



Module 4

Unit 4

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Module 4

Unit 4: Strategies

Task 1: Multiple choice¹

Question 1

An effective AD should:

- a) begin with research on the work of art and its author.
- b) be an adaptation of the brochure associated with a give work of art.
- c) include a synthesis of the opinions of the audio describer.
- d) never incorporate audio materials other than the descriptive narration.

Question 2

AD for visual arts typically include:

- a) only detailed descriptions of all visual information for those with sight loss.
- b) the background history of each work of art being described as well as directions for the visitors.
- c) only orientation instructions to guide persons with sight loss from exhibit to exhibit.
- d) a combination of traditional content for sighted audience and with descriptions for those with sight loss.

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Question 3

In terms of constraints, museum ADs:

¹ The responses are based on the ADLAB PRO core videos. Only one answer is correct.

- a) have none. They can be as long as necessary to describe the work of art.
- b) should not exceed 5 to 10 minutes in length.
- c) should conform to the attention span of the prospective user.
- d) should always respect a set limit of words.

Question 4

According to a recent corpus-based study, in museum AD informativity is gained:

- a) by using words that convey grammatical meaning.
- b) by choosing words that convey semantic meaning.
- c) by preferring long sentences and structurally complex formulations.
- d) by choosing mainly core vocabulary words.

Question 5

In a museum ADs, colour adjectives:

- a) should be avoided, as persons with sight loss do not know colours.
- b) should only be used when they concern lively or bleak colours.
- c) should be used, because persons with sight loss know how to interpret colour.
- d) should not be used when they concern bleak colours, because they are associated with grief.

Module 4

Unit 4: Strategies

Task 2

Aim(s):

- Learners can recognize main linguistic features and strategies for formulating AD of visual art and environment in professional AD script samples.

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 2 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- AD scripts in own language or in known language.
- Free online software for the calculation of type/token ratio.
- Free online software for the calculation of lexical density.
- Recommended reading: Giansante, L. (2015). *Writing verbal description audio tours*. Retrieved from <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/mei/verbal-description-training/writing-verbal-description-for-audio-guides/>
- Recommended reading: Perego, E. (2018). Into the language of museum audio descriptions: A corpus-based study. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*. doi <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2018.1544648>

Development:

1. Learners use AD scripts provided by trainer (or are asked to gather some themselves).
2. Learners find software online.

3. Learners produce checklist of most relevant features and strategies as they are illustrated in Core Video (and literature).
4. Learners focus on a selection of ADs, and compile checklist providing some examples.
5. Learners present their results to class, and initiate discussion.
6. Selected group of learners produces a summative checklist as well as outline with main reflections and examples to share with class.

Additional comments:

1. It would be best for learners to work on different types of AD, e.g., painting, photograph, sculpture, modern installation, multimedia art, architecture, heritage place, etc.
2. The website of VocalEyes (vocaleyes.co.uk) can be a useful purveyor of audio files in English that learners can transcribe or listen to.
3. Learners can find the pictures and the AD transcript in English, Catalan and Spanish of some works of art of the Design Museum in Barcelona (<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny/en>) in the handout of Task 2 of Module 4, Unit 5.

Module 4

Unit 4: Strategies

Task 3

Aim(s):

- Learners can assess non-professional AD text in terms of efficacy.
- Learners can identify faults and ameliorate them in non-professional ADs.

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 2 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Handout
- As an alternative, any AD provided by trainer in local language.

Development:

1. Learners read AD provided in handout or by trainer.
2. Learners underline effective formulations (if any) and explain why they are effective.
3. Learners underline ineffective formulations (if any), explain why they are ineffective, and suggest new formulation.

Additional comments:

1. It could be useful to retrieve the picture of the painting online only *after* analyzing the AD to see whether the AD provided is clear, effective and vivid.
2. A second revision of the AD provided might be performed after retrieving the picture of the painting online.
3. A comment on the reasons why changes are made after seeing the painting should be provided and discussed.
4. At this stage, learners might try to formulate their own AD of the painting as a homework.

Task 3: Handout

AD 1

"The coronation of Jehoash", Francesco Hayez (1860), Revoltella Museum in Trieste. AD and translation by Gaia Di Luca, Elisa Perego, Chris Taylor.

