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It is evident that artists use a visual language of signs and symbols that can be read and interpreted by the audience. A sign or symbol through its nature or appearance, reflects or represents something more profound than itself. This is illustrated through the artworks, "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time", "An Allegory of the Vanities of Human Life" and "Guernica".

"Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time" by Bronzino is a mannerist painting consisting of signs and symbols. The main theme of the artwork is profane love and sensual pleasures. The artwork consists of two predominant figures, Venus and Cupid who are surrounded by a number of other symbolic figures. Venus is holding cupid's bow, an apple and wearing a crown of pearls. The three

most significant symbols in the painting. Cupid's arrow is a symbol of the vulnerability of men towards Venus, as when it was fired into the heart of a man, he would ~~become~~ a "victim of her sexuality". Hei not be able to resist her. Inevitably he would become a victim of her sexuality.

An apple is a symbol of original sin and the sinful nature of mankind. Pearls are believed to be a symbol of naturalness and beauty and also represent pure sensual pleasures. This is also emphasised by the large amount of bare skin revealed in the painting.

The boy to the right of Venus is in the process of scattering flowers over her, symbolising folly and sexual pleasure. The two fallen masks symbolise a false face and persona. In conjunction, the woman with an animal face symbolises deceitfulness. The ugly woman behind Venus

signifies jealousy while the man watching over symbolises time and the pressure it restraints

"An Allegory of the Vanities of Human Life" by Harmen Steenwyck, contains symbols that can be read and deciphered by the audience. Through the array of random objects the artist attempts to depict the inevitability of death and the transience and insubstantiality of life. The main symbol in the painting is the skull - placed in the center foreground. This is made the predominant focus in an attempt to remind us of our mortality and inevitably entice us to make the most out of our short lives. The watch is another ~~pre~~ important symbol in the painting symbolising the quickly passing, ever moving time. This is made evident by the sunbeams from the

blown out oil lamp - result of time.

The shell, jug and lamp are all empty symbolising the transience of worldly or material objects. The recorder and horn symbolise music and the arts.

Picasso's "Guernica" is a painting that uses ~~sign~~ signs and symbols to convey meaning. The painting symbolises Picasso's hatred for war and its horrors. Through the ~~port~~ recording of an aerial attack on the small Spanish town of Guernica Picasso captures, the blatant horror of war. The bull is the most important image in the painting symbolising approaching death and the brut power of the Spanish military leader Franco, who condoned the bombing. The horse rearing in pain and fright symbolises the suffering of the Spanish civilians. ~~The~~ ~~broken~~ the broken

soldier and woman attempting to escape the horror with her dead child also ~~sign~~ signify pain and suffering. The soldier still clutching his sword symbolises a gallant Spanish opposition. ~~The man holding a lamp~~ The eye ~~the~~ shape lamp shade symbolises that it reminds of that there is always someone watching over the blatant horror of war. The light also stands for the presence of god in our lives. The man holding a lamp symbolises freedom and liberty while the ghostly figure is escaping out the window to full freedom. The monochromatic colour scene is symbolic as there is no colour in war. The black, white and grey colours symbolise mourning.

The artwork, "Amofini" Wedding portrait,

by Jan Van Eyck uses ~~some~~ disguised symbolism of the most subtle type to convey the nature of marriage. The predominant focus of the artwork is a convex shaped mirror that reflects on the whole event while subtly recreating a third person - witness to the marriage. Inscribe above the mirror is "Johannes de Eyck fuit hic", in which translated says, "Jan Van Eyck was here". The string of rosary beads hanging next to the mirror symbolise marital faith, while in conjunction the dog symbolises fidelity. The single candle in the chandelier reminds us that of the Lady's presence. ~~The~~ Furthermore, the shoes that have been significantly taken off remind us that they are standing on holy ground.

Like music, art is more universally accepted as it can jump social and cultural boundaries. Inevitably the artwork is a ~~ble~~ to directly communicate the artist's intentions. The artwork is a bridge between the artist and the audience ~~that is~~ and the symbols chosen assist the artist in ~~making~~ communicating with the audience. However, ~~a problem~~ occurs as ~~the final interpre~~ limitations occur when or, the ~~artist's~~ final interpretation of the meaning of the artwork are effected by the viewer's response to the signs and symbols. There are many factors effecting the way certain viewers respond to signs and symbols. It could be said that modern day viewers have increasingly less knowledge of historical symbolism and religious events. Inevitably, an audience from ~~there~~ the

era the artwork ^{was constructed} ~~would~~ have better knowledge of the signs and symbols conveyed as they would relate directly to their lifestyle. "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time", is an artwork that contains historical symbolism that a modern day viewer would have increasing ~~by~~ difficulty in responding to the signs and symbols. There. Furthermore, the less knowledge of the signs and symbols conveyed in an artwork the less accurate interpretation of the final meaning.

Artworks communicate as a system of signs and symbols that can be read and deciphered by the audience. Limitations occur as ~~certain viewers~~ the way in which certain viewers respond to symbolism has influential effect on their final interpretation of the artwork. Signs and symbols are a simple and direct way visual communication can be effectively used to communicate.