**5 mark questions for 19th Century French and British Art & Architecture.**

**Q:** **Discuss one work which commemorates an event or individual.**

*Monument to Balzac*, completed in 1897 by Auguste Rodin commemorates the French novelist Honore de Balzac. Rodin was commissioned to create a figurative work celebrating the intellectual genius of the writer. Rodin spent five years creating a number of standing male figures, each becoming more stylised as he attempted to depict the individuality of Balzac. The patrons requested that Balzac be shown wearing a dressing gown he frequently wore while working. Rodin had a replica made which he soaked in plaster and draped over one of the nude male figures. Despite this level of realism, the figure appears crude and simplified. Balzac is shown with empty eye sockets- as if lost in his thoughts, the dressing gown hides his form and the stylised appearance of Balzac left the patrons unhappy. The large scale of almost 3 metres gives a sense of importance to a literary giant of the 19th century.

**Q: Discuss one painting which depicts a literary scene.**

Waterhouse’s Pre-Raphaelite painting ‘The Lady of Shalott’, 1888, depicts the closing scenes from Tennyson’s poem of the same name. We see the lady of Shalott in a boat in a river floating to Camelot. She has left a tower where she had lived under a curse which compelled her to view life as reflections in a mirror. Seeing Sir Lancelot on horseback pass the window of her tower she fell in love with his image. The distraught look on her face tells us that the ‘curse has come upon her’. She wears white, symbolic of innocence and this makes her figure stand out from the surrounding landscape. In front of her we see three candles, two are quenched and one still flickers, this symbolises that her life is ending. A crucifix in front of the candles tells us that there is redemption in the afterlife for her. She sits on a tapestry that she had woven during her isolation in the tower,

showing scenes she had seen, including one of Sir Lancelot.

**Q: Explain the ways in which a religious scene is depicted in one painting by a French or British artist of this period**

Gauguin’s *Yellow Christ*, 1888, oil on canvas is a Post-Impressionist depiction of a roadside shrine in Brittany. We see a carved figure of Christ set in the Breton landscape with three women kneeling at the foot of the Cross. Gauguin painted this work in Pont-Aven, a rural area of France where religion was important to people. The body of Christ is painted yellow to match the surrounding landscape, linking religion to the location. Christ is placed asymmetrically, he fills the composition, giving him importance. Dark outlines emphasise his emaciated figure and show his suffering. The women wear traditional Breton costume and are praying, suggesting religious devotion. They are painted similarly to Christ and we are unsure whether they might actually be experiencing a religious vision of Christ. The autumnal landscape of browns and yellows symbolises the end of the year and also Christ’s life. It also reminds us of harvest and the Resurrection, significant events in the lives of Breton people and shows how religion and agriculture were of equal importance to them.

**Q: Explain the way colour is used in one British painting.**

Millais’s *Ophelia* is a Pre-Raphaelite depiction of a scene from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. We see the figure of Ophelia sink beneath a river as she drowns having being rejected by Hamlet. Her pale white complexion contrasts with the dark brown of the river, making her the focal point. Likewise her pale hands are shown rising above the dark water as she allows herself to drown. Around her we see flowers which are full of Pre-Raphaelite symbolism. Red poppies indicate death, a pink rose symbolises beauty and white daisies represent innocence. These all link to Ophelia’s character. The surrounding landscape is a rich green colour and shows the Pre-Raphaelite’s interest in nature. A tall clump of dark green reeds are shown reflected in the river. Patches of white highlights are dotted across the river to show its surface, showing attention to detail in nature which the Pre-Raphaelites followed. We see Ophelia in a silver coloured dress, this mimics the water as Ophelia becomes one with the stream. A red and brown robin which was mentioned in the play is shown singing on a tree above Ophelia. The Pre-Raphaelites achieved these intense details through a use of bright colours applied to a wet white ground.

**Q:****Explain the way colour is used in one French painting.**

*Bal du Moulin de la Galette* by Renoir, 1876 is an Impressionist genre scene. The Impressionists used colour to depict natural light. A large group of figures are shown in this scene. Men in the foreground wear dark navy blue suits, patches of dappled sunlight falls on their shoulders, indicated by lighter patches of blue. Renoir uses yellow across the scene linking the composition, a young girl in the foreground has yellow blonde hair, this colour appears in the straw hats worn by young men in the crowd. Faces are painted in shades of light pink and the colour has been applied loosely to suggest motion, as they dance and chat. Pure white is shown in the glass objects on a foreground table, these bright highlights suggest it is a sunny day. Areas of blue appear on the ground the figures stand on. Renoir uses this colour to indicate shadow, showing the influence of recent scientific research into light and colour. Above the figures loosely applied green paint indicates trees, sunlight streams through the leaves, changing the tone of the colours in this scene.

