahearn.

Answer: (c)

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2. Jan van Eyck's *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife Giovanna Cenami* depicts many objects that have symbolic meaning. The use or study of these symbols is called:

- a) content.
- b) iconography.
- c) form.
- d) aesthetics.

Answer: (b)

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3. While in prison, Howling Wolf made many drawings called

- a) scraffitti.
- b) ledger drawings.
- c) office drawings.
- d) calculated drawings.

Answer: (b)

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4. Bierstadt's picturesque view of the Rocky Mountains combines a representation of an American vista with his:

- a) European experience.
- b) World War I experience.
- c) Polynesian heritage.
- d) Alaskan expeditions.

Answer: (a)

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5. Beatriz Milhazes' *Carambola* is based on _____.

- a) the shapes, forms, and bright colors of Brazilian culture
- b) the art of the ancient Maya culture
- c) the realistic influences of traditional Latin art
- d) a calm, peaceful interpretation of color

Answer: (a)

6. When a work of art such as Kasimir Malevich's *Suprematist Painting, Black Rectangle, Blue Triangle* (p. 29) shows no reference to the natural world of images, it is usually called:
- a) stylized.
 - b) simplistic.
 - c) communistic.
 - d) nonrepresentational.

Answer: (d)

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7. The stained-glass window from Chartres Cathedral is an excellent example of the use of
- a) abstract art.
 - b) iconography.
 - c) non-objective art.
 - d) realism.

Answer: (b)

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8. Which of these statements best defines *visual literacy*?
- a) the ability to construct an artificial 3-d environment
 - b) the ability to recognize, understand, and communicate the meaning of visual images
 - c) the ability to envision a theoretical concept
 - d) the ability to write about art

Answer: (b)

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9. Rene Magritte's *The Treason of Images* asks us to consider_____.
- a) that images and words refer to things that we see, but are not the things themselves
 - b) that there is a direct, one-to-one relationship between objects and the words we use to name them
 - c) that we are often fooled by what we see, a la "trompe l'oeil" paintings
 - d) that images and words not only refer to things that we see, but are also the things themselves

Answer: (a)

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10. The *Triumphal Entry* page from the *Shahnamah* manuscript, a sacred text, exemplifies the preference of word over image in
- a) Chinese art.
 - b) Japanese art.
 - c) Korean art.
 - d) Islamic art.

Answer: (d)

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11. The symbolic hand gestures that refer to specific states of mind or events in the life of Buddha are called

- a) bismillah.
- b) handies.
- c) mudra.
- d) calliform.

Answer: (c)

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12. The terms naturalistic or realistic art are sometimes used to describe

- a) representational art.
- b) abstract art.
- c) nonrepresentational art.
- d) folk art.

Answer: (a)

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13. Lorna Simpson's series, *The Park*, includes both images and printed words. The text contributes to the prints in a way that makes the viewer more active in the work. What does the viewer become?

- a) An artist
- b) The subject of the work
- c) The form of the work
- d) A voyeur

Answer: (d)

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14. Why are images of humans traditionally banned in Islamic art?

- a) Humans are thought to be a symbol of filth.
- b) Human images are not banned in Islamic art.
- c) Depicting a human is thought to be competing with the "creator."
- d) Calligraphy is more challenging.

Answer: (c)

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15. In a work of art, "content" refers to

- a) what the work expresses or means.
- b) the culture that produced it.
- c) its style.
- d) the way it looks.

Answer: (a)

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16. What kind of reading does Kenneth Clark illustrate in his assessment that an ancient Greek statue represents a "higher state of civilization" than a West African mask?

- a) aesthetic
- b) ethnocentric
- c) Afrocentric

d) American

Answer: (b)

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17. What is the chief form of Islamic art?

- a) abstractions of animals
- b) figurative representation
- c) calligraphy
- d) conceptual art

Answer: (c)

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18. What is the *subject matter* of Shirin Neshat's *Rebellious Silence*?

- a) the prominent place of women within every aspect of Iranian culture
- b) it is difficult to say from a Western perspective, because of lack of understanding of language and culture, but it is probably feminist in nature
- c) it reflects the artist's comfort with the roles of women in Iranian society
- d) it depicts a Muslim woman in a black *chador*, a rifle dividing, and Farsi text inscribed over her face

Answer: (d)

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19. *Naturalism* is a brand of representation in which the artist

- a) abstracts what he/she is depicting, to varying degrees.
- b) retains realistic elements but presents the world from a personal or subjective point of view.
- c) paints exactly, faithfully what she sees.
- d) works with ideas instead of images, creating purely non-objective artwork.

Answer: (b)

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20. When works of art like Kasimir Malevich's Suprematist painting, *Black Rectangle*, *Blue Triangle*, show no reference to the concrete world, it is usually called

- a) communistic.
- b) abstract.
- c) non-objective.
- d) stylized.

Answer: (c)

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21. What is the content of Albert Bierstadt's *Rocky Mountains*?

- a) It is a sublime representation of the mountain range that can be seen to encompass the spirit and character of the American West
- b) It is an imaginative interpretation of the landscape of the American East

c) It combines a representational depiction of a mountain meadow with a lake, waterfall, and Native American encampment with a barely disguised rendering of the Matterhorn in the distance

d) It is a realistic depiction of the mountain range without embellishment or artistic license.

Answer: (a)

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22. The representation of what subject has consistently aroused controversy throughout the history of the Western world?

a) the human figure

b) the Christian god

c) political leaders

d) Roman ideals

Answer: (b)

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Short Answer and Essay Questions

23. What is the relationship between form and content?

24. What subject matter is the artist Lorna Simpson most noted for?

25. Define *subject matter*.

26. What is the *content* of Jean-Michel Basquiat's painting *Charles the First*?

27. What term is used when someone imposes his or her own meanings and prejudices onto the art of another culture?

28. What is the content of Malevich's painting, *Black Rectangle, Blue Triangle*?

29. In Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini "wedding" portrait, the dog symbolizes what?

30. The habitual or expected ways (of seeing, for instance) of a given culture are known as what?

31. What is the chief form of art in Islamic cultures?

32. Discuss the disadvantages of judging artworks according to our own cultural standards.

33. Using René Magritte's *Treason of Images*, discuss how representational paintings can be more abstract than abstract paintings.

34. Compare and contrast John Taylor's and Howling Wolf's *Treaty Signing at Medicine Lodge Creek*. In your discussion, use the terms *form*, *content*, *representational*, *abstract*, *ledger art*, *convention*, and *iconography*.

35. How is Howling Wolf's *Treaty Signing at Medicine Lodge Creek* different from John Taylor's painting of the same name?