

## Oxbridge Interview Report

*Please answer in as much detail as possible. Your responses will definitely help other Surbiton girls to win a place at Oxford or Cambridge.*

Name: Harriet Jennings

University: Cambridge

Subject: History of Art

Written test sat when at Oxford or Cambridge: Of what did it comprise ?

N/A

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this written test ?

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### **First Interview**

College: Corpus Christi

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Admissions tutor: Dr Melanie Taylor and History Professor: Dr Boyle

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview ? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

I wasn't given anything before going in, but when I was in the interview I was shown a review (criticism) of Tracy Emin and had to argue for or against his point. I was also given an image to talk about. I first talked about what I thought about it and then they would correct me and see how my understanding and interpretation changed.

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room ?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

Not at all apart from at the end she said she noticed I was interested in photography and proceeded to ask me about it as an art form and how I thought it was valued compared to painting.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview ? Yes / No (underline one). If “Yes”, to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Yes I had to send in two essays. She actually asked me a question based on someone else’s essay on portraiture which I tried to answer anyway and then she realised that it wasn’t my essay at all and was a bit embarrassed and apologised. I don’t think much of the interview would have been based around the essay though.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Although this interview was not with history of art professors it was all about history of art. They asked a lot about the philosophy of art and what I thought was important to make a great work of art, what I thought about how art is categorised and how people label it as high or low art. Also what I thought of confessional art and why that is popular at the moment, and of the contemporary artists who I thought would be remembered in the future. I was not asked anything about the course or why I wanted to go there, or why I wanted to study history of art.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer ?

When we were discussing the picture question she asked me how my opinion would change if I knew that the box like shape was meant to be an ark or temple. I had no idea what this really meant so made something up and she looked at me to add something but I genuinely couldn't think of anything else to say because I had no idea what I was talking about.

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview ? 6

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one ? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview ?

I think it would have been good to practise talking about controversial issues surrounding art which people have differing opinions on, but I think it is impossible to what sort of things they will ask so it is hard to revise any specific areas.

## **Interview 2**

College: Corpus Christi

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Dr Oldfield, head of history of art at Corpus Christi and Dr Fox, a professor and fellow and Gonville and Caius

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview ? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

Again I was given nothing to prepare before the interview but twice they gave me two images to compare. The first set was two paintings and the second were two sculptures. First I talked about what I thought of them and then they would ask me about specific areas or tell me things that could change my opinion (eg the fact I had thought it was a portrait of Jesus when it was actually a self-portrait of the artist. This moved on to them asking me what effect the artist creates by associating himself with Christ and if I thought it was blasphemous)

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room ?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

This interview was based more around my personal statement. They started by asking about a book I had mentioned in my personal statement and this led on to other questions around the same topic. They also asked me about some work experience at an art fair and which works I liked from it and how this corresponded to a statement I had made in my personal statement. I think they used my personal statement and SAQ as a starting point for topics but they would move away from what I actually wrote and expand the ideas.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview ? Yes / No (underline one). If “Yes”, to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Yes from the two essays I sent in they asked me a bit about the one on modern architecture and what I thought of the architect’s style and would I actually want to live in one of his houses. They then asked me why I thought modernist architecture is not very popular with many people.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

I talked about my epq and the women in art and why they are not documented as well as male artists. Also based on a Degas exhibition I had been to what I thought of his depiction of women.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer ?

They were so friendly that I felt quite at ease and it was easy to say something about everything they asked because nothing was right or wrong but about my own opinion (although its hard to know what they actually want to hear) They would often ask me questions quite quickly which meant there was a good flow to the interview but when I was talking about my epq they didn’t interrupt me and I wasn’t sure how much detail I should go into and thought perhaps I was rambling.

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview ? 7

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one ? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview ?

Nothing apart from being comfortable with your personal statement and knowing you can expand on statements if you need to

### **Interview 3**

College:

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview ? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room ?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview ? Yes / No (underline one). If “Yes”, to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one) ? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer ?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview ?

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one ? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview ?