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Visual Arts

A History of European Art

Course Guidebook

Professor William Kloss

Independent Art Historian,
The Smithsonian Associates,
Smithsonian Institution



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Professor William Kloss is an independent art historian and scholar who lectures and writes about a wide range of European and American art. He was educated at Oberlin College, where he earned a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Art History.

Professor Kloss continued his postgraduate work as a Teaching Fellow at the University of Michigan. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for two years of study in Rome and was an Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia, where he taught 17th- and 18th-century European art and 19th-century French art. His courses were very highly rated by both undergraduate and graduate students.

A resident of Washington DC, Professor Kloss has enjoyed a long association with the Smithsonian Institution as an independent lecturer for the seminar and travel program, presenting more than 100 courses in the United States and abroad on subjects ranging from ancient Greek art to Impressionism to the works of Winslow Homer. He has also been a featured lecturer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and for The Art Institute of Chicago and a guest faculty lecturer for the American Arts Course at Sotheby's Institute of Art.

Professor Kloss serves on the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, a presidential appointment he has held since 1990, and is a member of the Portrait Advisory Panel for the U.S. Senate Commission on Art. He is the author of several books, including the award-winning *Art in the White House: A Nation's Pride* and most recently coauthored *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art*. He has also written articles published in *Winterthur Portfolio*, *The Magazine Antiques*, *American Arts Quarterly*, *White House History*, and *Antiques & Fine Art* and has recorded four earlier Teaching

Company courses: *Great Artists of the Italian Renaissance*, *A History of European Art*, *Dutch Masters: The Age of Rembrandt*, and *Masterworks of American Art*. ■

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A History of European Art

Scope:

In this course, we'll survey the great monuments of European painting, sculpture, and architecture from the age of Charlemagne to the onset of World War II. We'll spend time together examining major works by the greatest visual artists of a millennium of Western civilization, including extensive considerations of such important artists as Giotto, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Monet. We'll place these artists and their masterpieces in the political, religious, and social context of their time, so that we have a more profound understanding of both why an artwork was created and how it responded to a particular set of historical circumstances. In the course of this survey, we'll witness the birth and fruition of a brilliant European civilization, emerging from the shadow of the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages to become one of the most dominant cultural forces in history.

In Lecture One, we'll set the stage for our survey by providing a chronological overview of the course. I'll also introduce the five essential aspects in the analysis of works of art: subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion. An appreciation of each of these individual elements is crucial to our understanding of artists and their works. In the first lecture, we'll illustrate this approach by analyzing several representative masterpieces. Throughout the course, we'll employ these key elements to look at paintings, sculpture, and prints. We'll also identify and define the five areas of subject matter that constitute the major categories of art: narrative or historical art, portraiture, landscape, still life, and scenes of daily life. During the survey, we will see how each era emphasized certain subjects in art to communicate important societal and political ideas and values. Throughout the survey, one of our goals will be to learn to take *time* with art—to look at it, consider it, and feel it without haste—in the hopes that an understanding of art can change and enhance our lives.

In Lectures Two through Ten we'll explore the artistic output of the Middle Ages, from the early architectural monuments of the Carolingian Empire to

the massive cathedrals and exquisite sculpture of the French Gothic style. Despite its former reputation, this was a period of great creativity and provides a necessary background to our extensive consideration of the achievements of the Renaissance that followed. We will spend a significant amount of time, Lectures Eleven through Twenty-Seven, examining the early development and the blossoming of the Renaissance in both Italy and the north. The Renaissance was both a rebirth of interest in Classical literature and art and a revival of interest in learning that, together, led to a reevaluation of man's place in the world. We will discuss the place of Humanism and Neo-Platonic philosophy in the Renaissance—both of which were reflected in different styles in art of the period. We will note how the conceptual advances of the time, beginning with Giotto's approach to the illusionistic creation of space, led to a revolution in the expressive possibilities of narrative art. We'll trace this accomplishment through the works of some of the greatest artists in history, from Masaccio and Donatello, at the outset of the 15th century, to the acknowledged geniuses of the High Renaissance, including Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Bellini, and Titian. We'll also discuss the tremendous innovations in Renaissance architecture, from Brunelleschi's dome for the cathedral in Florence to the creation of the new Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome in the High Renaissance. We will also address the Renaissance in the north, with considerations of the art of Jan van Eyck, Dürer, Bosch, and Bruegel, among many other important masters.

In Lectures Twenty-Eight through Thirty-Eight, we'll commence with a discussion of the evolution of Baroque style in the art of Caravaggio and the Bolognese Carracci family. We'll spend a substantial amount of time examining the presiding genius of the time in Rome, the sculptor and architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini. We'll continue from Italy to a broader view of European Baroque art, from Velázquez in Spain to Rubens and Rembrandt in the Netherlands, to Versailles and the court of Louis XIV in France. Not only will we discuss the major masters of the era, but we'll spend time on many of the extraordinary yet lesser known geniuses of the period. I'll then discuss the 18th-century reactions to the Baroque by introducing the Rococo style of Watteau, Boucher, and Fragonard. It is at this time that we will see the nations of Europe becoming increasingly politically and culturally unified, sharing an artistic language expressed in the varying accents of Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium, and France.

Finally, in Lectures Thirty-Nine through Forty-Eight, we'll examine the beginnings of modern European art with the Neoclassical movement of the late 18th century. We'll discuss the work of David that defined the Neoclassical style, and we will detail the work of the great Romantic artists Goya, Géricault, and Delacroix. We'll see how the Neoclassical and Romantic art of the early 19th century gave way to the Realism of Courbet and Manet, which in turn, led to the Impressionist achievements of Degas and Monet. We'll have the opportunity to discuss the reactions to Impressionism embodied in the work of Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Seurat and reserve time to discuss the seminal contributions of Cezanne and Rodin to the art of the 20th century. As we move into the new century, we again see a period of internationalism in art, as well as a greater variety of artistic styles and movements, all of which responded to, were conditioned by, or were created by the events leading up to World War I. We'll conclude with a consideration of the early movements of the century, including Fauvism, Cubism, German Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism, and the pivotal role of the two towering geniuses of early modern art, Picasso and Matisse. ■

Approaches to European Art

Lecture 1

[I]n this first lecture, I would like to offer some ideas about looking at art—how we do it, and why we do it. I start with a question: Where does one begin a historical survey course?

No matter where we jump in, there is always a known prelude, always the desire to begin earlier than the announced starting point. We will start with the date 800 A.D., the year of Charlemagne's coronation as Holy Roman Emperor. This convenient date may be regarded as the beginning of the first true European civilization, distinct from the Roman Empire.

The ancient Greek and Roman civilizations preceded and prepared the way for the new Europe and are always its background. Throughout this course, we will refer to the artistic achievements of Classical antiquity and its importance to European art. But our starting point will be the birth of Europe, and our chronological path will be its evolution into a coherent civilization.

These 48 lectures are not evenly divided among the centuries. For example, we will survey medieval art in nine lectures, an overview that only begins to explore an era of great creativity. Medieval art is the background for the next great era in European art, the Renaissance. Though encompassing only about two centuries, the Renaissance is the central achievement of European civilization, and we will devote 17 lectures to it, including 11 on Italian art and architecture. We will discuss the Baroque era and the 18th century in a dozen lectures. This period is truly European, politically and culturally. Here we find one Europe composed of many national powers, with a shared artistic language expressed in the national accents of Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium, and France.

The last nine lectures will cover the 19th century and provide an introduction to the 20th century. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic period that followed it established France as the de facto capital of European art in the 19th century, and we will study its art from Romanticism through Impressionism.

Although we have only recently left the 20th century and have not yet come to terms with its art; however, our quick dip into the early years of 20th-century European art will reveal the vitality, inventiveness, conviction, and passion of modern art.

Art history is, obviously, the study of the visual arts of a particular period or civilization. But it also a guide to *looking*—a foundation for viewing art with understanding and pleasure. We will focus on five elements: subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion. Although we will address them singly, these elements always overlap and intermingle. My aim is for you to begin to see how and why works of art affect us, that you begin to look at art consciously, and that you realize that looking at art requires time.

Every work of art has a *subject*. The way the subject is expressed in art is the artist's *interpretation*, and the artistic means of interpretation is the artist's *style*. Note that this is not the same as the style of a period, though it is related; within the Gothic period style, for example, each artist still has a personal style. The *context* can be of the moment (the events of an artist's life), of contemporary political events (the French Revolution), of the historical period (the Renaissance), or of long-term cultural determinants (in Europe, Christianity). *Emotion* is harder to define, because it is so instinctive on the part of both artist and viewer. We may easily misinterpret the intended emotion, and the further the art is from our own time, the more easily we do so. For this reason, our own emotional response must always be measured against what we can learn of the artist and the period.

First, let's focus on subject. Artists of the Renaissance and the Baroque were especially fond of subjects drawn from Classical Greek and Roman culture, including mythology. The myths are so common in art that we must know these stories, if only in summary. Our first examples are two famous works with mythological subjects.

First, we see Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c. 1522). This brilliantly painted work is vivid in color and motion. It is possible simply to revel in the physical beauty of the painting, but we miss out on a much richer experience if we don't know the myth. Bacchus is the god of wine, but in the Classical world, his *passion* was understood as the opposite of *reason*.

The joyous procession of Bacchus and his caravan of revelers was linked to ancient fertility rites. The meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne is the love story central to this myth. Leading his followers in his chariot, Bacchus discovers Ariadne abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos. Instantly smitten, he leaps—almost floats—down in a trance of love to make her his bride and, ultimately, to give her immortality as a constellation of stars, as already seen in the heavens above her.

Our next example is *Apollo and Daphne* (c. 1622–1625) by Bernini. If we don't know this myth of Apollo's love for the nymph Daphne, as retold by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, then what are we to make of our observation that her fingers are changing into branches and her toes are taking root? And if we guess, by her fearful expression or his apprehensive one, that her transformation must have something to do with his pursuit, we still would not know that she has prayed for this metamorphosis to thwart him. There is a certain melancholy in her success, because she didn't wait long enough to learn that he was a god. The story is a memorable one, and the sculpture is a magnificent expression of it in intractable marble, in which such a metamorphosis seems especially impressive. Knowledge of the myth—the subject—is essential.

That these two subjects were also *interpreted* by the artists is obvious even if we had never seen other examples. For instance, Bernini could have shown Daphne almost completely transformed into a laurel tree and Apollo seated dejectedly on a rock.

To explore interpretation, we'll look at three versions of one subject: St. Matthew. The New Testament begins with the accounts of the life of Jesus written by the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It must be understood that here, as always in our discussion of Christian art, we are taking the accounts of the saints and the biblical narratives at face value, because that is what the artists did. Each of the evangelists has a symbolic figure who accompanies him or stands in for him, and the symbol of St. Matthew is a winged man, an angel. In art, the saint's angel is often seen with him while the evangelist writes his Gospel, as if inspiring or even dictating it to him. But this simple subject can take many different forms.

First, we see *St. Matthew* (c. 816–835 A.D.) by an unknown Carolingian artist. St. Matthew is seated, writing his Gospel. Where is his symbol, the angel? Matthew is situated in a landscape—some plants are at his feet, and there is a hill behind him, crowned by some trees and a church-like structure. On the right side stands the angel, holding a scroll that unwinds in St. Matthew’s direction. The visual connection—the related shapes—of that scroll and St. Matthew’s ink horn is the artist’s way of suggesting the divine inspiration or dictation that directs Matthew’s writing.

But the small painting does much more than show us Matthew writing his Gospel while the angel inspires him. The artist has also tried to understand the saint’s state of mind while writing and to convey that state of mind to us in his picture—*that* is the artist’s interpretation. The artist has imagined that St. Matthew urgently wanted to pass on the “good news” to his readers; thus, he devises a *style* to express this idea. The style is intensely linear, and the lines of the saint’s robe are crisp, curvilinear, insistently repetitive, and densely packed—full of energy. In his concentration, St. Matthew hunches over his writing table, and the curved lines of the hill behind him echo and reinforce this posture and its meaning.

We often look first to the human face for emotional cues, and we find them here. St. Matthew’s eyebrows are raised in concentration; his eyes are open wide. His hair is not merely curly, but the curls snap with the same intensity found in the folds of his robe.

Almost 800 years later, the Italian painter Caravaggio painted the same subject—twice in fact. We see his first version, *St. Matthew and the Angel* (c. 1600–1601, destroyed). How did Caravaggio imagine his St. Matthew? He imagined that St. Matthew was not merely unlearned but seemingly illiterate. We see that the angel is not just dictating but guiding the saint’s hand. The strain of the task is apparent in St. Matthew’s furrowed brow, his brawny forearm, and his tensely crossed legs. His whole body is focused on the mental challenge and is in complete contrast to the casual, curved pose

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of the angel and his elegant hand. But the angel, too, is solidly physical and literally down-to-earth. The patrons whose family chapel this painting was intended for rejected it as improper and indecorous. They failed to understand Caravaggio's intention, which was to make the evangelist a recognizable Italian of his day, with whom an average visitor to the church could readily identify and through whom that visitor could feel the importance of the life of Jesus being so laboriously recorded.

Because the patron disliked the first painting, Caravaggio painted a second version: *St. Matthew and the Angel* (c. 1602). Now the evangelist is dressed in flowing robes, suggesting an ancient philosopher, and the angel stays in the air. He is still dictating, but there is no physical contact between the figures. St. Matthew is serious, intelligent, and completely literate. Notice also that St. Matthew is set further back in space, at a greater distance from us than he is in either the 9th-century book painting or Caravaggio's first version. It is a fine painting but without the profound originality of the first rendering.

In looking at contrasting interpretations of St. Matthew, we have also dealt explicitly with style. We couldn't do otherwise because style is the means of the artist's interpretation. The history of art is rich in styles, and every style holds its particular expressive potential. It was once popular to judge art with a Darwinian assumption of progress, and this is still implicit in many people's response to art. Earlier styles whose language is remote from us are sometimes considered as lesser artistic expressions.

For purposes of comparison, we see two paintings of the same subject, made two centuries apart, in contrasting styles: a *Deposition* (c. 1435) by Rogier van der Weyden and a painting with the same title made about 1612–1614 by Peter Paul Rubens. Both paintings depict the lowering of the dead body of Christ from the cross. Van der Weyden cares nothing for space except the shallow box in which the figures are gathered—a space that is not part of “real” space, not a landscape setting, but it suggests a container for painted sculpture. Yet the gold background of that box heightens the already extreme pathos of the grieving figures. Rubens places his figures outside at night, but the darkness obscures the landscape setting, isolating the figures from the rest of the world as much as van der Weyden's box did. And Rubens's black background is as much an amplifier of feeling as van der Weyden's gold.

In each painting, the brilliant red robe of St. John intensifies the emotion, although in van der Weyden's painting, the saint assists the fainting Virgin Mary, calling attention to the way her body echoes her son's; in Rubens's painting, St. John supports the body of Christ, the main subject. In each painting, the body of Christ dominates, one presented to us in an angular, stark, frontal pose and the other, slumped and lifeless, sliding down a long diagonal of sorrow. One may prefer one painter over the other, one style over the other, but one cannot deny that each artist has found a consummate expression of death and response to death. The particular expressivity of each artist could be achieved only in his particular, personal style.