"The Coronation of Jehoash" is a painting by the Italian artist Francesco Hayez. The artwork is oil on canvas dated 1860. The painting is 83 centimetres high by 105 centimetres wide. Jehoash King of Judah is also, not without reason, the title of a libretto for an opera by Pietro Metastasio, inspired by the famous biblical episode. As was often the case in the nineteenth century, opera productions were a source of inspiration for paintings.

The canvas depicts the biblical episode in which Jehoash, at the age of seven, is made King of Judah. The scene takes place within the walls of a temple, whose architecture is of little complexity but detailed. The painting is made up of three groups of figures: Jehoash's grandmother and the guards on the left-hand side, a crowd at the centre and Jehoash on the right of the painting. We are looking at the scene from a lateral point of view, to the left of Jehoash. We will begin from the description of the first group of figures on the left-hand side of the painting.

Jehoash's grandmother, who looks as if she is in her thirties, is near the walls of the temple, behind the second group of figures from our perspective. She is surrounded by a group of guards, who are pointing their fingers at her, while she is being arrested because she is guilty of attempting to eliminate her grandson. She has collapsed to the ground and a man is dragging her by

the arms trying to get her outside. Jehoash's grandmother has her right arm bent and her left arm stretched out, both upwards, attempting to break free. Her head is bent down but she is looking ahead. She is wearing a long white tunic, which is almost completely covered by a bright purple toga. Behind them, a gap in the walls of the temple can be seen, in the shape of a pentagon with a pointed top. In the background, seen through the gap, and outside the walls of the temple, a plume of smoke is rising: it is the fire of Jerusalem, which occupies the right side of the sky. It seems an omen of dreadful tragedies to come. Behind the flames, a tall building is depicted, which occupies the left side of the sky. There is a central quadrangular structure, which ends with three windows on the right-hand side and another three on the left-hand side. The building in the centre is divided into two different parts by a parallelepiped-shaped tower with no openings, which rises nearly up to the upper margin of the painting.

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The second group of figures is located in the centre of the painting. It is the crowd who are emphatically participating in the dramatic event of the death sentence on Jehoash's grandmother. They are tightly and orderly arranged along parallel or juxtaposed diagonal lines. These are easily distinguished in the outstretched arms of some of the people present. They are then reinforced along the bent backs of others. Hayez's scenography and staging are very complex, emphasized through the different positions of the figures, their rhetorical gestures and by the expressions on peoples' faces. The latter reveal the pathos and gravity of the scene. One of the people present is not looking at the king, but he is turned to his left to watch the arrest of Jehoash's grandmother. This gives continuity to the interpretation of the painting. Many of the people have their hands clasped and are knelt in prayer in front of the new young king, who sits on a throne supported by a stone

cube located on the right of the scene. Behind him, some guards wearing white garments and turbans are watching over him. At his side, stands the priest Jehoiada, in front of us. He is a tall old man and he has a full white beard. His brow is knitted while he is staring furiously at Jehoash's grandmother. He is wearing the typical priestly clothes. The light-blue sleeveless robe is decorated at the bottom with little golden bells. Above the robe, he wears an apron with some carved onyx stones. The breastplate of judgment is decorated with twelve precious stones with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel carved on it. On his head, he is wearing a cone-shaped linen turban, from which a nearly transparent veil hangs down to the ground. The priest has his arms open: the left arm is slightly bent upwards, palm open. The right arm is outstretched, while he is pointing his finger at Jehoash's grandmother, to order her death. Behind the priest, near the walls of the temple, there is a goblet-shaped baptismal font made of stone and set on the heads of some oxen sculptures. On the right-hand side of the painting, at the far end, in the foreground, there are some steep stone steps, which come out from the cube. On the third to last step, there is a young woman dressed in white who is holding a metal censer on her left arm, that is to say a vase used to burn incense during a religious service. On her right, still in the foreground, two Roman guards are talking facing each other. One of them turns his back to us, showing a large wooden shield.

The entire scene is depicted with very bright colours and a much-emphasised chiaroscuro. The painting's frame is gold-plated and rectangular, made up of various borders that are decorated with geometric inlay patterns that progressively widen. In the middle of the lower border there is a small plate which displays the artist's name in large print, the dates 1791 and 1881 divided by a hyphen and the title of the painting.