**Q: Explain the way colour is used in one French painting.**

Gauguin’s *Yellow Christ* is a Post-Impressionist depiction of a scene from Brittany. We see a yellow carved wood figure of Christ on a cross. His skin tone matches that of the surrounding landscape, linking him to this area of France and making Him one with the earth. Gauguin uses a solid black outline to emphasise the figure’s form. This relates to cloisonnism, where bright flat areas of colour were contained within a solid outline. Three women wearing white headdresses and blue dresses pray at the foot of the Cross. Their clothing is a complimentary to the orange trees of the background. Gauguin uses colour expressively, he links the Crucified Christ to the autumnal landscape, linking the Resurrection of Christ to the harvest these women pray for. Areas of green in the background are used to indicate fields and these contrast with the brown fields which have been ploughed for the harvest. The yellow tone of Christ’s body is a sickly colour and perhaps links to his death. The brown cross he is nailed to matches that of the fields and reinforces the importance of religion in the lives of these people.

**Q: Explain the ways one painting is Impressionist in style.**

Impression-Sunrise by Claude Monet is a seascape featuring boats, a harbour and buildings on a dock. Monet and the Impressionists depicted scenes from the modern world by applying paint quickly and loosely to create an ‘impression’ of a scene and this work gave the movement its name. The sky and sea are painted in broad washes of thin blue paint. Monet then uses dabs of orange to suggest the reflections of the rising sun on the rippling water. The sun is painted in a solid orange ball, making it the focal point. Monet sketches boats and harbour buildings in gestural strokes of dark blue to suggest they are in shadow. The vague outlines suggest this is a hazy morning. The Impressionists wanted to capture the effects of natural light and so this work was painted plein air. Monet had to work quickly to capture a fleeting moment and we see areas of bare canvas in the upper half, implying his technique was spontaneous.

**Q: Explain the ways one painting is Post-Impressionist in style.**

Gauguin’s *Yellow Christ*, 1888, oil on canvas depicts a roadside shrine in Brittany. We see a carved figure of Christ set in the Breton landscape with three women kneeling in prayer at the foot of the Cross. Many Post-Impressionists painted scenes in this rural area of France and were known as the Pont-Aven School. The Post-Impressionists used colour expressively and symbolically. Christ’s yellow figure links to the autumnal landscape setting, symbolising harvest and also the Resurrection. Heavy black outlines are seen on Christ’s figure which is clearly drawn, showing his emaciated figure. These dark outlines show the influence of Japanese woodblocks prints which were popular with Post-Impressionist artists. The kneeling women are also outlined, we see their Breton costume. The asymmetric composition breaks with academic conventions and is typically Post-Impressionist. Flat areas of bright colour, a Post-Impressionist technique known as cloisonnism are shown in the blue costumes of the women and the orange fields of the landscape.

**Q: Explain the ways one painting is Pre-Raphaelite in style.**

Millais’s *Ophelia*, oil on canvas, depicts a character from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Such subjects were popular with the Pre-Raphaelites who looked to literary and medieval themes for their work. Ophelia is shown drowning in a river having being rejected by her lover Hamlet. Millais paints the figure and setting in great detail with a focus on nature. The Pre-Raphaelites followed the advice of Ruskin who suggested artists ‘go to nature, selecting nothing, rejecting nothing’. Thus we see decaying river plants and weeds in the foreground. Millais painted the landscape setting plein air to achieve a realistic setting, this was typical of Pre-Raphaelite art. Colour is clear and bright, the Pre-Raphaelites applied colour to a wet white background so that forms could be clearly seen and help explain the narrative of the subject. Red roses, symbolising love and beauty, white daisies for innocence float near Ophelia. Her pale face, suggesting death, stands out from the surrounding brown river and green foliage.