In our discussion of interpretation and style, we have also been deeply concerned with context. Once again, it could not have been otherwise, because the subjects we were dealing with were Christian subjects. Christianity informed much of European culture throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque, and it remained a wellspring of subjects and themes well into the 18th century. We will spend a good deal of time looking at religious art, but to teach religious art is not to teach religion. One does not have to believe to be moved by the cultural expressions of religion.

We see Pierre Patel's *Perspective View of Versailles*. Just as one does not have to believe in a religion to be moved by its cultural expressions, neither must one believe in the divine right of kings or absolute monarchy to be awed by Louis XIV's great palace at Versailles, a palace that would never have been built in an era that was not autocratic and absolutist. We may disapprove of the political system, but we remain impressed by the achievement, which resulted from its political context.

Neither do we have to experience a political revolution to recognize the passionate response of a painter who witnessed the events of July 1830 in Paris, when the recently restored Bourbon regime was overthrown in an uprising. We see one response in Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). Delacroix could still think in the traditional allegorical mode, in which "Liberty" could be personified as a bare-breasted heroic woman carrying the flag but leading the real people of Paris forward in their struggle. The power of contemporary events can stir the deepest emotions of an artist,

even Delacroix, who was anything but politically engaged, and through his genius, Delacroix could enable us, long afterward, to share his response without having experienced the event.

Delacroix's response to a political context was also a profoundly emotional response. Each of us responds in our own way to events, circumstances, other persons, places, and experiences. Our response to joy or grief in life will also be evoked by the portrayals of those emotions in art. A particular example is our innate human response to a loving embrace, as we see in Giotto's *Meeting at the Golden Gate* (c. 1305) and Rembrandt's *The Jewish Bride* (c. 1668–1669).

Giotto's fresco shows an aged couple, Joachim and Anna, who had been childless and who have just learned that Anna will bear a child (Mary, who will become the mother of Jesus). They rush to find each other and meet at the city gate. Although the couple is grouped with others in an architectural setting, we focus at once on their memorable embrace. In fact, the arched gate leads our eyes to them, and its curve echoes their embrace. Their separate bodies fuse into a single loving form. Rembrandt's painting brings us into the immediate presence of this Jewish couple, whose names are not known. They are shown in a profoundly solemn embrace in which they do not even look directly at each other, yet they are ardently united by tender touch and by the warmth of her scarlet skirt and his golden sleeve—a sleeve that itself is the essence of an embrace. The couple in this portrait has been painted in the guise of the loving Isaac and Rebecca from the Old Testament book of Genesis; knowing this deepens the meaning of the painting. The emotion in these paintings is both personal and religious, expressed in different styles, but equally capable of touching us.

As biblical and mythological themes became less common in the 19th century, the emotional content of art was often more directly related to individual pleasures and sorrows. Thus, art increasingly reflected the modern European middle class that arose in the 19th century and turned to their lives and experiences for subjects and for emotional expression. One great example may suffice: Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881). We feel a satisfying, complete pleasure in Renoir's famous painting. It seems so obvious; that is, we understand it—we feel that it speaks our language.

But does it? No, it is merely much closer to our own time and free from references drawn from anything outside itself.

The pleasure that we feel in this painting comes from Renoir's own joy in the scene and his mastery of color, characterization, and composition—a composition that leaves a place at the table for us, the concave opening in front. Everything combines to convince us that we, too, are included in this long-ago gathering of friends. The red-orange color throughout the painting is used like a thread to weave the scene together into a tapestry. The grouping of figures also makes us feel as if we are a part of this world.

We have been using these examples of European art to provide a foundation for looking at the hundreds of works of art that this course will present. I have tried to suggest what pleasures lie in store for us, and in the process, I hope that I have hinted at my conviction that art is important, something that when properly seen and considered and felt, can change our lives for the better. ■

Works Discussed

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (The Épernay Gospel)*, c. 816–835, ink and colors on vellum, 10 ¼ x 8 ¾” (26 x 22.2 cm), Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay, France.

Bernini:

Apollo and Daphne, 1622–25, marble, 8’ H (24 m H), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

Caravaggio:

St. Matthew and the Angel (destroyed), c. 1600–01, oil on canvas, 7’ 7 ¼” x 6’ (2.31 x 1.82 m), for the Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

St. Matthew and the Angel, prob. 1602, oil on canvas, 9’ 8 ¾” x 6’ 2 ½” (295 x 195 cm), Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

Eugène Delacroix:

Liberty Leading the People, 1830, oil on canvas, 8' 6 ¼" x 10' 8"
(260 x 325 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Giotto:

Meeting at the Golden Gate, c. 1305, fresco, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel,
Padua, Italy.

Pierre Patel:

Perspective View of Versailles.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir:

Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881, oil on canvas, 4' 3" x 5' 8"
(129.5 x 172.7 cm), The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA.

Peter Paul Rubens:

Deposition Altarpiece, 1612–14, oil on panel, central panel:
13' 9 ¼" x 10' 2" (4.19 x 3.1 m), Antwerp Cathedral,
Antwerp, Belgium.

Titian:

Bacchus and Ariadne, c. 1522, oil on canvas, 5' 9 ½" x 6' 3 ¾"
(176.5 x 191 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Rogier van der Weyden:

Deposition, c. 1435, oil on panel, 7' 2 ½" x 8' 7" (220 x 262 cm),
Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Rembrandt van Rijn:

The Jewish Bride, 1668–69, oil on canvas, 4' x 5' 5 ½"
(121.5 x 166.5 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Suggested Reading

Acton, *Learning to Look at Paintings*.

Janson, *History of Art*.

Kleiner and Mamiya, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*.

Questions to Consider

1. Differentiate between the terms *interpretation* and *style* as used in this lecture.
2. Think of a work of art that has spoken to you in some way and try to explain its attraction.

Carolingian and Ottonian Art

Lecture 2

I have chosen to begin the survey historically with Charlemagne and his coronation as Emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome, on Christmas Day, 800. The reason for this choice is that the event is a convenient marker for the beginning of a centralized political power for the first time in Europe since the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the West in 476.

Before we begin our survey of European art with the Carolingian dynasty, we take a brief backward glance to the illuminations produced by Irish monks in the early Middle Ages. Here, we see the animal style of the nomadic German tribes combined with Celtic elements to make a statement about the earlier pagan world and its domestication by Christianity and the divine order. During the period following the Roman Empire, the only unifying force on the European continent was the Roman Catholic Church, whose spread was made possible by the astonishing Roman expansion across the continent and into Britain.

But Christian missionaries went even further than the Romans. Ireland, unlike England, had never been part of the Roman Empire, and the missionaries who reached Ireland in the early Middle Ages found a religiously responsive population, but one that had no interest in Roman or Mediterranean culture. When some Irish Christians sought to deepen their faith, they congregated in hermit groups, away from the cities, and spread throughout Ireland and Britain. These hermit communities developed into the first monasteries.

In these Irish monasteries, countless copies of the Bible and other Christian texts were produced. The illuminations of these texts—their painted decorations—combined the animal style of the nomadic German tribes with Celtic elements and used elaborate ornamental designs rather than pictures of biblical events. Our example shows a *carpet page*, with a design in the shape of a cross, from *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (c. 700 A.D.) The embellishment of this book page is staggeringly intricate. Compressed with manic intensity into the smallest spaces, the design consists, in part, of stylized, fantastic

animals—snakelike bodies with birdlike beaks—and, in part, of circles and sweeping, interlaced curves.

The Romans themselves, beginning notably with the emperor Constantine, were sometimes converts to Christianity, and this strengthened the Catholic presence in the Germanic and Gallic lands. Indeed, Constantine spent much time at Trier, on the Mosel, a city founded by the emperor Augustus. A short distance north of Trier, the city of Aachen became the capital of Charlemagne. During Charlemagne's reign, Aachen witnessed a cultural revival in arts and letters. What survives of the visual artistic activity, however, is almost entirely in the minor or decorative arts, such as gold and other metalwork, ivory carving, and illuminated manuscripts. Murals, relief sculpture, and mosaics existed, according to documents, but most have vanished.

The palace built by Charlemagne at Aachen has also vanished, but his palace chapel stands as a testament to his interest in the art of the Italian peninsula. Charlemagne had first visited Rome in Easter week of 774, where he consolidated his ties to the Roman Church by confirming its Italian territorial possessions, which would become the basis of the Papal States. He also made three military forays over the Alps for campaigns in northern Italy. On one or more of these Italian trips, Charlemagne visited Ravenna, on the Adriatic coast, once an important Roman port. The capital of the western Roman Empire had been moved to Ravenna in 402 because the city offered protection from the barbarian invasions. Then, in the mid-6th century, the Byzantine emperors had established their court there, and the first of these emperors, Justinian, had built the Church of San Vitale (547, Ravenna).

The polygonal S. Vitale is quite massive outside, but inside it is distinguished by much light, reflected from some of the finest and most important mosaics of the early Byzantine period. Charlemagne was obviously deeply impressed by the architecture, and of course, he was keenly aware of its symbolic significance as imperial architecture. As we see in the Palatine Chapel (805, Aachen), Charlemagne and his artistic advisors imported the ground plan, as well as the actual columns and bronze doors, from Rome and Ravenna, but they showed no apparent interest in the mosaic decoration. In fact, the interior has a heaviness quite different from the insubstantial atmosphere of the reflected light and splendid color of Byzantine art, as

seen at San Vitale. Its massive, muscular appearance is more reminiscent of Roman architecture.

Another striking aspect of the Carolingian artistic revival is its persuasive recollection of the Classical style of Greco-Roman antiquity, to be seen, for example, in its illuminated manuscripts. The depiction we see of *St. Matthew*, from the *Gospel Book of Charlemagne* (c. 800–810), was said to have been found in the tomb of Charlemagne in the palace chapel. The significance of the painting lies in the forceful three-dimensionality of the body, as seen through the robes. The pose is derived from a Classical prototype of an

The polygonal S. Vitale is quite massive outside, but inside it is distinguished by much light, reflected from some of the finest and most important mosaics of the early Byzantine period.

author portrait—a painting in which a famous writer was shown seated with an open book, reading or writing—but what impresses us is the degree to which the Carolingian artist understood how to recreate a believable, solid human body.

The artist does not make any attempt to suggest space beyond that occupied by the body—the background is basically flat bands of color. Even more interesting is another illuminated

St. Matthew, this one from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims* (c. 816–835), commonly called the *Épernay Gospel*. This painting represents the mature and distinctive Carolingian figure style, one that is suffused with linear movement and physical intensity. It has an expressive urgency that often recurs through later centuries of northern European art. Note also the angel who served as *St. Matthew*'s inspiration in the top right corner.

In 813, Charlemagne selected one of his sons, Louis the Pious, to share his power and to succeed him. Charlemagne died on January 28, 814, and when Louis died in 840, a war of succession broke out among his sons. The events of the next century—including raids by the Vikings—culminated in the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, headed first by the German king Otto I (Otto the Great), whose coronation as emperor in 962 established a political entity that endured in various permutations until the early 19th

century. Crowned at Aachen, Otto and his successors of the same name thus succeeded Charlemagne in place as in power. These kings gave their name to the Ottonian period of the 10th and early 11th centuries.

Artistically, the Ottonian period further developed the expressive style of the Carolingians, often in a narrative direction. Perhaps the chief monument of this style is the extraordinary set of bronze doors from the monastery at Hildesheim in northern Germany. The bronze doors (completed in 1015, Abbey Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim) are among the most memorable of the many sets of bronze doors throughout the history of art, and they represent a remarkable technical achievement—they were cast in a single piece, for the first time since antiquity. The single panel representing *Adam and Eve Reproached by the Lord* demonstrates the anonymous artist's achievement. Here are Adam and Eve, after the Fall, accused, found guilty, and about to be cast out of paradise. Note the angle of God's body, the gathering of force, the hand pointing like a cobra; the great, empty gap; and Adam, shrinking, recoiling, shamed, but pointing past the rather barren tree to Eve, shifting the blame. She bends over still more, covers herself, and points down at the demon at her feet, who, unyielding, flames up at her.

Moving to the end of the 11th century, away from the Ottonian Empire, we encounter one of the masterpieces of narrative art, an enthralling embroidered history of the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066. Though called the Bayeux Tapestry, it is, in fact, an embroidery, nearly 225 feet long by about 20 inches high, that reads like a continuous cartoon strip. But it is narrative art of the highest order, proof that seemingly naïve art is often the subtlest, as well as the clearest, the most moving, the most delightful, and the most memorable art. The tapestry was begun just after the Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066) and completed in time for exhibition in the nave of Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy when it was consecrated in 1077. It was subsequently stretched around the nave on feast days and special occasions.

The tapestry was probably commissioned by Bishop Odon, half-brother of William, duke of Normandy, who accompanied him during the conquest and who rebuilt the Cathedral of Bayeux. It is a statement about the need to respect an oath. Harold the Saxon had sworn an oath over sacred relics

in the old Cathedral of Bayeux, recognizing William's right to the English throne after the death of King Edward. He broke his oath, taking the crown for himself. The invasion followed. The first scene we see is opposite Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, with horses sinking into quicksand. After Harold breaks his oath to William, something ominous occurs. Astrologers announce the appearance of a comet, an evil omen for Harold. Finally, we see horses upended and killed and bodies strewn in the lower margin of the tapestry. The Bayeux Tapestry is one of the greatest pictorial narratives in Western European art, not because of its technical sophistication, but because—like the Hildesheim door relief—in it, all the artist's energy is focused on the most direct representation of a dramatic historical event. ■

Works Discussed

Adam and Eve Reproached by the Lord, completed in 1015, bronze, 23 x 43" (58.3 x 109.3 cm), detail from the Bronze Doors, Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim, Germany.

Bronze Doors, completed in 1015, bronze, 16' H (4.8 m H), Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim, Germany.

A Carpet Page, from *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, c. 700, tempera on vellum, 13 ½ x 9 ¼" (34.3 x 23.5 cm), The British Museum, London, Great Britain.

Church of S. Vitale, 547, Ravenna, Italy.

Details from the Bayeux Tapestry, 1080, wool embroidery on linen, 20" x 225' (0.51 x 68.6 m), Centre Guillaume le Conquerant, Bayeux, France.

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (The Épernay Gospel)*, c. 816–835, ink and colors on vellum, 10 ¼ x 8 ¾" (26 x 22.2 cm), Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay, France.

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Charlemagne*, c. 800–810, ink and colors on vellum, 13 x 10" (33 x 25.4 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

The Palatine Chapel, 805, Aachen, Germany.

Suggested Reading

John Beckwith, *Early Medieval Art: Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque*.

Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art*.

Questions to Consider

1. What function did narrative art serve, whether religious or secular, in the early Middle Ages?
2. What similarities and differences can you identify in the architecture and decoration of the Byzantine Church of S. Vitale and Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel?

Romanesque Sculpture and Architecture

Lecture 3

In our last lecture, we looked at the Bayeux Tapestry, which commemorated the invasion of England by William the Conqueror. We'll begin this lecture with another monument that William the Conqueror was responsible for and, in part, a commemoration of the same victory.

