

8 Read the text and choose the correct answers.

This month in *Art Around the World*, Fiona Hitchens visits China

My first introduction to Chinese art was an early morning walk in Beihai Park in Beijing. There, I saw elderly people writing on the pavement with paintbrushes which were a metre long! I soon learned that they were doing water calligraphy – writing in water. The words have meanings, but they are also art. The calligraphy quickly disappears, of course. But tomorrow, the old people will be back.

Temporary art like this is very popular in China. Every winter, Harbin, in northern China, is visited by sculptors and tourists from around the world. They come for the Harbin Ice Festival, when the city has huge sculptures made out of ice. The sculptures are bigger than houses, and they take weeks to make. Harbin's freezing winter temperatures make it very difficult for the artists to work outside. But the weather also means that the sculptures will be protected until the spring.

A few days later in Tibet, western China, I watched artists make sand paintings. The pictures are full of symbols, and they have important religious meanings for Tibetan people. They look amazing, but the paintings are soon destroyed by the artists who make them. It is important for Tibetan culture to make these paintings, then have them destroyed.

Of course, not all Chinese art is temporary – some of it has been around for a very long time! Near the city of Xi'an, I visited the amazing terracotta warriors, or soldiers. In 200 BCE, 8,000 statues of soldiers were made by sculptors out of a material called terracotta. They are as big as real people and they all have different faces. An important king had the statues produced to protect his body after he died. They stayed under the ground with the dead king for over 2,000 years, until they were discovered by a farmer in 1974.

At the China Art Museum, in Shanghai, I saw wonderful 16th-century Chinese paintings of tall mountains, trees and cliffs. The paintings were beautiful, but they didn't look very realistic to me at the time. 'Mountains aren't like that,' I thought. But that was before the last stop on my trip: the mountains of Zhangjiajie National Park.

These mountains were used by film director James Cameron in his sci-fi film *Avatar* because they look like something from another planet. On my last weekend in China, I took a cable car up into the mountains there. Trees grew on the sides of hundred-metre cliffs, and strange towers of rock appeared out of the morning fog. It looked just like the pictures in the China Art Museum. For a moment, I felt like I was inside a Chinese painting!

Glossary

brush – you use this to paint

- 1 What is true about the people in Beihai Park?
 - A They introduced themselves to the writer.
 - B Some of them were writing graffiti.
 - C Their art didn't last very long.
 - D They use paint and big brushes.
- 2 What does the author say about the ice festival in Harbin?
 - A It's only popular with local people.
 - B It's easy to make sculptures out of ice.
 - C The sculptures don't last long.
 - D The winter weather both helps and causes problems.
- 3 The author says that Tibetan sand paintings
 - A last a long time.
 - B are difficult to understand.
 - C are destroyed by vandals.
 - D have special meanings for local people.
- 4 What is true about the terracotta soldiers of Xi'an?
 - A They all look the same.
 - B Nobody saw them for a long time.
 - C Many people died making them.
 - D They are bigger than real people.
- 5 Which statement describes the author's feelings about Chinese art?
 - A She was surprised that it was so old.
 - B She was impressed by different types of Chinese art.
 - C She didn't think it was very realistic.
 - D She particularly liked old Chinese paintings.