**Q: Explain the ways one painting is Academic in style.**

Cabanel’s *Birth of Venus*, oil on canvas, depicts the Roman Goddess of love being born from the sea. Such mythological subjects were popular with Academic artists. The figure of Venus lies reclining on waves. Her idealised form and pale skin follow Academic depictions of the female nude. Above her we see a group of putti who further emphasise the mythological theme and appear frequently in Academic paintings. Paint has been applied smoothly and tones are blended, giving the work’s surface a polished appearance. This finish was expected in Academic paintings. Colours are soft, with the pastel blue sea and sky contrasting with the light pink bodies of the putti, making the work visually appealing and conventional for the Academies of the time. Venus by contrast appears white, suggesting Cabanel has looked at classical sculpture for inspiration. Her long brown hair emphasises her pale skin and feminine beauty. She is placed centrally in the composition, making her the focal point and giving a balanced, ordered appearance- thus suitable for Academic tastes.

**Q: Explain the ways one painting is Realist in style.**

Courbet’s *The Stone Breakers,* oil on canvas, depicts a scene of men breaking stones for the building of a road. Such subjects were popular with Realist artists. An older man kneels with a pickaxe breaking the stone, his aged appearance implies he has been doing this job for years. The young boy beside him struggles to carry a basket of stones, he is too young for such work. The older man’s face is sunburnt, indicates he works outdoors and gives accuracy to the scene. Their tattered clothing adds to the realism of the scene, neither is idealised but are shown to be real people. Colour is muted, their brown clothes links to the land they work on. Behind them is a dark area of shadow, placing the focus on them. A glimpse of blue sky in the top corner suggests daytime and they have hours of work ahead. Paint has been applied roughly, shown in the broken rocks surrounding the figures. This technique links to the harsh life endured by these figures.

**Q: Explain how the use of materials have affected the appearance of one building constructed during this period.**

Palais Garnier is an Opera House constructed during the Second Empire in the Beaux Arts style. A cast-iron frame has allowed for a large imposing building to stand in the centre of Paris, giving it a prominent position. Stone and marble were then applied to the outside, giving a sense of strength. External decoration in the form of marble columns links to the classical style and is typical of Beaux Art architecture. A large copper dome adds height and its green colour contrasts with the grey stone of the exterior. Gilded allegorical figures relating to the Arts demonstrate the building’s function. Bronze busts of composers, including Beethoven, above the frieze link to the theme of music and the building’s purpose. The interior is equally elaborate with a central marble staircase, gilded woodwork and large glass chandeliers which illuminate the public areas.

**Q: Explain how materials and techniques have been used in one sculpture from this period.**

Rodin’s *Monument to Balzac* is a standing male figure depicting the famous French writer. Rodin worked for a number of years on this work, beginning by modelling male figures, the same age as Balzac, in clay. These figures were realistically modelled to capture a likeness similar to that of Balzac. However Rodin wished to instead depict the ‘inner genius’ of Balzac. His clay figures became more stylized. Balzac’s face was made by sinking deep holes into the clay head, making him appear deep in thought. The figure’s hair is likewise simplified with large pieces of clay which have been incised with a sharp implement to reference strands of hair. Rodin then had a copy of Balzac’s dressing gown made which he soaked in plaster and draped across the nude clay figure. Balzac was known for wearing a dressing gown while he worked and this gave realism to the figure. The cloak was then draped and arranged to be sculptural. However Rodin then cast the whole figure in plaster, giving the form a ghostly and abstracted appearance which caused the commissioners to reject the work.

**Q: Explain how materials and techniques have been used in one sculpture from this period.**

Scott’s *Albert Memorial* is a Gothic Revival sculpture commemorating Prince Albert. We see a gilded large scale figure of Albert sat beneath a canopy. The figure was modelled realistically before being cast and then gilded in electrotype. The gold colour reminds us of Albert’s royal heritage. At the base of the structure is the Parnassus Frieze. This is a marble high relief of significant figures from the Arts and Sciences including Beethoven. The high relief carving and polished marble gives these figures a realistic, translucent appearance. The canopy above Albert is covered in detailed glass and ceramic mosaics. These mosaics depict allegorical scenes and their colour contrasts with the brown brick structure itself. Free standing white marble figures representing the four continents are placed on the outer edges of the site. These contrast with the gold figure of Albert and are realistically carved in high detail. They remind us of the areas under the rule of the Victorian Empire which was led by Albert’s wife Victoria.

**Q: Demonstrate the influence of Japonisme on one work of art from this period.**

Gauguin’s Yellow Christ is a Post-Impressionist depiction of a wooden figure of Christ in the Breton landscape. Gauguin was deeply influenced by Japanese woodblock prints and we see evidence throughout this painting. The figure of the crucified Christ is placed in the immediate foreground and to one side. This is typical of the asymmetrical compositions in Japanese woodblocks. Colour is bright and flat, particularly the yellow figure of Christ and the women kneeling at the foot of the Cross. These qualities are found in Japanese prints. Similarly the background is tilted in a naïve way providing a simplistic view of the landscape/perspective- a trait that Gauguin has taken from Japonism. Solid black outlines surround the forms and figures, this is also something seen in prints from Japan. This is an everyday scene and Gauguin may be referencing Japanese artists who likewise created depictions of daily life in Japan with figures placed in outdoor settings.

**Q: Discuss the use of materials in one British sculpture from this period**.

*Tinted Venus* by Gibson is a Victorian depiction of the Roman Goddess of Love. Gibson has used white marble to create a standing depiction of Venus. Marble suggests status and links to Venus’s role as a goddess. She is in a contrapposto position with minimal negative space, making her appear solid. She holds a length of drapery which acts as structural support for the life-sized figure. Detailed carving in the hair and figure add realism to the figure. Gibson contrasts the smooth polished figure of Venus with the rough base on which she stands, further emphasizing her idealism. Gibson stained the nude figure with pink dye to add realism and then waxed the sculpture to give it a high sheen. She holds an apple which has been gilded which adds colour contrast in the work. Her eyes and lips are coloured realistically using paint, the red and blue also appear on the hem of the drapery Venus holds. Venus wears gold earrings, heightening the sense of realism.

Q: Discuss how patronage has contributed to the meaning of one British sculpture from this period.

Albert Memorial

1. Commissioned by Queen Victoria in memory of her husband Prince Albert, paid for by the public.

2. A gilded larger than life-size Albert is seated beneath a stone canopy. Gilding links to the idea of power and importance. The canopy acts as a shrine to protect him and preserve his memory.

3. A marble frieze (Parnassus Frieze) at the base depicts individuals from the Arts including Van Eyck, Shakespeare and Beethoven- showing Albert’s interest in the Arts and implying he is cultured.

4. On the outer edges of the sculpture’s site there are marble allegorical depictions of four continents including Asia and the Africa- linking to the British Empire’s overseas territories. Albert and Victoria reigned over these regions.

5. Allegorical figures representing the Sciences are placed on columns either side of Albert, these show his interest in scientific research and progress.

6. The Gothic Revival style of the work links to the theme of Christianity and this is reinforced by gilt depictions of religious figures including angels and the three Virtues- all implying Albert’s piety and religious faith.

Q: Discuss one British sculpture from this period which commemorates an event or individual.

Albert Memorial

Q: Discuss one depiction of the nude figure in a painting/sculpture by a French or British artist of this period.

*Olympia* by Manet is a Realist depiction of a nude female prostitute.

1. Olympia is shown reclining fully nude on a bed and Manet has based his composition on Titian’s Venus of Urbino.

2. Olympia is shown with her left hand firmly covering her private area. Manet has used a heavy dark outline to emphasise this and her form in general.

3. She is un-idealised, her face is asymmetrical and Manet uses roughly applied paint to give her complexion an imperfect finish.

4. Her pale complexion appears a sickly yellow and this is emphasised by a black female servant behind her.

5. Her hair is pulled tightly back with a large flower behind one ear. This, her jewellery and one slipper on her foot reinforces the nakedness of her body.

6. The bed she lies on is unmade and the folds of the sheets contrast with her curved form. She is propped upright in a confrontational manner.

Q: Discuss one landscape painting by a French/British artist of this period.

Monet painted Impression-Sunrise in Le Harve, an area where he was originally from.

1. We see the port of Le Harve on a hazy morning with the sun rising above.

2. Monet painted this work plein air in an effort to capture the sunrise as accurately as possible- thus the scene appears misty and vague.

3. The harbor buildings are sketched in loosely with quick lines of dark blue and grey. These lines highlight the lack of an actual horizon line in the scene.

4. The sun is a solid globe of pinky orange and Monet uses dabs of this colour to represent the sun’s reflection on the rippling water.

5. Small boats with loosely sketched figures appear near the foreground in the sea. They are painted in dark blue and stand in contrast to the paler blue of the water.

6. The scene is asymmetrical, giving an unbalanced and spontaneous appearance. Monet worked quickly to depict this scene and the bare areas of canvas in the sky highlight his technique of painting quickly.

Q: Explain the ways in which a religious scene is depicted in one painting by a French or British artist of this period.

The Shadow of Death is a Pre-Raphaelite depiction of Christ in his workshop by Holman Hunt.

