

ART427: Midterm Questions and Outlines of Good Answers

1. In what respects, if any, might the next works be considered authentic? There are four images in all, shown two at a time. Remember: your argument is your answer. (20 points)

- answer deals with all four images
- situates or explains the meaning of authenticity in the context of this question
- recognizes that Shonibare falls outside of a discussion of authenticity unless the question is about associating an art work with the artist; should also recognize that the artwork in this case was more than the clothing/fabric (some of you responded only to the material)
- justifies decision for each work

2. Based on our study of African art traditions, how do the art works in the next examples relate to traditional arts? Do not limit your answer to formal (visual) qualities. By necessity, your answer will be hypothetical -- what additional information do you need to give a definitive answer to this question? There are three examples for this question. (15 points)

- association of each image with a traditional art form from the image groups is the best approach for a question like this, while also recognizing that the association cannot be definitive without more information;
- identifying what this information should be is an important part of the answer; in most cases, you would have needed to know WHY something was made, unless it was clearly recognizable as a traditional work we have already seen in class; the first one, for example, resembled a bocio but was made by a contemporary African-American artist, Alison Saar
- because the question emphasized that you should not limit yourself to visual qualities, you really needed to examine the meaning of “traditional art”

3. Which of the next two images is NOT considered an icon and why? (10 points)

- neither work was an icon;
- the question asked why, so a definition of icon would have been a good way to begin the answer; if one had been an icon, then comparison to something we saw in class would have worked for the “why”

4. Which of the following works is an example of the apotropaic function in art? (5 points)

- we looked at the first work on the first day – since it was made by an American artist and was on display in a museum, it is not apotropaic;
- you should have connected the second work to the Dogon masks we looked at but this question did not ask for a reason so you could get away with identification alone!

5. Without paraphrasing or quoting from the class note summary I emailed, discuss the differences between the traditional African artist and our typical notion of an artist in western culture. (20 points)

- the question was about the artist, not the art work; that focus needed to be clear;
- in addition to discussing the difference between making art for use and making it for aesthetic pleasure, a good answer would have also discussed the collective or

communal nature of making art and the role of the client (clients are important in western art but generally because they pay for the art work; in traditional African arts, the work is made to meet the specific needs of the client – that should have been included in your answer)

- many of you referred to anonymity, and this was an important point to make, but it is not true for all traditional arts

6. Paraphrase the paragraph from John Peffer's book, *Art and the End of Apartheid*. Everyone in your group should write his or her own paraphrase and the group should then choose the best one to include in the test. (20 points)

- did you get the main points?
- Did you avoid using Peffer's language or at least use quotation marks when you had to quote him?
- Did you attribute the ideas to Peffer?
- Peffer included a lot of history but the main point was in the last two sentences about the similarities and differences between S. African art and other African art. Did you capture the essence of those points? Not plagiarizing is important, but it is just as important to be true to the meaning of the writing you paraphrase.

My paraphrase:

South Africa was the last country on the African continent to achieve independence. Despite the late date (1994), its art shares many of the qualities of the post-colonial art that is found in the rest of Africa. As Peffer observes, these include a "backward glance" to traditions, real and invented, and an emphasis on decorative patterns. However, Peffer also notes that because of the country's long struggle and the underlying racialism of that struggle, there is a political subtext to S. African art this is quite different from art on the rest of the continent.

Peffer: "Whereas most African countries achieved their independence from European colonial occupation by the 1960s, South Africa had to wait until 1994 for majority rule. In 1910 the British colonies in the Cape and Natal united with the Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State to form the Union of South Africa. In 1961, the year following independence from colonial rule for most of the rest of the continent, South Africa resisted majority rule, left the Commonwealth, and declared itself the Republic of South Africa. The late 1970s, following the uprising in Soweto, witnessed the buildup to eventual democratization. Unlike the rest of Africa, whose independence era encompassed the late 1950s to the early 1970s, South Africa's liberation dates to the period following 1976. Despite the difference in dates, many of the signature aspects of art that anticipates the post-colonial were the same in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent: the backward glance to invented traditions, the flattening of traditional ritual arts into design elements, and the euphoria of reconstruction. In other respects, art in South Africa was unlike art elsewhere because of its heavily socialist struggle rhetoric and the local history of extreme racialism."