Of the two abbeys William built, one is the church of St. Etienne, which is located in Caen, France, about 25 miles from Bayeux in Normandy. Construction of this church began in 1067, and the vaulting in the nave dates to 1115–1120. This structure was built by William the Conqueror as an abbey church and was known as the “abbey of the men”—a place for monks.

The Normans who conquered England introduced a well-developed architectural style that is referred to as *Norman* in England, but we call this style *Romanesque*. The building techniques were derived from ancient Roman architecture, especially the use of the *arch*, an invention that allowed Roman architects to span wide spaces with fewer supports and that instilled a fluid feeling in the space. When the arch was used to construct domes, the spatial expansion was dramatic, allowing more light into the structure.

Looking at St. Etienne, we see the nave from the front to the apse. We see the nave arcade (a series of arches on both sides of the nave), the gallery, clerestory windows, and the vaulting system with weight-bearing ribs. Most of the weight of the structure is carried by the arches. As demonstrated by St. Etienne's façade, Romanesque architecture is typically massive, with broad expanses of exterior wall and heavy supports to buttress them. These buttressing elements are placed directly against the wall to be supported, jut out prominently, and are called *salient buttresses*. St. Etienne's enormous, symmetrical towers are another remarkable aspect of this church. Historically, towers express power, as do the ones that guard the door at St. Etienne.

The Romanesque style arose at a turning point in Western political history, when empires that Charlemagne and Otto the Great had forged were gradually being replaced with an emerging sense of Europe *as* Europe. Although the Roman Catholic Church remained powerful, another rising force was *feudalism*, an economic system that allowed peasants to use land owned by lords in exchange for service, often military. The lords owed allegiance to the kings, but their own growing power gave them increasing independence. The Romanesque style, with distinct local variations, is found throughout Europe from about the middle of the 11th century until about the last third of the 12th century. Although this style is derived from architectural innovations of the period, the term also applies to sculpture, painting, and other art forms.

St. Trophime is located in Arles in southern France and was built in 1180. Because the Romans were once prominent in this region, there were many Roman ruins left for medieval architects and artists to emulate. St. Trophime's facade contains obvious Roman elements, such as arches and high-relief figure sculptures similar to those on Roman tombs. The appearance of monumental stone sculpture, usually incorporated into architecture, distinguishes Romanesque art. (There was no precedent for this in Carolingian or Ottonian art.)

We see a *Map of the Pilgrimage Roads* that dates back to 1648 and shows pilgrimage routes followed by Christians converging on holy places. Pilgrimage routes were linked to the Crusades, wars waged by European armies to capture the Holy Land from the Muslims. The Crusades inevitably resulted in territorial conquests and affected trade and economics. Jerusalem was retaken in the First Crusade (1099) and became a pilgrimage goal. To reach Jerusalem, northern Europeans traveled to the Mediterranean, usually by land routes, then sailed for the Near East. Rome was another pilgrimage goal, to which pilgrims generally traveled by land, crossing the Alps.

The most important pilgrimage site in the 11th and 12th centuries was Santiago da Compostela in the northwest corner of Spain. This spot was dedicated to St. James the Greater (or Major), the apostle whose martyred body, according to legend, came to Spain in a boat without sails, landing at Compostela, where he was buried and where a cathedral was subsequently

constructed. Another legend recounted James's miraculous appearance in the early 10th century as a warrior who repelled the Moorish army's advance through Spain.

There were four major pilgrimage roads to Santiago: one began in Paris, another in Burgundy at Vézelay, another in southwestern France at Le Puy, and yet another in Arles near Provence. Because the pilgrims required food, lodging, and care on their long journeys, numerous churches and monasteries were built along the way. These establishments provided physical and spiritual necessities—for a price—and local towns benefited from the tourism.

The cult of relics—bones of saints and other personal effects—grew during this period because relics gave churches special attractions. This brief background of pilgrimage routes helps explain the presence of Romanesque-period churches scattered throughout France.

The city of Autun, in eastern France, boasts one of the most important Romanesque churches, Saint-Lazare (St. Lazarus). This church contains many relief sculptures, all carved from 1120–1130. They include the following:

- The tympanum (lunette above the lintel of the doorway) contains the *Last Judgment*. This sculpture is signed “Gislebertus”—one of the rare artists of the Middle Ages who is known to us by name.
- *Hanging of Judas*, in the nave, depicts Judas being assisted in his suicide by two demons. These figures have many expressive features.
- *Annunciation to the Magi* depicts an angel appearing to the magi, telling them to follow the star.
- *Temptation of Eve* is a fragment of a relief sculpture. It was formerly on the lintel of a flanking door, between Adam and the tempter, and it is now in the Musée Rolin in Autun.

Conques is a town on a pilgrimage route between Le Puy and Moissac, on the way to Toulouse. The town contains a church dedicated to a child saint, a small girl martyred at an unknown date. Her name is St. Foi—*foi* means “faith”—and she was much venerated in England and France, although her legend is possibly unhistorical. This church contains the *Last Judgment* (c. 1130, tympanum, portal), depicting Christ with the blessed and damned. Christ is in the middle with the blessed to his right and the damned to his left. St. Foi is depicted in the corner as a child saint who is blessed by the hand of God.

Several figures are shown, including one who may be St. Peter, welcoming the righteous into heaven, as well as Abraham, the patriarch. A knight, representing pride, is depicted on the side of the damned. We see two doors; through one, the blessed are welcomed into heaven, while the damned are pushed into hell through the other.

In Souillac, not far from Conques, another church offers one of the most dramatic Romanesque sculptures—*Isaiah*—in the church of St. Mary. This sculpture was originally on the front of the church but was moved inside from the jamb of the old west portal. It dates from the first third of the 12th century. The prophet Isaiah, who was believed to have prophesied the birth of Christ, holds a vertical scroll that once had the words of his prophecy painted on it. The drama here is in the twisting posture of Isaiah, his left leg swung around in front of the right and his head turning back to gaze at us. Note his long, agitated beard and the counter-curves of the broad edges of his sweeping robe. In this carving, some have called him the “dancing prophet.”

Less than 100 miles from Paris, the abbey at Vézelay was founded in Carolingian times but gained its first distinction during the 11th century when the supposed relics of St. Mary Magdalen were brought there, making it an important pilgrimage site. We will look at the nave in Vézelay, Ste. Madeleine

Although the Roman Catholic Church remained powerful, another rising force was *feudalism*, an economic system that allowed peasants to use land owned by lords in exchange for service, often military.

(c. 1120–1132). The abbey’s greatest historical fame is connected to the Crusades. It was here, in 1146, that the great Cistercian abbot St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached the sermon that launched the Second Crusade.

Although we are looking at the nave as the example, it is important to note that the throng of barons and clergy from all over Europe who gathered at Vézelay was so enormous that the event took place outside the walls of the city. Vézelay remained one of the major starting points of the pilgrimage roads. In 1190, Philip Augustus, king of France, and Richard the Lion-Hearted met here to set aside their differences and unite on the Third Crusade, although the Second Crusade was a disaster.

In 1120, on the eve of the July pilgrimage, the church at Vézelay was destroyed in a tragic fire that claimed 1,000 lives. This tragedy reminds us of the great numbers of pilgrims who set out from there and other starting points on the pilgrimage roads. The rebuilding of the church began immediately, and the nave was complete by 1132. In this handsome nave are famous *historiated capitals*—capitals with sculpted scenes.

Our example shows *Noah Building the Ark* (c. 1120–1132, Vézelay, Ste. Madeleine, nave, capital). The most famous sculptural monument at Vézelay is in the narthex, which was built to a larger scale to accommodate crowds entering the church. The portal of the *Mission of the Apostles* (c. 1120–1132, Vézelay, narthex) is our next example. In this façade within a façade, a door opens into the nave, and above that door is the tympanum with the *Mission of the Apostles*. Many of the principal Romanesque tympanum sculptures depict the Last Judgment. The highly original subject of the Vézelay tympanum, *Mission of the Apostles*, reflects the church’s fame as a starting point for pilgrims. Vézelay is one of the finest monuments in the Romanesque style, and it leaves us on the threshold of the next moment in medieval culture: the Gothic. ■

Works Discussed

Last Judgment, c. 1130, from the tympanum of the portal, Church of St. Foy, Conques, France.

Prophet Isaiah, c. 12th century, Church of St. Mary, Souillac, France.

Map of the Pilgrimage Roads, c. 1648.

Mission of the Apostles, c. 1120–32, Church of Ste. Madeleine, Vézelay, France.

Noah Building the Ark, c. 1120–32, a capital in the nave from the Church of Ste. Madeleine, Vézelay, France.

St. Etienne, begun c. 1067, Caen, France.

Ste. Madeleine, c. 1120–32, Vézelay, France.

St. Trophime, c. 1180, Arles, France.

Gislebertus:

Hanging of Judas and Annunciation to the Magi, c. 1120–30, capitals in the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, France.

Last Judgment, c. 1120–30, from the tympanum of the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, France.

Temptation of Eve, c. 1120–30, fragment relief sculpture from the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Musée Rolin, Autun, France.

Suggested Reading

Laule, Geese, and Toman, eds., *Romanesque Art*.

Petzold, *Romanesque Art (Perspectives)*.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the primary cultural, political, and historical influences on Romanesque art forms?
2. Identify the various parts of Romanesque churches and describe their primary functions.

Gothic Art in France

Lecture 4

The term Gothic is so well-known, and so often used as a catch-all category for the later Middle Ages and, especially, for the greatly admired cathedrals of the period, that it is easy to forget that it was coined as a slur by Italian writers of the Renaissance.

To them, the foreign style was in such conflict with the Humanistic principles of their art in the 15th and 16th centuries that it seemed like another invasion of the *Goths*, the barbarians who had raided Italy and precipitated the fall of the Roman Empire.

Architecturally, the Gothic style evolved from the Romanesque, and one of the key transitional monuments is the famous cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. *Notre Dame* means “Our Lady,” that is, the Virgin Mary. Our example shows the Notre-Dame of Paris façade 1163–1250.) This ensemble view is rare among such renowned buildings because they are often hemmed in by later urban environments. Because the cathedral sits on an island, Notre-Dame offers this sweeping view from the south bank of the Seine.

The Notre-Dame façade shows the symmetrical harmony of the square towers and reminds us of the façade of St. Etienne at Caen. The St. Etienne façade is mostly solid masonry with relatively small doors and windows punched through it, whereas the Notre-Dame façade has been opened up by three deep portals, a huge rose window, carved lace-like gables above the portals, and a gallery of sculptured figures below the rose window. The remarkable opening of the architectural elements gives the façade a comparatively lighter appearance. Another feature of the Notre-Dame façade is its clarity and lucidity in architectural parts, symmetry, and proportion.

We now turn to the nave of Notre-Dame. It would not have been possible to penetrate so much of the façade if the front and the lateral walls of the cathedral had to support all the weight of the stone vaults. The weight of the vaulting of a great church is immense and pushes the walls outward. Thus, in Romanesque churches, walls needed additional thickening—salient

buttresses—to contain the pressures. Apparent from a view of the nave, much of the upper wall, the third or *clerestory* level, has been replaced by enormous glass windows that allow light into the sanctuary. The weight of the vaults has been countered by the stone ribs that carry most of the weight and pass some of it down to the piers between the windows and the floor. The webbing between the ribs is essentially non-supporting and constructed of lighter materials.

The greatest remaining concentration of weight is at the convergence of the ribs at the tops of the piers, and much of that is carried away from the wall by the *flying buttresses*—one of the most famous architectural inventions of the Gothic era. As we see, the vaults are divided into six parts. As Gothic architecture advanced, only four parts were used instead of six. The arches also have changed, both in the nave arcade and in the vaults, taking on a pointed rather than a round profile. This directs the thrust of the weight vertically downward and decreases the pressure at the haunch of the arch (the most vulnerable spot of maximum outward thrust). Moreover, the pointed arch increases the height of the arch and the whole church, emphasizing the soaring quality associated with the Gothic style.

On Notre-Dame’s exterior, near the apse, the flying buttresses consist of a lower buttress and a higher strut. This construction means that the thickness of the walls can be reduced, because the weight is being carried out and down on great piers that are some distance from the exterior of the church, not just down through the wall. This allows the walls to be opened up with windows that let in more light.

Notre-Dame’s vast interior is a useful introduction to describe another great church, the Royal Abbey Church of St. Denis, also in Paris. About 20 to 25 years before construction began on Notre-Dame, the Abbot Suger of St. Denis wrote extensive descriptions of the rebuilding of the narthex and choir of his church in a new style. In re-consecrating his church, Suger wrote verses that manifested his pleasure in the light that now filled the building: “The church shines with its middle part brightened./ ... /And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light.” Suger also gave a detailed description of what it was like when the church was filled to capacity,

particularly on feast days. Excessive crowding on holy days was one reason for his determination to enlarge the narthex.

We now look at Chartres Cathedral (c. 1134–1194), as seen across the rooftops of the city. About 100 miles southwest of Paris, Chartres is the first masterpiece in the full Gothic style. This is due in part to disaster—the destruction of the recently rebuilt cathedral in 1194. The archbishop of Chartres, a friend of Abbot Suger, had undertaken a rebuilding in the spirit of St. Denis around 1145, but everything except the west façade and its sculpture was destroyed by fire. Rebuilding began immediately and was finished by 1220, a remarkably short time in this era.

Viewing the Chartres nave, we see a taller, narrower nave arcade, a much reduced gallery level with a triple arcade (*triforium*), and the clerestory with still more glass. This nave has superior unity. Photos cannot do justice to the quality of light in the church. Unlike other great cathedrals, Chartres retains nearly all of its original 13th-century stained glass, and the effect is a magical display of colored light. The famous window *Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere* (*Our Lady of the Beautiful Wall of Glass*) in the ambulatory near the south transept shows this effect. Note the blues, grays, and reds of the Madonna and Christ Child. Henry Adams wrote in his book *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, “a strange, almost uncanny feeling seems to haunt this window. ... The effect of the whole ... is deep and sad.”

Next, we will consider the west façade of Chartres. The lower part of this façade survived the fire of 1194, and its two towers, begun before 1145, were completed at different dates and in different styles. Chartres’ earliest sculpture decorates the portals of the west façade. An example of this sculpture is the doorjamb figures from the central door (c. 1150). The jamb statues of all three west doors represent biblical prophets, kings, and queens and emphasize the harmony of secular and sacred rule by suggesting that the

Curvilinear forms, S-shaped or flame-shaped, entered the decorative repertory of architecture, both sacred and secular. From the flame shape, the word *flamboyant* was derived.

kings and queens of France were spiritual heirs of the biblical rulers. This idea haunted many cathedrals in France during the French Revolution, when biblical king sculptures were mutilated and destroyed because they were associated with political rulers. St. Denis and Notre-Dame of Paris especially suffered important losses.

These figures have charm as well as dignity, and though they are attached to the columns and echo the columnar shape, they are essentially conceived as sculpture in the round. The style of the 13th-century sculpture at Chartres is early High Gothic, representing a suave and more convincing figure type.

The figures from the left jamb of the central portal of the north transept (after 1194) are Old Testament precursors of Christ. For example, the center figure, Moses, holds the tablets of the Ten Commandments and a column with the brazen serpent (which was later interpreted as a symbol of the Crucifixion). He stands on the golden calf idol that the Israelites were worshiping when Moses came down from the mountain. His body turns slightly on its axis, and his clothes fall naturally with a certain flexibility. This is much different than the columnar stiffness and vertical drapery folds of the figures on the west front.

To the left of Moses is a portrayal of Abraham and Isaac when Abraham is about to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. Isaac's hands are bound; Abraham's left hand cradles his son's head while his right hand holds the knife. The most unusual aspect, in the context of Gothic portal sculpture, is that Abraham looks up abruptly, with a surprising degree of movement. He is looking at the angel who has arrived to stop the sacrifice, and beneath the feet of Abraham and Isaac is the ram that becomes the alternative sacrifice.

Next, we will consider two architectural monuments in the city of Rouen in Normandy on the Seine. The first monument is the Rouen Cathedral (Notre Dame), recorded in a 19th-century image by a little-known artist. This is an interesting example because the artist was able to free himself from the confines of the square in front of the cathedral and show the church much more fully than a photograph could.

Only the three lowest tiers of the northwest (left) tower—the St. Romain Tower—remain of the Romanesque church consecrated in 1063; the rest burned in a fire in 1200. From that point, four centuries of Gothic style can be seen on this same spot, dominated by the so-called *Flamboyant* style of the 16th century. The soaring steeple is a 19th-century ironwork creation—at 151 meters (500 feet) it is the tallest spire in France. The façade of Rouen Cathedral became the subject of some 30 paintings by Claude Monet in the 1890s. One example is *Rouen Cathedral* painted in 1894. Note how Monet captured the many colors and the reflections of white light in his painting.

In the very late Gothic period in northern Europe, which corresponded with the Renaissance in Italy, architecture developed in a striking way. Curvilinear forms, S-shaped or flame-shaped, entered the decorative repertory of architecture, both sacred and secular. From the flame shape, the word *flamboyant* was derived. *Flamma* is Latin for “flame,” and *flambeau* is French for “torch.” The word *flamboyant* is purely descriptive and carries none of the negative connotations that it may have in English. It was perhaps predictable that this expressive, curvilinear style should develop; the ever-increasing piercing of the non-supporting decorative stone work must have tempted the designers and the carvers to relax, extend, and elaborate their forms, as the sculptors of saints and Last Judgments were doing.

St. Maclou (c. 1500–1514) is a church near Rouen Cathedral and a famous example of the French Flamboyant style. Sadly, it was bombarded and nearly destroyed in the battle for the bridges over the Seine during World War II. Note the remarkable virtuosity of the carving of the gables above the portals on the church’s façade—they are the visual definition of the Flamboyant Gothic. ■

Works Discussed

Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris, 1163–1250, Paris, France.

Chartres Cathedral, 1134–94, Chartres, France.

Church of St. Maclou, c. 1500–14, Rouen, France.

Jamb figures from central door, c. 1150, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Moses and Abraham and Isaac from the left jamb of the central portal of the North Transept, after 1194, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere (Our Lady of the Beautiful Wall of Glass), 1134–94, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Claude Monet:

Rouen Cathedral, 1894, oil on canvas, 42 x 28 ¾" (107 x 73 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Rouargue:

Rouen Cathedral (Notre Dame), 19th century, engraving, Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Kergall and Minne-Seve, *Romanesque and Gothic France*.

Stoddard, *Art and Architecture in Medieval France*.

Questions to Consider

1. What architectural inventions does the Gothic style employ that give it a distinctive appearance?
2. How can you account for different styles or lack of symmetry in a single structure?

Gothic Art in Germany and Italy

Lecture 5

Thus far, we have looked at medieval art—Romanesque and Gothic—within the borders of modern France. But these stylistic or cultural labels transcend borders, especially since we are not speaking of modern nation-states.

The city of Strasbourg, for example, on the Rhine River, has changed political complexion more than once, and it would be foolish to say that Strasbourg was not French in the Middle Ages. Our example shows a famous sculpture, *Death of the Virgin* (c. 1230, Strasbourg Cathedral, south transept door, tympanum). This small narrative sculpture has a characteristic expressivity that is not explained simply by its date in the Gothic period. The heads of the apostles, who are present at Mary's death, are compressed awkwardly against the arch. The central drama is richly enacted by four full-length and two half-length figures: Mary, being laid on a bed by two apostles; Christ and St. John standing behind the bed; and most remarkably, St. Mary Magdalen, kneeling in front of it.

The robes of these figures are modeled in a Classical manner reminiscent of the flowing robes of Moses and Abraham on the north portal of Chartres, but they are infused with more humanity and tenderness, because their greater *motion* is translated into *emotion*. The sculptor makes the demands of the semi-circular composition work for him by allowing it to bend figures in toward the emotional core of the scene. Note that Christ, miraculously present, holds a female figure like a small statue in his left hand. This is the soul of his mother, which he receives. The Magdalene, who nearly always expresses deep emotion in artistic representations, is believable in her grief, which we see in her face and feel in her coiled posture.

The next work is in the Germanic spirit—a creation of a northern psychological trait that values the release of extreme emotion and permits it to govern the representation of the human body. *Pietà* (c. 1300) shows the emaciated and broken body of Christ supported by his anguished mother. The compactness of this group was partly dictated by the limitations of the wood, but it is

precisely this compression of form, contrasted with disproportionately large, expressive heads, that engages our emotions. Curiously, this scene has no scriptural foundation. It was invented, probably in northern Europe, as a kind of omega to the alpha of the innumerable images of the Madonna tenderly holding the Christ Child.

South of the Alps, in Italy, the Romanesque and Gothic styles also found a home before a rejection of these styles developed during the Renaissance. One of the most beautiful and monumental architectural complexes in Italy is in Pisa, then a rich port city on the Arno near the Tyrrhenian Sea. Our next example shows an aerial view of the baptistery, cathedral, *campanile*, and *campo santo* at Pisa. All these buildings were constructed from 1053–1272. The tiers of white stone arcades and colonnades on the principal buildings are breathtaking. The baptistery in the foreground suggests a papal tiara. The *campo santo*, or “holy field,” just beyond the baptistery, is the burial ground, a large, open, cloister-like space surrounded by covered galleries that are decorated with tombs and wall paintings. The whole of this complex is known by the evocative name Campo dei Miracoli, meaning “Field of Miracles.”

Inside the baptistery is a magnificent pulpit (c. 1260, Baptistery, Pisa, pulpit) carved by Nicola Pisano (1220–1278). Nicola consciously reinvented Roman Classical forms for use in his religious sculpture. There are five rectangular marble panels with relief carvings on the pulpit. One of the most striking of the marble panels is the *Adoration of the Magi*. All the figures in this carving impress us with their dignity and physical weight. The drapery owes much to Roman marble carving, except that its sharp angularity is similar to Italo-Byzantine stylization. Note the horses of the magi, the gifts in containers, and the Christ Child’s acceptance of the gift.

Nicola borrowed the Madonna’s pose from a Roman sarcophagus then, and still, in the Campo Santo at Pisa (a museum of Roman sarcophagi). Nicola used a sarcophagus with the legend of Hippolytus for inspiration here. We see the sarcophagus (2nd c. A.D.) depicting the myth of Hippolytus, whose death was caused by Poseidon. The theme was popular on Roman sarcophagi.

The female figure seated at the left front of this sarcophagus is Phaedra; Theseus is the older man near her; and Hippolytus is in the center. The right half of the relief shows the horse of Hippolytus bolting when the sea monster sent by Poseidon appears. Nicola reversed the seated Phaedra when he adopted the pose for his Madonna, perhaps to disguise the borrowing but just as likely for compositional reasons. He also borrowed the triangular gable or cornice above her head.

At the six corners of the pulpit, above the capitals of the supporting columns, are small statues of the Virtues, as well as John the Baptist. Our example shows the figure titled *Fortitude*, one of the so-called Cardinal Virtues, symbolizing strength, courage, and endurance. Nicola based him on the popular mythological hero Hercules. The nudity is perhaps surprising at such an early, pre-Renaissance date but is more common than one might think. This model was probably also on a sarcophagus.

Next, we consider Nicola's *The Nativity* from the Pisa pulpit. This also is reminiscent of a Roman sarcophagus relief. The majesty of the reclining Mary, presiding like a queen, is unforgettable. Note that here the Nativity is combined with the Annunciation. To the left of the reclining Mary is the annunciate Mary and the Angel Gabriel. The reclining Mary overlaps herself in the Annunciation. In the foreground, the midwives wash the child while Joseph watches; behind the birth bed, the infant is already laid in the manger, while the shepherds receive news of his birth. These multiple simultaneous narratives are a standard pictorial device in medieval art and continue well into the Renaissance.

Nicola Pisano had a son, Giovanni (1248–after 1314), who shared his genius in sculpture (both were architects, as well, for example, working on the Pisa baptistery). Both belong to the Gothic era, but Nicola's Classicism is in striking contrast to his son's art.

One of the most beautiful and monumental architectural complexes in Italy is in Pisa, then a rich port city on the Arno near the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Giovanni also worked in Pisa, creating a great pulpit for the cathedral. Consider *The Nativity* (c. 1302–1311). The scene still contains multiple simultaneous narratives, but there are many differences between Giovanni's design and Nicola's. Although the Virgin is hieratically large, her dominance is not as striking, and our eyes are drawn to her because of the sloping, eye-shaped oval that contains her body. The lower part of that shape is marked by the curve of her bedclothes; then the eye is drawn upward at the left by the curve of her back and head and by the beginning of a grotto-like arc that envelopes Mary, the ox and ass, and her child, to whom she pays tender attention. The overall design is dynamic, with a swaying, swinging line; bowing, stooping, and bending figures; and a scheme of figures radiating outward from a point in the lower center of the panel.

Both Pisanos also worked in Siena, in the striking black-and-white marble cathedral shown as our next example. This cathedral (mid-12th to late 14th c., Siena) has been much altered inside. Long removed from its place of honor as the high altarpiece is one of the greatest medieval Italian painted altars, the *Maestà*. The *Maestà* (“*Majesty*”) (c. 1308–1311, front side, with enthroned Madonna) is by Duccio di Buoninsegna. We will return to this masterpiece later in our lectures.

We will look at three great paintings of a single subject, the Madonna and Child enthroned with angels, by different artists during a brief period of 25 to 30 years. The artists are Cimabue, Duccio, and Giotto. The monumental paintings are today all in a single museum, the Uffizi in Florence.

First, we will look at Cimabue's *Madonna Enthroned (Santa Trinità)* (c. 1280–1290). Cimabue's monumental Madonna is the stylistic heir to the ongoing Byzantine tradition—the style of the Eastern Catholic Church, centered in Constantinople. In the poses, symmetry, and decorative details, it speaks the language of what contemporary Florentines called the “Greek manner.” No panel painting in the East had dared such a huge size and rarely had they achieved such formal simplicity and directness, resulting in a more personal connection with the viewer.

Italo-Byzantine art, this Eastern-flavored style, was dominant in Italian painting in the 12th century and most of the 13th century. Cimabue moves away from this style even while he incorporates elements of it. Even the pointed gable of the panel is a break with Byzantine art. Note the architectural throne, especially at the bottom, where the concavity of the base houses prophets. The throne emphasizes an unexpected solidity. This painting is called the *Santa Trinitá Madonna* because it comes from that Florentine church.

Next, we will consider Duccio's *Madonna Enthroned* (c. 1285). Seeing it in reproduction, most people would guess that Duccio's *Madonna* was smaller than Cimabue's, but in fact, it is larger. The difference in style might lead to such a mistake, because Duccio is a far more lyrical painter, and that lyricism is expressed through smaller figures, more linear curves, fewer massive shapes, and gentle expressions.

Comparatively, we see that Cimabue's eight standing angels are densely packed in a cascade of wings, while Duccio's four angels seem to float. Cimabue's angels look directly at us, and Duccio's look at the Madonna and Christ Child. Further, Duccio's throne is placed on a slight diagonal, while Cimabue's is insistently frontal. In art historical literature, Duccio's painting is often mistakenly called the "*Rucellai Madonna*," but that is only because it was later moved into the chapel of the Rucellai family in Sta. Maria Novella in Florence—the family did not commission the painting.

The third painting is Giotto's *Madonna Enthroned (Ognissanti Madonna)* (c. 1310). From the church of the Ognissanti (All Saints) in Florence, this great painting of the Madonna and Christ Child represents the greatest stylistic advance but is the smallest of the three. By "advance," I do not mean improved or better; I refer only to the technical advances made by Giotto that are found here. First, the architecture of the throne wraps around, enclosing the Madonna and Christ Child. Second, her head is held erect and is, therefore, less stylized; we feel that she is looking at us with a shared humanity. Third, the angels and saints that flank the throne, while crowded, overlap with greater naturalness and more variety. The two angels who kneel beside the front steps of the throne possess a noble bearing that is absent in the otherwise superb angels of Cimabue and Duccio. ■

Works Discussed

Baptistery, Cathedral, Campanile, and Camposanto, 1053–1272, Pisa, Italy.

Death of the Virgin, c. 1230, tympanum of the south transept door, Strasbourg Cathedral, Strasbourg, France.

Roettgen Pietà, c. 1300, wood, 34 ½" H (87.5 cm H), Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany.

Roman sarcophagus showing *The Legend of Hippolytus*, 2nd century A.D., Camposanto, Pisa, Italy.

Cimabue:

Madonna Enthroned (of Sta. Trinità), c. 1280, tempera on panel, 12' 7" x 7' 4" (3.9 x 2.2 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Duccio di Buoninsegna:

Madonna Enthroned, c. 1285, tempera on panel, 14' 9" x 9' 6" (4.5 x 2.9 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Maestà, 1308–11, tempera and gold leaf on panel, originally about 7' x 13' 6", Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Giotto:

Madonna Enthroned (Ognissanti Madonna), c. 1310, tempera on panel, 10' 8" x 6' 8" (3.3 x 2 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Giovanni Pisano:

The Nativity, c. 1302–11, marble, from the Pulpit, Duomo, Pisa, Italy.

Nicola Pisano:

Adoration of the Magi, Fortitude (Allegory of Strength), and *The Nativity*, 1260, marble, 15' H (4.6 m H), details from the Pulpit, Baptistery, Pisa, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Scott, *The Gothic Enterprise*.

White, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250–1400*.

Questions to Consider

1. What influences are revealed in Nicola Pisano's sculpture and architecture?
2. Compare and contrast the three paintings depicting the Madonna and Child enthroned. In your opinion, which is the most realistic? Most impressive? Most emotional?

Giotto and the Arena Chapel—Part I

Lecture 6

Giotto worked on what we know today, almost universally ... [as] the Arena Chapel, beginning about 1303. The Arena Chapel was the palace chapel for the Scrovegni family palace.

Giotto was commissioned by the Scrovegni family to fresco the interior of the family chapel. We will discuss the history of the Arena Chapel, including its location, its patron, and its significance. After describing the technique of fresco, we will study several scenes from Giotto's fresco cycle narrating the life of the Virgin and the life of Christ.

The Scrovegni Chapel (c. 1303), in Padua near Italy's coast, is called the Arena Chapel because it was built along with a palace for the Scrovegni family on the site of an ancient Roman amphitheater. The photo we see is of the chapel, because the palace no longer exists. A simple structure, the chapel's solid, austere exterior gives no hint of the treasure that lies within. One of the supreme achievements of Western European art can be seen on the walls of the interior of the Arena Chapel, a fresco cycle of 38 large narrative scenes and a huge Last Judgment on the entrance wall of the chapel.

The subjects of the wall paintings are the life of the Virgin Mary and Jesus' life, death (passion), and resurrection. All the painting is the work of Giotto di Bondone (1266/67–1337), an artist from Tuscany who had already made a name for himself painting at the shrine of St. Francis at Assisi. Although it is possible that Giotto worked here until 1310 to complete his cycle, some scholars suggest a remarkably short span of about two years, so that the frescoes would have been complete by 1305 when the chapel was consecrated. But whether it took two years or seven years, the Arena Chapel is a work for eternity.

In order to see the whole picture, we must first discuss the history of the chapel, its artist, Giotto, and the medium of *fresco*. Enrico Scrovegni's father, Rinaldo (d. 1289), was a wealthy and notorious citizen of Padua. His wealth and notoriety came from money lending at usurious rates. So

widely despised was Rinaldo that Dante, whose *Divine Comedy* was begun in 1307, made a place for him in the seventh circle of hell, reserved for usurers. Enrico Scrovegni himself was also probably a usurer, and he may have commissioned this chapel to redeem the family reputation and, perhaps, their souls.

Giotto (according to Giorgio Vasari in his seminal Renaissance work on the *Lives of the Artists*) was the pupil of Cimabue, though this account may simply reflect their stylistic kinship. Already in his late 30s when he came to Padua, Giotto had established a considerable reputation, with important works in the fresco cycle at the shrine of St. Francis at Assisi, the saint's birthplace, and an enormous crucifix for the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella, among others. He also had worked in Rome.

Fresco was the principal medium for painting on walls during the Renaissance in Italy and for a long time thereafter. The Italian word *fresco* means “fresh”—frescoes are painted in water-based colors onto a wet plaster wall. If painted on top of dry plaster, the result is called *fresco a secco* (“dry fresco”); if painted on a thin layer of wet plaster laid onto the dry wall, the colors are infused into the plaster, and the result is *buon fresco* (“true fresco”), one of the most permanent painting techniques. Dry fresco is usually reserved for finishing details or used with expensive pigments and is more fragile and subject to damage.

Because the painting of an area of wet plaster must stop when the plaster dries, the medium requires speed and confidence. It is difficult to match one day's work with the preceding day's work, so a discrete area of color—a figure, for instance—is best painted at one time. After the passage of time, the sections may be distinguished easily. In Italian, such a section is called a *giornata*, a “day's work.” When frescoing a wall, the painter must start at the top and work down, or he risks dripping paint on finished work.

With this background in mind, we return to Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel. As previously mentioned, the subjects of the fresco cycle are the life of the Virgin Mary and the life of Jesus. The subjects are ordered in three tiers. The story begins at the altar end (the far end of the chapel as shown in the photo), the top tier on the right-hand (south) wall, with scenes of Mary's

parents, and continues back toward the entrance door. It then moves to the top tier on the left-hand side of the chapel and continues back to the altar wall. The last narrative scene is Mary's Wedding Procession. There are 12 scenes in all.

At the top, the arched altar wall depicts God sending the Angel Gabriel to tell Mary of the divine child she is to bear; the Annunciation flanks the arch, with the Angel Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right. The middle tier of the right-hand wall begins at the altar end with the Nativity, the birth of Jesus, and moves through the stories of his early childhood. Then, jumping across to the north side, the narrative continues, mostly with stories of Jesus' ministry. The bottom tier on the south wall continues with the last events of Jesus' life, from the Last Supper to the Mocking of Christ, and on the opposite wall, with the Procession to Calvary and the Crucifixion, on through

Because the painting of an area of wet plaster must stop when the plaster dries, the medium requires speed and confidence.

the events after Jesus' death, ending at the altar wall once more. The only wall that we have not mentioned or seen so far is the interior of the entrance wall, where Giotto painted the Last Judgment.

For the remainder of this lecture and the next, we will look more closely at some of the most significant of these scenes in narrative order. The first reproduction contains the *Triumphal Arch with the*

Altar, including the *Annunciation*, *Pact of Judas*, and *Visitation*. On the altar, we see Giovanni Pisano's *Madonna and Child* (c. 1305). This sculpture has a French flair, suggesting that Giovanni had seen French Gothic sculpture and highlighting the difference between Giovanni and his father, Nicola, who showed strong Classical tendencies.

Note the following sources for the life of the Virgin and the life of Christ. Keep in mind that artists had other sources besides the Old and New Testaments to consult when elaborating their painted narratives. For the legends of the Virgin Mary and her parents, see the Apocryphal Gospel of St. James the Less and the Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew. The famous *Golden*

Legend of Voragine also supplied information. For most of the rest, see the Gospels of the New Testament.

Also see the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, gathered together in the late 13th century by an unidentified Franciscan monk called the Pseudo-Bonaventura. This text was nearly contemporary with Giotto. The *Meditations* may have been especially appealing to Giotto because it stressed the human, vulnerable aspects of Jesus and contained many colorful anecdotes, written in a direct style.

Let us consider Giotto's remarkable interpretations of these stories. Joachim and Anna, the parents of Mary, had been childless and were quite elderly. Barrenness was considered a sign of God's disfavor, and Joachim had been expelled from the temple for this reason. In his absence, his worried wife received an angelic visitation. The *Annunciation to St. Anne*, the third scene, shows the effective dollhouse architecture, with an open front like a stage setting. The angel can be seen coming through Anne's window. The annunciate angel tells Anne that she will conceive and bear a child to be named Mary.

In the open porch at the left, a young woman holds a distaff, a rod entwined with wool from which thread is spun. This domestic object has a dual significance. In Classical mythology, it is an attribute of one of the Fates and refers to the thread of destiny that is spun out. In pictures of the Annunciation, it is an attribute of the Virgin Mary, thus it has been adopted for the less commonly represented story of the annunciation to Mary's mother.

Joachim's Sacrifice shows the rejected Joachim, accompanied by a shepherd and a small group of animals, making a sacrifice of a sheep to God. The fire still burns, and an angel and the hand of God appear to signal acceptance of Joachim's offering. The landscape, miniature though it is, is expressive in the direct use of diagonals cutting an illusionistic shallow space into the painting. The animals are naturalistic and delightful.

The *Dream of Joachim* depicts Joachim sleeping while two shepherds stand nearby. An angel appears in his dream to tell Joachim of Anne's imminent, unexpected fertility and the conception of Mary. The angel tells him to go to

the Golden Gate in Jerusalem to meet his wife. In the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, Anne and Joachim reunite and embrace, joyful in their knowledge. Note the memorable, mysterious, ominous woman in black near the gate.

Next we look at *The Virgin's Suitors Presenting Their Rods*. According to the *Golden Legend*, when Mary was 14, she left the temple to receive suitors for her marriage. Because she had taken a vow of virginity, the high priest sought guidance. He heard a voice tell him that the men of marriageable age of the House of David should each bring a dry branch and lay it on the altar. The suitor whose branch, or rod, flowered would be chosen as Mary's husband.

The elderly Joseph declined because of age. Here we see that he hangs back at the far left. When none of the branches flowered, the voice told the priest that the only man who had not presented his rod was the man who would become Mary's husband. Notice that all the suitors' heads are aligned in the painting, with only the priest's head slightly elevated.

The Suitors' Prayer before the Rods shows all of the men kneeling. The heads are even more securely aligned, and they have left the strong solid wall of blue sky above them. Consider how this blue—painted with precious azurite in *fresco secco*—must have resonated when it was newly painted. Joseph still hides himself at the left edge of the picture—only his haloed head is seen. Also, note the pyramid of figures and rods and the fact that Giotto chooses not to show the flowering of Joseph's rod but, instead, this moment of suspense.

The Marriage of the Virgin shows a standing-kneeling-standing sequence on the wall of the chapel. This is the marriage ceremony, and Joseph holds his flowering branch, upon which the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, perches, as the *Golden Legend* relates, "according to the prophecy of Isaiah." Among the disappointed suitors, two may be noted. The man in blue nearest Joseph seems to be holding his hand up, not in greeting, but threatening to strike Joseph. Just behind him is a suitor who breaks his rod over his raised knee. This motif became firmly established in the iconography of this scene, famously used by Raphael, among others.

This scene is followed by the *Wedding Procession* (badly damaged), which concludes the early life of the Virgin. *The Annunciation* follows and is, of course, a more famous Annunciation than the one to Mary's mother, Anne. This Annunciation doesn't have to do with barrenness but with sworn virginity and an even more miraculous conception and birth—the Incarnation of Christ at the moment of the Annunciation.

In our next lecture, we will continue our exploration of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes, this time with the life of Christ, in which Giotto's interpretations of the subjects seem to grow both more human and more spiritual. ■

Works Discussed

Giotto:

Annunciation to St. Anne, Joachim's Sacrifice, Joachim's Dream, Meeting at the Golden Gate, The Suitors Presenting Their Rods, The Suitors' Prayer before the Rods, The Marriage of the Virgin, and The Annunciation, c. 1305, fresco, overall: 69' L x 26' W x 43' H, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Giovanni Pisano:

Madonna and Child, c. 1305, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Basile, *Giotto*.

Stubblebine, ed., *Giotto*.

Questions to Consider

1. Why did Giotto use fresco in the Arena Chapel? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the medium of fresco?
2. How are the various depictions in Giotto's fresco cycle blended together but kept as distinct, separate scenes?

Giotto and the Arena Chapel—Part II

Lecture 7

When we left off our examination of Giotto's Arena Chapel yesterday, I wanted to return directly with the scenes devoted to the life of Christ. These are the majority of scenes in the Arena Chapel.

We will discuss Giotto's powerful renditions of popular Christian subjects by describing specific details of the narrative. Two scenes are fairly visible in our example. On the right-hand wall, in the middle tier, is the *Flight into Egypt*. On the left-hand wall, also in the middle tier, is the *Baptism of Christ*. We will look at both of these more closely, but before we continue, let's look briefly at the *Annunciation* again. The *Annunciation* takes place on either side of the arch, with the Angel Gabriel on the left, the Virgin Mary on the right, and God the Father shown above. Note the rooms that Gabriel and the Virgin Mary inhabit. The architecture in the painting is tilted so that the figures can be seen from the center, conveying a sense of space and of volume. Observe the consistent use of light connecting the three figures. Remember that everything in the chapel is painted except for the windows and arch. What first appear to be marble, sculptures, and horizontal bands are all painted.

Let us continue to the south wall on the right. In *Flight into Egypt*, once more, a dream plays an important role in the cycle of the Arena Chapel. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to flee with his family to Egypt because Herod was seeking to kill the child who would become king of the Jews. This scene shows Joseph leaving with his family. Note that the Madonna is a monumental figure. Her figure and the mountain behind her create a ledge of space that implies a sense of danger. Giotto used this scene to present an "everyday" moment, one of his favorite themes. The Madonna appears beige, but her robes were originally painted with azurite. The *secco* technique was used because azurite was too expensive to wash into the plaster, but the blue on the surface has disappeared over time. However, the figure's form still reveals a strong, expressive image.

Massacre of the Innocents shows the scene from which the Holy Family narrowly escaped. The painting shows a pile of infants slaughtered at Herod's command, as well as a circle of violence, with guards trying to murder children. Note the expressive angularity of the arms and the heads. Ironically, the scene takes place in front of a baptistery. The scene is framed by two men—one experiencing remorse, one a horrific executioner with a sword that was painted with the *fresco secco* technique in gold that has flaked off. This scene is horrifying to contemplate because such carnage is cyclic in human history.

Many significant scenes are included on the ensemble of the north wall of the Arena Chapel, including *Christ among the Doctors*, the *Baptism*, the *Wedding at Cana*, the *Raising of Lazarus*, the *Entry into Jerusalem*, and the *Cleansing of the Temple*. The *Baptism of Christ* was already a time-honored composition in painting, in both early Christian and Byzantine art. The scene shows two small island-like patches of rocky shore. On the left, angels hold Christ's clothes; on the right, Mary and Joseph watch as John the Baptist stretches out his hand above Christ's head, though he does not pour water in the baptism. The naked Jesus is seen through the water, with both Christ's nakedness and the transparency of the water part of the artistic tradition. A burst of light from the apparition of God the Father above indicates the divine presence. Jesus raises both arms in a gesture of acceptance.

In the *Wedding at Cana*, Jesus is on the left, the governor of the feast is at center, and Mary is seated beside the governor. This scene shows the first miracle attributed to Jesus. Jesus, his mother, and the disciples were invited to the wedding. Although Joseph is not mentioned in the Gospels, Giotto must surely intend the haloed old man in the corner to be Joseph. When the wine ran out, Jesus told the servants to fill the six empty stone pots with water, then to draw out a glass to serve the governor of the feast. When the governor tasted the water that had been transformed into wine, he remarked that at most dinners the host serves the good wine first, then the lesser wine, "but thou hast kept the good wine until now." This line foreshadows transubstantiation, the miraculous changing of Christ's blood into wine during the Christian Mass—the sacrament of the Eucharist, the central mystery of the faith. Giotto is as fond of the everyday aspects of the scene as he is concerned with symbolism. He represents the head steward

of the feast sipping from a large flagon with a dubious expression. His corpulence repeats the shapes of the pots in front of him, emphasized by decorative striations and the creases in his tunic.

Following this scene is the *Raising of Lazarus*. Lazarus was the brother of Mary Magdalen and Martha. Because he was sick, they asked Jesus to come and cure him. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead and entombed for four days. Jesus told Martha, in words that have become a central tenet of the Christian faith: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whomever lives and believes in me shall never die.” In the foreground, Lazarus’s two sisters prostrate themselves in earnest belief in Jesus and his power to restore life. They are presented as a unified mass. The large sloping rock leads the eye to Jesus and to his hand, which is above the heads of Mary and Martha, isolated against blue sky. The slope also simultaneously expands his gesture—carrying the miraculous power from his hand across the composition to Lazarus.

The architecture in the painting is tilted so that the figures can be seen from the center, conveying a sense of space and of volume.

Note the careful compositional balance of Jesus on the left and the upright, still-shrouded Lazarus at right. This painting is divided down the middle, with Jesus, his disciples, and the sisters on the left and those with Lazarus and the tomb at the right—the division between life and death. Lazarus is

flanked by two large figures, a bearded man and a woman whose face is covered. Behind her, another woman covers her nose with her veil, because, as Martha says in St. John’s Gospel, “by this time he stinketh”—a reminder of mortality, one that Giotto and most painters of this scene indicate by the covering of noses.

There is a striking man in green mediating between the groups, gesturing toward Jesus while looking intently at Lazarus. In the right foreground, two men are moving the marble slab that covered the vertical tomb behind Lazarus, while the barren, rocky mountain behind sprouts green trees as evidence of resurrection. In a memorable touch that is part of Giotto’s genius,

the sisters are not yet aware, as the viewer is, that Lazarus's eyes and lips are already opening.

We will bypass several scenes of the last days of Christ's ministry, including the *Entry into Jerusalem*, to concentrate on a few specific frescos. We go directly to the violent and unforgettable *Kiss of Judas (Capture of Christ)* in the middle of the bottom tier on the south wall. The violence is not so much in the clash of bodies as in the bristling array of staves and torches that radiate out of the mass of humanity converging on Jesus. Peter is shown severing the ear of the servant of the high priest. In the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, Judas offered to identify Jesus by kissing him. In Giotto's painting, it is Judas's embrace that betrays Jesus. This moment is described differently in the Gospel of St. Luke: When "Judas drew near unto Jesus to kiss him, . . . Jesus said unto him 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?'" This is a significant difference, given that no kiss follows. This version may have appealed to Giotto, who realized that the moment before an action often is more dramatic than the action itself.

Three more scenes following Christ's arrest precede the *Crucifixion*, a work that is severely symmetrical and frontal in presentation. A group of soldiers and tormentors are shown at right; another group shows the Virgin Mary (fainting) along with John and some women at left. Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the cross and wipes blood from Christ's feet with her hair. Although this is based on biblical text, Giotto alludes to the biblical washing of Christ's feet and her drying them with her hair that occurred earlier. The cross bearing Christ divides the fresco. Ten small grieving angels are disposed symmetrically above. This symmetry, and the fact that Christ appears lifeless on the cross, makes this scene more symbolic than narrative. Emotions are expressed but with remarkable restraint. Only the centurion Longinus, who lanced Christ's side, looks up at Christ, because he has been converted. No other eyes are on Christ.

This scene contrasts greatly with the *Lamentation*. Now, all eyes are on the dead body laid out in the foreground, and Giotto presents the human tragedy of death and of the bereft. It is Christ who is dead, but it is also everyman, and it is, likewise, everyman who remains behind. In the foreground, the body is protected from a closer gaze by two massive, anonymous blocks of

figures who sit with their backs to us. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus stand at the far right in front of the high point of a rock topped by a small dead tree.

The rock begins its sloping descent, encountering the grieving John, who leans forward and throws his arms backward, wing-like. Below him, one of the holy women bends over Jesus, and below her, seated in dejection at his feet, is Mary Magdalene. The height of emotion is reached at the end of this diagonal of grief, where the Virgin cradles her son in her lap, supported by her knee, their two haloed heads placed in intense juxtaposition, a concentration of tenderness and sorrow. In the sky, the 10 angels of the crucifixion return to provide their own lament in counterpoint to the long lines, dramatic pauses, and resounding chords of the human mourners. Perhaps the pictorial representation of great loss and grief in this fresco has never been surpassed.

Next, we look at the huge fresco on the inside wall of the entrance façade of the chapel, which is not part of the life of Mary or Christ. *The Last Judgment* is part of the interior of the Arena Chapel. As visitors originally saw the *Annunciation* first upon entering the chapel, so they saw *The Last Judgment* when leaving. An announcement of the Second Coming and the final judgment of humanity, it is the same scene carved in stone over the doorways of medieval churches but vastly enlarged. It is not without precedent—such huge Last Judgments exist elsewhere. *The Last Judgment* reminds us that Giotto clearly belongs to the Middle Ages. But when looking at the *Lamentation* and many of Giotto's other poignant images of humanity, we must remember that he was also the most remarkable precursor and one of the greatest sources of the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century.

One other matter of significance must be mentioned here. Although we know the names of occasional earlier artists in the history of art, they remain essentially anonymous. With Giotto, a new phenomenon arises—from now on, the history of art is also the history of great artists. ■

Works Discussed

Giotto:

Flight into Egypt, Massacre of the Innocents, Baptism of Christ, Marriage at Cana, Raising of Lazarus, Kiss of Judas, Crucifixion, Lamentation, The Last Judgment, c. 1305, fresco, overall: 69' L x 26' W x 43' H, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: Frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel*.

James H. Stubblebine, ed., *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*.

Questions to Consider

1. What artistic devices did Giotto use in his paintings to convey emotional intensity?
2. Do you think that Giotto emphasized some aspects of Christ's life more than others? Was any one scene more important than another? Which is the most memorable?

Duccio and the *Maestà*

Lecture 8

Duccio is the first great painter from Siena and the greatest painter from Siena. He is usually played against his great Florentine contemporary, Giotto, and usually, I think, to his disadvantage.

In this lecture, we consider the work of Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255/60–1315/18), specifically his masterpiece, the *Maestà*. We compare Duccio and his great contemporary, Giotto, in terms of their reputation and their technique. We'll also examine several panels from the *Maestà*, including the large central altarpiece and scenes from the pinnacles and the predella.

Giotto, as a true and obvious precursor of the early-15th-century Florentine Renaissance, is the beneficiary of the modern era's Darwinian belief in progress—that the most important art is that which makes an obvious advance on what came before. We should recognize this bias, because great artists have always existed whose art was not in the forefront of “progress,” however that might have been defined at the time.

Duccio is an artist clearly indebted to and reflective of the artistic ideals of the late Middle Ages, of the Gothic period in Italy, and of the Byzantine tradition, which was well established in Italy. Instead of the powerful Naturalism of Giotto, Duccio accepted the lyrical and austere beauty of Byzantine art and imbued it with the spirit of the Humanism that was issuing from the newly founded Franciscan and Dominican orders. However, each artist was aware of the other's work.

We know as little about the artistic origins of Duccio—his training or apprenticeship—as we do about Giotto's. Although Duccio was Sienese and his style is often defined as Sienese, in contrast to Florentine, he was sometimes commissioned by Florentine patrons. The *Rucellai Madonna* that we looked at in Lecture Five was commissioned for the Florentine church of Sta. Maria Novella. But because of the artistic rivalry between the two cities in the 16th century, that painting long was attributed to a Florentine, Cimabue. Duccio is regarded today with the same bias in most general

textbooks, but many museums recognize his significance. For example, the Metropolitan Museum acquired a small but beautiful painting by Duccio in 2004 at a considerable price (*Madonna and Child*, c. 1300).

In this lecture, we focus on Duccio's unquestioned masterpiece, the *Maestà* (1308–1311), which means “majesty.” This work shows the Madonna and Child enthroned, surrounded by adoring saints and angels. The Italian word applies to all large paintings of the subject, but only Duccio's is universally known as the *Maestà*. In 1260, a great victory over Florentine forces was credited to divine intervention by the Virgin Mary. One day after the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, the people dedicated themselves and their city to her protection, thus making her the patron saint of Siena. This veneration explains the people's joy when Duccio's completed altarpiece was taken to the cathedral in 1311.

A contemporary account describes this occasion: “On the 9th of June, at midday, the Sienese carried the altarpiece in great devotion to the cathedral in a procession... They accompanied the painting up to the cathedral, walking in procession around the Campo, while all the bells rang joyfully.” Notwithstanding the devotion with which the Sienese regarded the Virgin Mary, it is truly unique that the general populace of any city would carry a work of art in triumphant procession. This is compelling evidence for art historian Edgar Wind's essay about art at the center of a culture, as it once was, and art at the margins of society, as it now is.

Our example shows a badly damaged *Maestà* with the pinnacles (top) and the predella (bottom) missing. This work has undergone reconstruction at various times in its existence. Let's consider its history. The *Maestà* was commissioned for the high altar of the Sienese Cathedral of Santa Maria in 1308 and completed in 1311. It was, before alterations, about 13 ½ feet wide and 7 feet high. It was painted on both sides, and thus, its painted area was about 188 square feet. It was very large, but recall that each of Giotto's frescoed scenes was about 6 ½ feet wide—the *Maestà* was just over twice as wide as a single fresco in the Arena Chapel.

Duccio's work is sometimes small, especially on the reverse, the side facing away from the nave. The many predella panels are also intentionally small.

Their quality resides partly in the finely detailed, subtly composed scenes that often measure only about 17 or 18 inches square. There is a vast difference in technique between fresco, with its broadly painted areas, and tempera, which often is painstaking but well-suited for small formats. The *Maestà* was executed in tempera. With tempera, ground colors are suspended in egg yolk thinned with water. Because tempera dries quickly, only a small area can be painted before change is impossible. Tempera paintings are generally on panels that have been coated with a smooth layer of gesso. In the medieval period, gold leaf was often used for decorative splendor or for the entire background of the painting, which greatly increases the reflection of light. This medium also permits colors that are subtle and sumptuous, where fresco tends to have more muted colors. (Another reason *fresco secco* was used was to intensify the color of certain areas.)

The famous altarpiece remained on the high altar until 1505, when it was removed to a side chapel in the cathedral; in 1771, the two sides—front and back—of the painting were separated by sawing it apart! Subsequently, some of the panels from the predella and the pinnacles were separated from the altar, sold off by cathedral authorities, and are now in museums in London, New York, and Washington, DC. The altarpiece as it remained was at last placed in the cathedral museum, where it is today.

Looking at the *Maestà* from the front, we see the Madonna and Child enthroned with saints and angels present. Note the size of the figures—they faced the congregation and could be seen clearly from some distance, intended for contemplation. Figures of this weight, solidity, and substance were new to Siena. The enthroned Madonna and Child are flanked by a kneeling row of saints, a standing row of saints and archangels, and a back row of angels who continue up and around the throne. Note the upper part of the Madonna, with angels leaning on the throne. The predella shows seven scenes of the infancy of Christ (these had to be seen at close range), while scenes from the life of Mary can be seen on the pinnacles. At the far left, we find St. Catherine of Alexandria. This type of face, less stylized than in Byzantine art, is typical of Duccio in its quiet solemnity.

Our next example shows a scene from the lower left predella, which was separated and sold. The *Annunciation* is now in the National Gallery in

London. Observe the colors of the angel and the shallow architectural space. Consider the second predella scene of the *Nativity* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Two saints who prophesied the birth of Christ—Isaiah and Ezekiel—flank the striking image of the Nativity. This image shows a combination of stable (European tradition) and cave (Byzantine tradition). The Virgin reclines on a Roman-style mattress. As in other Nativities we have seen, there is a simultaneous narrative, with the Child being bathed in the foreground while already in the manger in the background. The chalice-like tub is a reference to Mass. Observe the Naturalism of the sheep and the glorious color palette.

We now consider the reconstruction of the reverse side of the *Maestà*. Our next image shows a possible reconstruction, including the missing works—some works have been lost and never located. This side

faced the sanctuary; thus, only the clergy and the monks' choir would have seen this side, which had some 40 scenes that constitute a kind of scriptural commentary. Several scenes from Christ's life are shown in the main section and the predella. We'll look at some of these in detail. On the predella is the *Temptation of Christ*. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Satan tempted Jesus three times. The third time, he took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world; these Satan offered to Jesus "if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Duccio has imagined all the kingdoms of the world as a large handful of Tuscan walled cities, marvelously detailed miniature constructions. His Sienese contemporaries must have enjoyed this depiction. Next to this scene is the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*. Note the gold ground, the isolation of Christ's beckoning hand, and the clarity of the storytelling even from a distance. The *Wedding at Cana* is a detailed and busy scene. There are two noticeable figures—one pours the water-become-wine into the other's glass. Note the contrasts between Giotto's and Duccio's depictions of this scene.

Looking at the *Maestà* from the front, we see the Madonna and Child enthroned with saints and angels present.

Our next scene, *Transfiguration*, is an unfamiliar theme to many viewers. When Jesus went with Peter, James, and John to pray on a mountaintop, the disciples witnessed Jesus “transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” Then they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. By invoking the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah), the Gospels here confer significant authority on Jesus. This is an important work because it has beautiful colors and an impressively severe design. It is also the sort of visionary theological scene that was best painted in the more abstract Byzantine style. On the top left pinnacle is *The Incredulity of Thomas*, which is still in Siena. This scene shows Jesus revealing his wounds to “doubting Thomas.”

Finally, we look at the reverse side of the *Maestà* as it now is. *Christ and Apostles on the Mount of Olives* shows Christ praying while the apostles sleep. *The Capture of Christ* draws attention to the lances in the center, Christ’s robe, and the apostles fleeing. Duccio’s *Crucifixion* is a narrative scene in contrast to Giotto’s more theological, symbolic treatment of the subject in the Arena Chapel. All three crosses are shown, amidst a boisterous crowd scene, with a great variety of expressions, ranging from fear and hatred to silence and grief. *Entombment* shows a scene in which Jesus is tenderly laid in the sarcophagus. The emotion is restrained except for Mary Magdalene’s up-thrown arms, but all the figures turn inward and pull our eyes to Mary’s head as it presses against her son’s. ■

Works Discussed

Duccio di Buoninsegna:

Annunciation, 17 x 17 ¼” (43 x 44 cm), from the *Maestà*, National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Madonna and Child, c. 1300, tempera and gold on wood; overall, with engaged frame: 11 x 8 ¼” (27.9 x 21 cm), painted surface: 9 3/8 x 6 ½” (23.8 x 16.5 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Maestà, 1308–11, tempera and gold leaf on panel, originally about 7’ x 13’ 6”, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Nativity, 17 ¼ x 30 ½” (43.8 x 77.5 cm), and *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, 17 x 18” (43.5 x 46 cm), from the *Maestà*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Temptation of Christ, 17 x 18” (43.5 x 46 cm), from the *Maestà*, The Frick Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Wedding at Cana, *The Transfiguration*, *The Incredulity of Thomas*, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, *The Capture of Christ*, *The Crucifixion*, and *The Entombment*, from the *Maestà*, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Bellosi, *Duccio: The Maestà*.

Dini, Angelini, and Sani, *Sieneese Painting*.

Questions to Consider

1. Compare and contrast Duccio and Giotto. How do they interpret the same subjects differently?
2. As this lecture has discussed, the *Maestà* is no longer one complete work; various pieces are in different locations. How does this affect your viewing of the subject matter and the work itself?

Sieneese Art in the 14th Century

Lecture 9

We looked at Duccio's *Maestà* last time and discussed Duccio and Sieneese art in his reflection, as it were. Siene is a very important city, and its art has a particular flavor, and I want to spend a little more time with it.

We begin this lecture by discussing the historical influence of the Italian city-state during this period and its relationship to artistic representations. The Italian phrase *ma paese* means "my country," but first and foremost, it means "my town" or "my city," defining a person by the place where he or she was born. This identification with place also meant that the larger entities—regional or national governments—may govern people, but they are not the controlling factors in people's lives. This concept is critical in understanding Italy and the development of the Italian city-state. City-states were communes that had developed as self-governing units during the chaotic period of the barbarian invasions, the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and the social disruption of a huge political unit into dukedoms and other fiefdoms based on military power. The city-states that arose in the central portion of the Italian peninsula were often republics—mercantile cities dominated by mercantile interests—and they were often at war with their neighbors. They were proud of their independence and regarded themselves as civic polities united for the good of their citizens.

Siena was a bitter rival to Florence, 45 miles to the north, which like Siena, had important banking operations throughout Europe. Despite the intense political hostility between the two cities, there was regular cultural interchange; artists from one sometimes worked for patrons in the other. One of the most important Sieneese painters following in the footsteps of Duccio was Simone Martini (1284–1344). He was probably Duccio's pupil, and he emulated the elegant linearity and coloristic brilliance of his teacher. He was also influenced by Giovanni Pisano's sculpture and French art.