Francesco Hayez is considered the leading artist of Romanticism in Italy. This artistic movement originated in Europe towards 1830. It rejected the rationalism that characterised Neoclassicism during the second half of the XVIII century. On the contrary, Romanticism placed emphasis on emotions, passion, irrationality and important religious themes. However, Romanticism cannot be considered a style. This is because homogeneity concerned themes but not techniques. Hayez represented the themes of freedom and nation related to the Italian Risorgimento. In fact, to avoid Austrian censorship, Hayez painted scenes and characters from mythology and a distant past. However, the style used by Hayez in his paintings was still neoclassical. Neoclassicism drew inspiration from the classical art and culture of Greco-Roman ideals and aimed to reach perfection, logic, symmetry and simplicity.

AD 2

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"Sphere n.3", Arnaldo Pomodoro (1963), Revoltella Museum, Trieste, Italy.

AD and translation by Biancarosa Zordan, Elisa Perego, Chris Taylor.

Sphere n. 3 is one of Arnaldo Pomodoro's sculptural metaphors, part of the series of Rotating spheres which started in 1963. It is made of bronze, with a diameter of 58 cm, about the length of a pillow. The sphere was created in 1964 and was bought by the museum in 1965 at the Venice Biennale. The sphere is a "magical and perfect form" which the artist claims he fractured to discover the mysterious, living, monstrous internal fermentations. The perfect surface of the sphere is cut by jagged-edged oblique fissures, about the width of a hand, which resemble an open zipper. These kinds of openings reveal an internal turmoil within the sphere of metal wire and welding scraps. The viewer is led to the search and discovery of the complex mechanism

which is hidden beyond the perfect, smooth surface. The main fissure cuts through the half-sphere in front of you from the top right to the bottom left, ending on the other end of the sphere, currently hidden from view. A parallelepiped is inserted in the centre of the main fissure, erasing the spherical curve. The sides of this element are also about the length of a hand, and an irregularly-squared surface emerges from the fissure. The contrast between the smooth and polished surface and their intricate interior is emphasised by this rupture.

Arnaldo Pomodoro's style remains highly personal and unmistakable, even though many historians have drawn parallels to contemporary art, from Pollock to Brancusi. He resorts to the ancient technique of the mould and experiments with a brand new matrix, from cuttlebone to fictile coal, talc and slate.

Module 4

Unit 4: Strategies

Task 4

Aim(s):

- Learners can implement strategies and formulate own AD.

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 3 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Picture of artworks to be described.

Development:

1. Choose an artwork and draft your own description.
2. Exchange your AD with the AD of a classmate, and revise his/her description: what solutions are better than yours? What are worse, instead?

Additional comments:

1. Pictures of any artwork can be used for this task, even if some are given in the Learner handout section below.
2. To exercise better, different art formats should be described (e.g., painting, sculpture, modern installations, abstract art, multimedia art, architecture, etc.).
3. You can consider using the pictures used in Task 2 of Module 4, Unit 5: here pictures of some works of art of the Design Museum in Barcelona (<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny/en>) are followed by

the professional AD transcript in English, Catalan and Spanish. You can compare your AD to the professional AD that has been provided.

Task 4: Handout

Picture 1: Pottery oil lamps, National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia (Italy). Courtesy of Marta Novello.

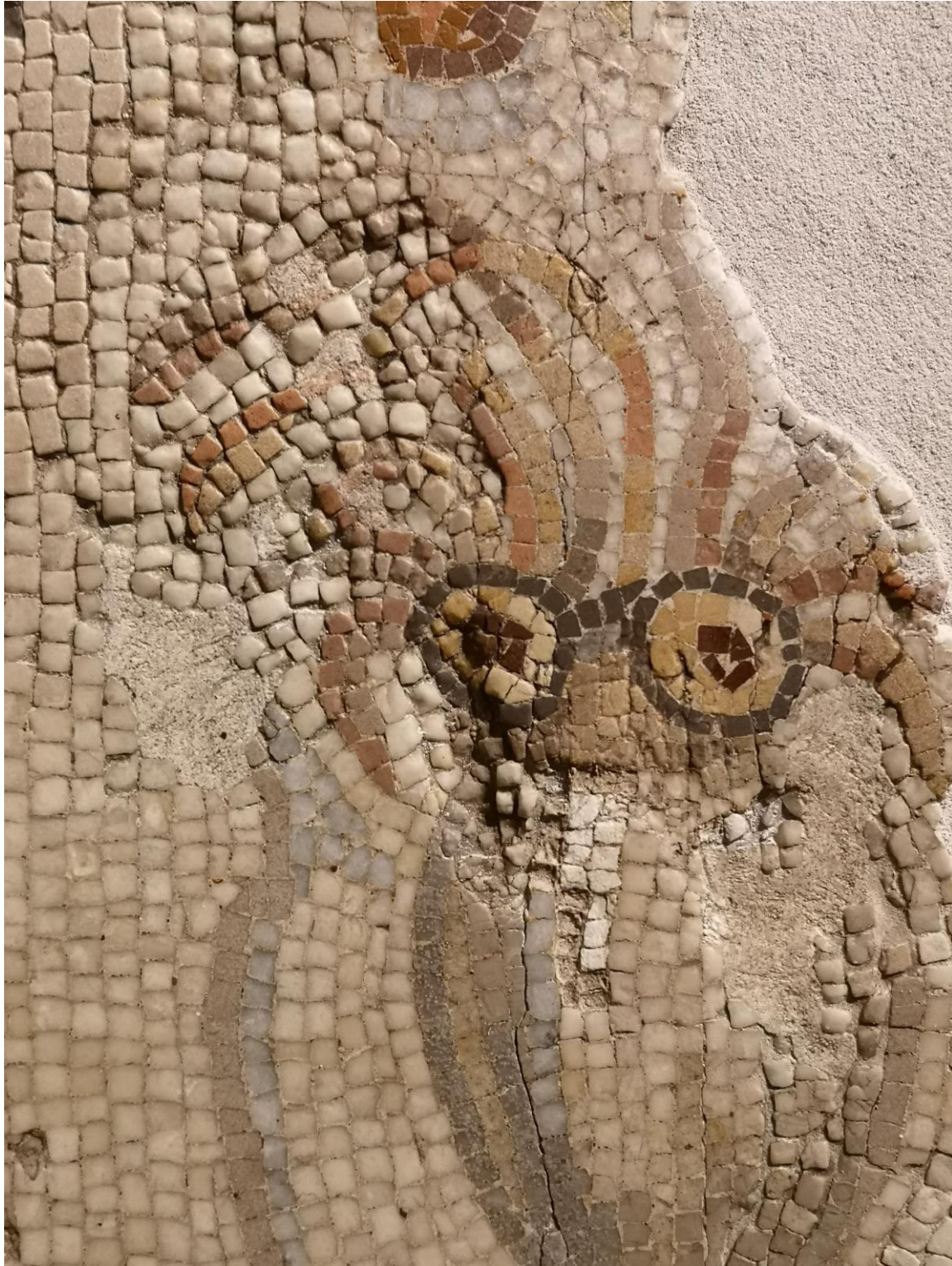


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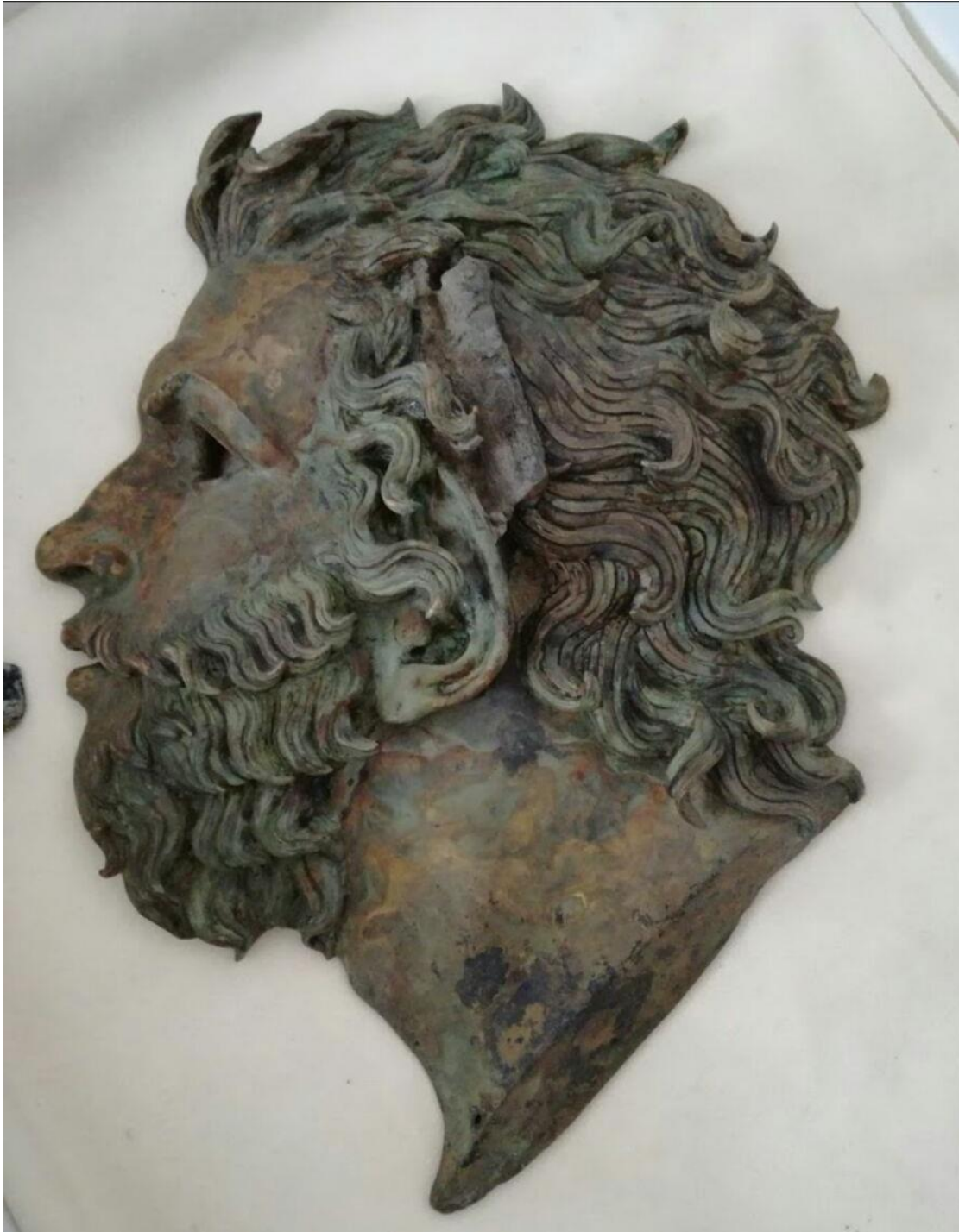


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Picture 2: Detail of wall mosaic, National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia (Italy). Courtesy of Marta Novello.



Picture 3: Head of Boreas, National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia (Italy). Courtesy of Marta Novello.



Picture 4: This is a reproduction of one of Joan Miró's artworks by 8 year old Caterina Perego. Try and describe it! It can prove challenging yet funny.



Picture 5: This is a reproduction of one of Frida Kahlo's artworks by 7 year old Agnese Perego. Try and describe it! It can prove challenging yet funny.



The following pictures are all exhibited in the Design Museum in Barcelona (<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny/en>).

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Picture 6: Foto de Pere Casas Abarca (1875-1958) de 1902-1903. Mida: 8 x 12,3 cm. MTIB 4177/14. Rights: Museu del Disseny / Pere Casas Abarca.



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Picture 7: Camisans. Barcelona, 1920-1930. Mida: 17,6 x 12,6 cm. MTIB 4179/14. Rights: Museu del Disseny / Camisans.