1. Christ is shown as a carpenter in the period before he started preaching. He is stretching from sawing and his shadow cast on the back wall resembles a crucified pose. This scene foretells his death.

2. His mother Mary is shown kneeling at a chest which contains the gifts of the Magi, reminding us of the Nativity. She sees the shadow and reacts in fear.

3. Christ’s physique is muscular and idealised and this links to the Victorian concept of Muscular Christianity which advocated hard work and a devout life for men. Christ’s physical labour here represents that concept.

4. Symbolic details include a pomegranate which links to the Resurrection. The red headband near the bottom of the picture symbolizes the Crown of Thorns. Tools and equipment in the background replicate the Cross on which he will be crucified and the hammer and nails used for that event.

5. A window in the background forms the shape of a halo above Christ’s head and we see the landscape of Galilee outside- this was where Christ would preach his Gospels.

Discuss the treatment of light and tone in one painting from this period (5).

Renoir’s Bal du Moulin de la Galette is an Impressionist painting which focuses on natural light falling on a group of figures outdoors.

1. Impressionists interested in natural light- dappled patches of light fall on the shoulders of men standing beneath trees.

2. Blue is used for shadows- we see this on the dancefloor where figures move

3. White is used for highlights on the glass objects in foreground table- all indicating a bright sunny day.

4. Renoir uses yellow throughout the painting, in the hair and straw hats worn by male and female figures. This colour is darker in tone for those figure standing in shadows.

5. A woman in a white dress stands in the centre of the composition in the open air. Her dress appears bright white with patches of pink to indicate sunlight falling directly on her. This shows Renoir painted the scene en plein air and is an accurate depiction of light.

Discuss how one work of art is typically Victorian in style (5 marks)

Derby Day by Powell Frith is a Victorian depiction of a racing meeting in Epsom.

1. This is a genre scene with a focus on social commentary- a popular theme for Victorian artists.

2. It shows all members of society socialising. However there is a clear hierarchy between rich and poor- as shown by the wealthy couple on the right in a carriage and a beggar asking them for money. This is a reflection on Victorian society.

3. This work reveals behaviour, such as the young man conned of his belongings by tricksters that would resonate with a conservative Victorian audience. Similarly we see a female prostitute on the far left of the composition who is literally on the edge of society.

4. The work is painted in great detail, typical of academic Victorian painting. We see the expressions of all the characters including a poor boy entranced by a lavish picnic hamper.

5. The finish of the painting meets Victorian standards in art. The polished surface allows for the narrative to be clearly read with a focus on the crowd while the race in the background is secondary to the subject.

(Victorian art was for a conservative audience who appreciated subjects with a moral. The upper classes versus the lower classes was a popular theme. Victorian art is finished to a high standard often with idealised females- when high class or ‘innocent’. Look for painting technique, realism, social commentary)

Discuss one building which is Gothic Revival in style/ Discuss one work which responds to revivalism in this period.

1. The New Palace of Westminster by Barry and Pugin was constructed during the height of the Gothic Revival in Britain.

2. This building acts as the seat of Government and as such uses Gothic style features to give the building a sense of importance and sincerity.

3. The main building is 4-storey highs with lancet windows placed regularly across the façade. Tracery and quatrefoils within these windows emphasis the Gothic style.

4. Pilaster buttresses separate the façade into a series of bays and blind niches mirror the shape of the lancet windows.

5. The buttresses rise from the ground to the top storey, carrying our eye upwards, as if mimicking religious architecture. Towers placed on each end add to the height and also reference bell towers found on religious buildings.

6. Britain’s coat-of-arms appears in areas on the façade and their medieval style is enhanced by the angels who support them. Linking the building to God but also the government.

Discuss how patronage has influence the appearance of one British building in this period.

1. The New Palace of Westminster by Barry and Pugin was constructed during the height of the Gothic Revival in Britain. This style was requested by the patrons (the Government) who wanted a serious and impressive new seat of Government.

2. The large scale building allows for various groups within government to be accommodated. The monarch has their own chambers while the Lords and MPs each have their own areas for meeting.

3. Individual entrances for the public but also the Monarch and MPs and Lords suggest a social hierarchy.

4. The interior is decorated in the Gothic Revival style and features the coat of arms of the Government throughout.

5. Towers are placed either end of the building. One is named Victoria Tower after Queen Victoria who reigned in Britain at this time.

6. The style of the building allows the New Palace of Westminster to blend in with similar Gothic buildings nearby including Westminster Abbey- all linking to the power of the British Government and its history.