Our first example shows Simone Martini's *Annunciation*. This famous altarpiece was painted for a chapel in the Siena Cathedral. The lateral saints

were painted by Lippo Memmi, a pupil and brother-in-law of Simone, but the entire center panel is by Simone. Note the elaborate architecture in the frame, with many cusps, twisted columns, complex gables, pinnacles, and intricately tooled designs in the gold leaf that dominates the ensemble.

The main panel is a stunning blaze of orange and gold—the background wall, the Archangel Gabriel’s wings and plaid cloak, and Mary’s throne. The colors are repeated in the radiance of the Holy Spirit as a dove, the urn holding the lilies, and the veined marble pavement. The brilliance of the colors is analogous to the effect of the Annunciation on Mary. As Gabriel alights, he thrusts his head forward into the center of the painting, and his words, which are embossed on the gold ground, proceed from his head to hers. *Ave gratia plena dominus tecum* means “Hail thou that are full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” The force of the angel’s arrival and news seems to push Mary away. She shrinks from him and looks startled and unhappy. Simone’s masterpiece is nearly two-dimensional in effect. The sweep and visual bounce of the gold and the emphasis on contour and line assure this, and it is especially apparent when compared with our next example.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s *Presentation in the Temple* was also painted for the Cathedral of Siena and is now in Florence. Here the pictorial space is developed carefully and convincingly. The figures are proportionately larger than the architecture, as in Giotto and Duccio, and the architecture attracts our eyes. This is one of the first fully developed renderings of architectural space in late medieval painting. Joseph and Mary have brought Jesus to the temple to be “consecrated to the Lord.” They have handed him to Simeon, who had been told he would not die before he had seen the Christ. The prophetess Anna stands behind him holding a scroll with a passage from the Gospel of Luke relating this event. Ambrogio has characterized the holy figures with attention to detail and painted their costumes with rich colors worthy of Siennese life and art.

We now look at Pietro Lorenzetti who, with his brother Ambrogio, dominated Siennese painting after Simone Martini left the city to paint elsewhere. Simone was called to do work in Naples and later in Avignon, which was the seat of the papacy during much of the 14th century. In the 1320s, Pietro was summoned to paint a major fresco cycle at the Basilica of San Francesco (St.

Francis) at Assisi, which had become one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Italy after St. Francis was buried there, in the town of his birth, in 1230. Many of Italy's finest artists worked in Assisi, including Giotto some 30 years earlier. Assisi consists of an upper church, where Giotto worked, and a lower church. Pietro was given the task of overseeing the decoration of the walls and vaults of the left transept of the lower church.

Our example shows the Lorenzetti Chapel in the lower church. The subject of the fresco cycle is the Passion of Christ, beginning with *The Entry into Jerusalem*. This scene is at the end of our view of the transept chapel and not visible in our example. Pietro learned much from Giotto's example, but he remains an artist for whom detail, both decorative and narrative, was irresistible. *Entry into Jerusalem* marks the beginning of Christ's Passion. Note the children climbing the trees for a better view and the city architecture.

The Palazzo Pubblico (1297–1342), or the Town Hall of Siena, is one of the most elegant monuments of the Italian Gothic. Piazza del Campo has always been the center of civic life in Siena. Siena is a hilly town, and the Campo slopes with the shape of half a conch shell.

In the Sala del Consiglio (Council Hall), Palazzo Pubblico, Simone Martini's *Maestà* (c. 1315, partially repainted in 1321) is on the end wall. Unlike Duccio's altarpiece, this work is a wall decoration—a fresco (much of it *secco* and, therefore, damaged). It is painted as if it were a tapestry. The Virgin and Child enthroned and a court of saints are covered by a canopy supported by slender poles, perhaps a reflection of an actual structure used to protect secular rulers outdoors or to protect the Eucharist when carried in procession. The sag of the canopy enhances the illusion that the painting is a tapestry, because it recalls the sag of a tapestry hanging on a wall. The subject is framed by the simulated architecture and tapestry border, containing roundels with heads of the fathers of the Church and prophets.

Simone's *Guidoriccio da Fogliano* (c. 1328) is an equestrian portrait of a Siennese captain painted to celebrate a major victory he had won that year. This faces the *Maestà* from the other end of the room and covers the whole upper part of that wall. No landscape of such ambition had yet been

painted in Italy or anywhere since ancient Roman times. The painting shows the fortified town that was captured, a fortress, and battle encampments. The “toy” towns in the painting are still large because of the fresco’s 40-foot width.

We now take a close look at the groups of frescoes that are the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* in the Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico. Our photo shows only the two walls with the *Allegory of Good Government*; the other wall, *Bad Government*, has deteriorated considerably. The hall is directly behind the large council chamber and was the room where the “nine lords” or governors of Siena met. Simone had been the city’s official painter, but when he moved to Avignon, Ambrogio Lorenzetti succeeded him in Siena, and he fulfilled this important commission.

Ambrogio’s *Allegory of Good Government*, representing the Commune of Siena (1338–1339), is on the end wall. The personified image of Siena is the huge old man holding a scepter and orb, dressed in the colors of the republic, and flanked by the cardinal and theological virtues, while the Three Graces—Faith, Hope, and Charity—hover above. Farther to the left, the large female figure is Justice personified, dispensing rewards and punishments. Wisdom floats above Justice. The citizens who made up the Great Council are arrayed across the front on a lower stage. Peace, the figure for whom this hall is named (Sala della Pace), finds herself with nothing to do, so ineffective is the government. She lolls idly in the center in a white dress between Siena and Justice. Ambrogio borrowed her pose from an ancient Roman sarcophagus still in the Palazzo Pubblico today.

Siena was a bitter rival to Florence, 45 miles to the north, which like Siena, had important banking operations throughout Europe.

Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country is a continuous, wall-length painting—about 46 feet long—surely the most important monumental civic image in Italy during the 14th century. These may be allegories of government, but unlike the allegory of the Commune that we just saw, these ignore symbolic images and concentrate on 14th-century Siena. We will look

at this wall in two parts: city and country, starting at the point that divides them—the city wall and gate.

In *Effects of Good Government in the City*, the architecture, a mix of Romanesque and Gothic, commands the scene. In the upper left corner is the black-and-white bell tower of the cathedral. Gray is the dominant color of the foreground buildings, while behind them, deep red and light pink buildings seem to introduce sunlight into the middle ground. This is a city still in the making—we see a building with scaffolding and workmen carrying materials and laying stone or brick. The townspeople and farmers mingle on the streets, forming a line from the city gate at right that exits at the lower left. This leads the eye toward the wall with the *Allegory of Good Government*. The city gate at right shows people entering and leaving and donkeys carrying goods accompanied by farmers. In front, there is a herd of sheep, a woman carrying a basket on her head, and another woman holding a fowl. There is bustling in the background—goods being exchanged or shops being set up.

The central architectural group is defined by a triple loggia: At the right is a merchant setting out containers; in the middle is a schoolroom with the schoolmaster addressing his pupils; and on the left is a shoemaker's shop with three artisans at work and one customer approaching. A group of ten women dance in a circle while one keeps rhythm on her tambourine. This portrayal is intended to symbolize the civility, culture, and pleasure of the city. In the large arched opening in the next building are several men conversing and perhaps gambling (the mural is damaged here). The building's upper story has elegant windows with single mullions. Note the small procession of persons on horseback and on foot heading toward another gate.

We next turn to *Effects of Good Government in the Country*. As donkeys are coming in the gate, a pair of Sieneese nobles is going out on a hawking expedition in the country. In the foreground, men tend a vineyard and farmers lead a hog and heavily laden donkeys up the steep slope, contrasting sharply with the hunters. At the bottom of the hill, huntsmen and dogs are seen in the field. In the lower right corner, more donkeys with produce from the country cross a red stone bridge on their way to the city. Tuscan hills of many sizes and shapes are in the background, some planted in vineyards, others perhaps

with orchards, farms, castles, or villages. In the distance are heavily forested areas with sharper mountain ridges beyond. The lady floating in the air by the city gate is the personification of Security. In her right hand, a scroll announces the tranquility and peace that the Commune of Siena provides; in her left hand, a miniature gallows shows the corpse of someone who threatened that peace and paid the price.

Overall, the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* constitute a glorious decorative scheme for the proud city-commune. This was just before the plague of 1348, an overwhelming crisis in Europe. The Black Death left Siena city development frozen in its age of glory. Its artists were among the victims; both Ambrogio Lorenzetti and his brother Pietro are presumed to have died in the plague, but this mural leaves a record of the prosperous calm before the calamitous storm. ■

Works Discussed

Palazzo Pubblico, 1297–1342, Siena, Italy.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti:

Allegory of Good Government, 1338–39, fresco, 25' 3" W (7.7 m W), Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country, 1338–39, fresco, 46' W (14 m W), Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Presentation in the Temple, 1342, tempera on panel, 8' 5 ¼" x 5' 6 ¼" (257 x 168 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Pietro Lorenzetti:

The Entry into Jerusalem, 1320–30, fresco, Lorenzetti Chapel, Basilica of S. Francesco, Assisi, Italy.

Simone Martini:

Annunciation (St. Ansano Altarpiece), 1333, tempera on panel, 10' x 8' 9" (184 x 210 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Guidoriccio da Fogliano, 1328, fresco, 40' W (12.2 m), Sala del Consiglio, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Maestà, 1315, fresco, 25' x 31' 9" (763 x 970 cm), Sala del Consiglio, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Hyman, *Sieneese Painting*.

Maginnis, *The World of the Early Sieneese Painter*.

Questions to Consider

1. How was Ambrogio Lorenzetti influenced by other Italian artists?
2. Think about the significance of the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* painted inside the Palazzo Pubblico, the Town Hall. How are these similar to the artwork found in our civic buildings today?

The Black Death and the International Style

Lecture 10

The tragic outbreak of the Bubonic Plague affected not only Siena, of course. This was a pandemic that swept Europe and parts of Asia, and, in 20 years, it killed as much as three-quarters of the population.

Picking up from our last lecture, we discuss how the bubonic plague of the mid-14th century affected art as a whole. In this same vein, we also compare artistic renditions of the same subject from works before and after the plague. The Black Death affected not only Siena but swept through Europe and parts of Asia and killed three-quarters of the population in 20 years. When the plague exploded in Italy, Siena and Florence were already vulnerable from two years of severe agricultural and economic losses. In Florence, 45,000 out of 90,000 inhabitants died in the summer of 1348. In Siena, 27,000 out of a population of 42,000 perished. As a result, the plague radically changed the course of society and art.

In the cloistered burial ground called the Campo Santo in Pisa, a fresco attributed to Francesco Traini, *Triumph of Death*, summed up the prevailing pessimism. Our example shows an aerial view of Pisa's Campo Santo. The *Triumph of Death* is a panorama reminiscent of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's panorama of good government in the city and country. Some scholars attribute this work to an anonymous "Master of the *Triumph of Death*," and others think it was completed before the plague of 1348. Although Traini was a minor Pisan artist, the plague may have eliminated much of the competition for this commission. The right side of this fresco recalls Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, with aristocratic young people making music, conversing, and playing with pets. The painter reminds us that those in the prime of youth are still subject to the same fate as all mankind. Note the flying woman with long white hair and a scythe swooping down on the party from the left, a personification of Death. Above the group, angels vie with demons for the souls of the dead.

The left side of the fresco shows a group of horsemen encountering three coffins—those of a wealthy man, a clergyman, and a king. The Humanistic art

of Giotto was cancelled out as if it had never existed. Gone are the narrative pleasure of Duccio, the clash of Simone Martini's colors and the civic pride embodied in his *Guidoriccio*, and the embracing of the contemporary world in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Effects of Good Government*. These are replaced by a severe art that emphasized guilt and the need to repent and in which mysticism and the authority of the Church offered hope.

Let's look at some other works from this difficult period. Our next example shows Andrea Orcagna's *Enthroned Christ with Madonna and Saints* (1354–1357). This is the first altarpiece with a full-length, adult Christ in the central field of the painting in either Florentine or Siennese painting. This severe depiction represents a Christ who grants authority—to St. Peter at right—and disseminates theological doctrine—to St. Thomas Aquinas at left. An excellent demonstration of the changes that occurred in art can be found in a comparison between Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1342), which we examined in the last lecture, and Bartolo di Fredi's *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1353). Here is an astonishing transformation, or regression, of style in just 11 years.

We also see drastic changes by comparing two more works with the same subject. Luca di Tommè's *Raising of Lazarus* (c. 1360) shows densely packed figures, leaving no room for more than a stylized landscape at the top. St. Peter's placement next to Jesus suggests that the painting may have been commissioned by the Vatican. Christ's elongated arm stretches halfway across the painting to Lazarus, and the straight band running from Christ's mouth must have held the words recorded in the Gospel of St. John, "Lazarus, come forth." Compare this to Giotto's earlier *Raising of Lazarus* (c. 1305–1307, Arena Chapel). Tommè's version doesn't have the human quality, narrative complexity, or nuance of Giotto's interpretation. This has been abandoned for a certain severity; we are to regard the miracle in a strictly theological way, rather than in narrative terms.

Another comparison involves different *Pietà*s. Giovanni da Milano's *Pietà* (c. 1365) presents Christ supported by the Madonna and St. Mary Magdalene, with another saint behind them. The German *Pietà* (c. 1300), which we saw in Lecture Five, has a Nordic intensity. In a kind of compulsory act,

both artists are intent on forcing us to confront the dead body of Christ in these works.

Such profound pessimism could not last, and toward the end of the century, a new spirit arose throughout Europe, called the *International Gothic* style. This style may be seen as a reaction against the severe religiosity that followed the Black Death. It seems to be a rebirth of courtly late-Gothic art—in fact, a reprise of the waning Gothic style might have been instinctive for artists.

Our example shows an anonymous work, the *Wilton Diptych*, (c. 1395–1399). This magnificent but small diptych was commissioned for the private devotions of Richard II of England. The tempera technique is Italian, and the style is close to Sienese art; it was probably painted by an Italian, a Frenchman, or even a central European Bohemian artist working at the English court. The image of Richard is probably a real portrait, not idealized. Richard's patron saint was St. John the Baptist, and he touches the king's shoulder; the other saints are English: King Edmund and King Edward the Confessor. Note the right-hand panel, where the Virgin and Child are glorified amid angels. All the angels have a white hart (deer) embroidered on their robes; the personal device of Richard, seen also on his costume. The contrast of the gold-dominated left wing with the blue-dominated right wing and the simplicity of the symmetrical design are strong and charming. This new International style is less symbolic; it finds more beauty in actual observations than in symbols.

The Limbourg Brothers were famous manuscript painters, and their most famous work is probably *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (“*Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry*”). The duke was one of the Burgundian dukes who dominated northern Europe at this time, and his passion was books. A book of hours is a prayer book often, as here, attached to a calendar decorated with miniatures of the months of the year. Our example shows the Limbourg

In the cloistered burial ground called the Campo Santo in Pisa, a fresco attributed to Francesco Traini, *Triumph of Death*, summed up the prevailing pessimism.

brothers' *February* from the *Très Riches Heures* (c. 1413–1416). Another anonymous work, a *Madonna and Child* (c. 1400), is a tender representation about the size of a manuscript page.