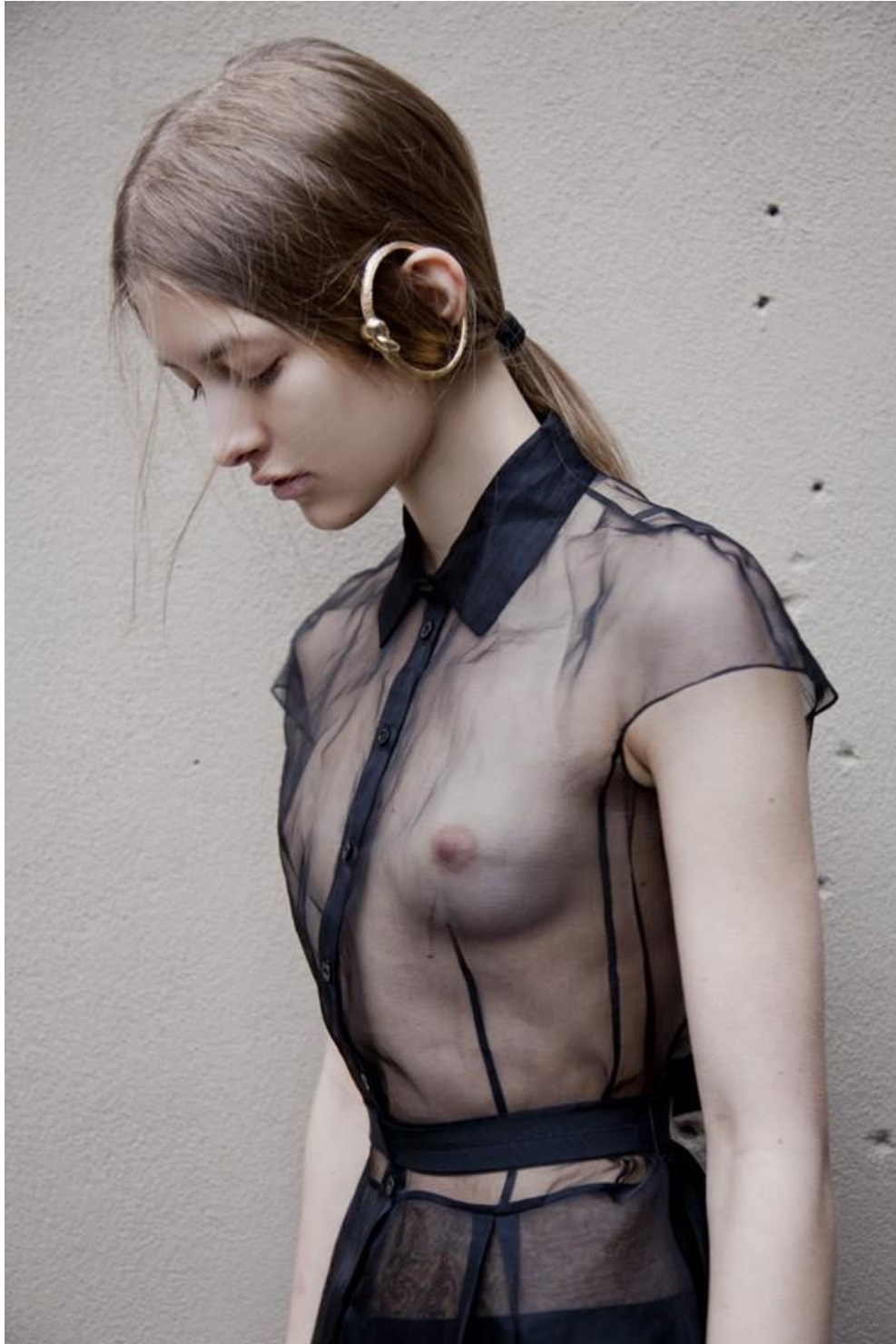


Picture 8: Eugenio Recuenco (1968). La Cenicienta. Madrid, 2005. Vestit de Cymbelline, davantal de Pepita y Beatriz. Mida: 43,2 x 56,5 cm. MTIB 3879/13. Rights: Museu del Disseny / Eugenio Recuenco.



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Picture 9: Virgili Jubero (1984). París, 2012. Brusa de Christian Dior. Mida: 59,6 x 40 cm. MTIB 3943/13. Rights: Museu del Disseny / Virgili Jubero.



Picture 10: Txema Yeste (1972). Gala. Cadaqués, 2009. Mida: 47,1 x 70,6 cm.
MTIB 3807/12. Rights: Museu del Disseny / Txema Yeste.



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