The International style was also pervasive in Italy. Lorenzo Monaco was born in Siena (1370–1425) but later moved to Florence where he entered a monastery and became an artist. His paintings are marked by intimacy, restraint, and a delicate lyricism. *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1413) is an entire altarpiece painted by Lorenzo. Exquisite color and large, gracefully drawn figures characterize the painting, in which some effects of volume are countered by weightlessness.

Adoration of the Magi (c. 1423) by Gentile da Fabriano (1385–1427) was an influential painting, with its gold leaf and sumptuous color. The rich costumes of the magi are physically enhanced by building up the surface with molded gesso to emulate crowns or other costume elements. Note the serpentine composition that is a significant aspect of the painting. There is no horizon; the land just rises straight up. Gentile's *Flight into Egypt* on the center panel of the predella of the *Adoration* looks to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Guidoriccio*, but it is much smaller, and its advances are in Gentile's love of naturalistic detail and his exploration of atmospheric effects. In this last development, he belongs with the Italian sculptors then at work, who are among the most significant artists to lay the foundation for the Renaissance.

Let's briefly define the term *Renaissance*. The English language took this term, meaning "rebirth," directly from the French. In Italian, *rinascimento* means "rebirth" or "revival." Among the intelligentsia and ruling classes of Italy, there was a rebirth of interest in Classical literature and culture. Latin was still the language of Italian scholarship and the Church. Some scholars read Greek, but most read Greek literature in Latin translation. Those who wanted to read Classical literature needed access to manuscripts or copies of them.

Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), the first of the Medici to rule Florence, was a patron of Classical culture and founder of the Neo-Platonic Academy in Florence, an early literary society. Its members included Leon Battista Alberti, the great architect. In this pre-printing-press era, copying manuscripts

was essential to satisfy the need for Classical literature, and Cosimo had hundreds copied.

Humanism, a term that is intimately associated with the Renaissance, is also the product of the Classical revival; the emphasis was on man, not God, because the pre-Christian writers had a different focus on man and the origins of the world. The intellectuals of the Renaissance era were challenged with integrating Classical and Christian thought. In fact, Renaissance Neo-Platonism does not indicate a concentration mainly on Plato's ideas but was developed from the last great pagan philosopher, Plotinus, in the 3rd century A.D., seven centuries after Plato. *Renaissance* should be used as a cultural, not a stylistic, term, because there were many styles during the Renaissance. However, they were grounded in a common culture that came from the balancing of Classical and Christian traditions. ■

Works Discussed

Wilton Diptych, c. 1395–99, tempera on panel, 22 ½ x 11 ½” (57 x 29.2 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Virgin and Child, c. 1400, oil on panel, 8 ¼ x 6” (21 x 15 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Gentile da Fabriano:

Adoration of the Magi and detail from the predella: *Flight into Egypt*, 1423, tempera on panel, overall: 9' 10" x 9' 3" (300 x 283 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Giovanni da Milano:

Pietà, 1365, oil on panel, 48 x 22 ¾” (122 x 57.5 cm), Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy.

Bartolo di Fredi:

Presentation in the Temple, 1353, oil on panel, 6 x 4' (190 x 125 cm) Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Limbourg Brothers:

February, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, c. 1413–16, illumination, 8 ½ x 5 ½» (21.5 x 14 cm), Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti:

Presentation in the Temple, 1342, tempera on panel, 8' 5 ¼" x 5' 6 ¼" (257 x 168 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Lorenzo Monaco:

Coronation of the Virgin, 1413, tempera on panel, 8' x 12' 3" (450 x 350 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Andrea Orcagna:

Enthroned Christ with Madonna and Saints (Strozzi Altarpiece), 1354–57, oil on panel, Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.

Luca di Tommè:

Raising of Lazarus, c. 1360, Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Francesco Traini:

Triumph of Death, c. 1325–50, fresco, Camposanto, Pisa, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*.

White, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250–1400*.

Questions to Consider

1. Describe the ways that the Black Death influenced painting in the 14th century in Italy.
2. What elements of the International style depend on earlier painting?

Early Renaissance Sculpture in Florence

Lecture 11

Now we have to remind ourselves that the Renaissance was born in Italy in part because that was the center of the Roman Empire, where the most complete and impressive physical remains of the ancient artistic achievement were to be found, and because the major patronage of Renaissance art came from the Roman Catholic Church, also centered in Italy.

We begin this lecture by exploring the reasons that sculpture, rather than painting, led to the development of the Renaissance style. Roman architectural innovations, including the use of the arch, provided the model for Romanesque architects, and Romanesque architecture provided the starting point for Gothic architecture. Relief sculpture decorating marble sarcophagi provided models for figure poses and for style and technique.

Christianity assimilated much of the Roman tradition, and because Rome was home to the papacy, Christian art included constant references to and borrowings from Roman art. Charlemagne borrowed the ground plan of San Vitale in Ravenna for use in Aachen because of its imperial and religious associations. Manuscript illuminators searching for a model for the imaginary portraits of the four evangelists seized upon the Greco-Roman portraits of Classical authors.

The Renaissance was born in Italy in part because that was the center of the Roman Empire, where the most complete and impressive physical remains of the ancient artistic achievement were found. Also, the major patronage of Renaissance art came from the Roman Catholic Church, also centered in Italy. Thus, early-15th-century sculpture was bound to reflect Roman sculpture. Early Renaissance sculpture often was used to decorate architecture, as Roman sculpture had been in antiquity (e.g., relief carvings on friezes). Because early-15th-century artists were trying to portray the human figure in space and because sculpture is three-dimensional, it was logical that sculpture took the lead and that painting soon followed.

Two of the most important sculptors of the early 15th century were Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi, although Brunelleschi is most famous as an architect. Brunelleschi was one of seven entrants in a competition held in 1401 to design a second set of bronze doors for the Baptistery adjacent to the façade of the Cathedral of Florence. The Baptistery has three entrances and already had one set of bronze doors by Andrea Pisano (c. 1330). The finalists in the competition were Brunelleschi and Ghiberti. The subject assigned them was the sacrifice of Isaac.

In Brunelleschi's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (c. 1401), Isaac is kneeling on an altar in the center, an angel is emerging, and a ram can be seen in the left foreground. Note the angular and forceful design, with the angel physically restraining Abraham. The quatrefoil design is used here, and the figures were made separately, then fused onto the door. Ghiberti's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (c. 1401) is in strong contrast. Ghiberti's depiction of Isaac is Classical. The angel here gestures to Abraham, instead of grasping his arm as in Brunelleschi's depiction. Ghiberti was awarded the commission.

Our example shows an aerial view of the Baptistery in Florence. Ghiberti's North Doors (his first set of doors) for the Baptistery (c. 1403–1424) narrate the life of Christ, the four evangelists, and the four theological fathers of the Church. There are 28 panels with the quatrefoil design. Our example shows *The Flagellation*, a symmetrical composition. These doors took 20 years to complete, and they were such a success that Ghiberti received a commission soon after for another set of doors for the third entrance to the Baptistery.

Ghiberti's East Doors (Gates of Paradise) (c. 1425–1452) were radically different from the earlier ones. The 28 panels and the quatrefoil shape within which the sculptural figures had been fitted were abandoned. The new doors had 10 panels, five in each valve, and each panel was square. These larger fields were similar to those used in painting and allowed Ghiberti to develop a style of relief sculpture with illusionistic architecture and space. Each panel is completely gilded.

The doors show 10 scenes from Genesis, reading from top left, across and down. These include the creation of Adam and Eve through their expulsion from Eden, followed by the stories of Cain and Abel, Abraham, and Jacob.

We will look at the panels from the top left, the *Creation of Man*, and the third down on the left, the *Story of Joseph*. The *Creation of Man* describes, from left to right, the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve, and the expulsion from the garden. Note particularly the subject of the temptation/fall in the left background. *Joseph and His Brothers* depicts Joseph, the youngest of Jacob's sons and his favorite, and his eight jealous older brothers. One scene shows the brothers selling Joseph into slavery.

Joseph gains fame as he serves Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh; interprets the Pharaoh's dreams; and averts famine in Egypt. Famine in other countries compelled Joseph's brothers to come to Egypt for grain, but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph had a silver cup hidden in the grain sack of Benjamin who, born after Joseph's slavery, had become his father's favorite. Another scene shows the sack being inspected. When the cup is found, the brothers plead on Benjamin's behalf, and Joseph then reveals himself.

In all the panels on this set of doors, we have seen that Ghiberti retains the medieval device of simultaneous narration, showing a sequence of events in the same continuous setting. This remained fairly common in the early 15th century. The doors, however, are in a fully Renaissance style. This second set of doors, known since the 16th century as the Gates of Paradise, is one of the supreme achievements of the early Renaissance. Instantly famous, the doors were installed on the east side, the side facing the cathedral, causing Ghiberti's first set of doors to be moved to the north side. Their name came from Michelangelo, who was said to have remarked that they were worthy to be the gates of paradise. The remark may have been a pun, because the piazza between the Duomo and Baptistery was known as the Paradise, an allusion to the salvation of the sacrament of baptism. Thus, these doors would have been the gates to *the* Paradise and to Paradise itself.

The greatest Florentine sculptor of the 15th century, and probably the most influential artist in Italy at the time, was Donato di Niccolò Bardi, known as Donatello (1386–1466).

The greatest Florentine sculptor of the 15th century, and probably the most influential artist in Italy at the time, was Donato di Niccolò Bardi, known as Donatello (1386–1466). He apprenticed with Ghiberti and worked on the preparation of the north doors for the baptistery, but his artistic temperament was quite different. He had technical genius in both marble and bronze, and throughout his life, his work was endlessly inventive and deeply moving.

Our example shows Donatello's marble sculpture *St. George* (c. 1415), which was commissioned for a niche on the exterior of the civic guild hall in Florence, known as Orsanmichele. The guilds that controlled the niches were required to commission sculptures for them. The Armorer's Guild chose the warrior figure of St. George to represent its members and commissioned Donatello to carve what became his most important early work. The sculpture is heroic and lifelike. It was originally crowned by a real helmet and held a real sword, both made by the Armorer's Guild.

The *St. George and the Dragon* is a marble relief sculpture (c. 1415–1417) below the niche of the *St. George* sculpture. The shallow carving in the background is unprecedented. This *flattened relief* is Donatello's invention and his means of suggesting atmospheric effects. This technique was remarkably influential; in fact, Ghiberti used the sculptural illusionism brilliantly in his *Gates of Paradise*.

In the *Feast of Herod* (c. 1427, Siena, Baptistery), Herod is presented with the head of St. John the Baptist. The work is infused with emotion and horror. Donatello's most famous work is probably his bronze *David* (c. early 1430s). The Medici owned this sculpture, but we don't know if they commissioned it. It was the first life-size, freestanding, fully-in-the-round, bronze male nude statue since antiquity.

Luca della Robbia (1400–1482) was also one of the great sculptors of the Florentine Renaissance, yet his name often does not garner the same attention as Donatello. This may be because he made many glazed terracotta sculptures, popular art sometimes slighted as “decorative art.” Luca invented the means of applying the fused lead and glass compounds used by potters to terracotta sculpture, and his family kept the process secret for centuries,

running a highly profitable business. Luca's work in stone sculpture is less well known but is proof of his artistic genius.

We will look at his most famous achievement, his *Cantoria* (c. 1431–1438), or “singing gallery,” produced for the Florence Cathedral. This is a marble choir gallery, 17 feet wide, that was located over the door to the left-hand sacristy in the cathedral. Singers and instrumentalists performed from this elegant perch. The decoration consists of 10 panels depicting children as musical genies. Our example shows eight square panels in two levels on the front, and one rectangular panel on each end. The front panels are separated by pilasters above and brackets below, and on three horizontal bands is inscribed Psalm 150, “Praise ye the Lord.../Praise him with the timbrel and dance:/Praise him with stringed instruments and organs./Praise him upon the loud cymbals./Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.” Luca's work depicts young instrumentalists, trumpeters, with dancers singing and cavorting below them. Note particularly the end panel—the older boys singing in the choir whose faces Luca has observed closely. Luca renders adolescent flesh equal to Donatello's in the bronze *David* but without the erotic undercurrent. ■

Works Discussed

Filippo Brunelleschi:

Sacrifice of Isaac, 1401, gilt bronze, 21 x 17” (53.3 x 43.4 cm), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Luca della Robbia:

Cantoria, c. 1431–38, marble, 17' W (5 m W), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Donatello:

David, 1430s, bronze, 5' 2 ¼” H (158 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Feast of Herod, c. 1427, gilt bronze, 23 ½” square (59.7 cm square), Baptistery, Siena, Italy.

St. George, c. 1415, marble, 6' 10" H (210 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

St. George and the Dragon, c. 1415, marble, 15 ¾" H (40 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Lorenzo Ghiberti:

Creation of Man and Joseph and His Brothers, 1425–52, from the East Doors (Gates of Paradise), gilt bronze, 31¼" square (79.5 cm square), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

East Doors (Gates of Paradise), 1425–52, gilt bronze, 15' H (4.57 m H), Baptistry, Florence, Italy.

The Flagellation, 1403–24, gilt bronze, 20 ½ x 17 ¾" (53 x 45 cm), from the North Doors, Baptistry, Florence, Italy.

North Doors (original East Doors), 1403–24, gilt bronze, 15' H (4.57 m H), Baptistry, Florence, Italy.

Sacrifice of Isaac, 1401, gilt bronze, 21 x 17" (53.3 x 43.4), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Olson, *Italian Renaissance Sculpture*.

Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Renaissance Sculpture*.

Questions to Consider

1. Why did sculpture precede painting in the creation of a Renaissance style? How did Renaissance sculpture influence painting?
2. How do you think Donatello's *David* was viewed in the 15th century?

Early Renaissance Architecture in Florence

Lecture 12

This city offers much in the way of Renaissance, and I want to give you at least some indication of the richness of the architecture, particularly at the beginning of the 15th century when Florence was taking shape as the great Renaissance exemplar that it is.

We return to Florence to examine some spectacular and influential architecture of the early 15th century. Looking closely at some of these buildings, we discover how Renaissance architects solved major construction dilemmas with new methods and inventions. The lecture focuses on works by Brunelleschi and Alberti.

In this panorama of Florence, we see the Duomo (the Cathedral of Florence), the tower of Town Hall, and the Guild Hall, among other buildings. In this lecture, we will discuss some of the most important examples of 15th-century architecture.

One famous example is Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents, an orphanage designed in 1419 and begun in 1421. The building, although elegant, may not seem impressive or epochal, probably because it is the model for hundreds of later buildings and we have grown accustomed to it. However, it played an important role in the urban development of Renaissance Florence. Brunelleschi was commissioned to design the building, because the orphanage was considered an integral part of the society. The hospital was sited at a right angle to the Church of Santissima Annunziata ("Most Holy Annunciation"), a major pilgrimage church in Florence.

A new street had just been constructed between the SS. Annunziata Church and the Duomo, with an unobstructed view between them. There were also two existing streets entering the space in front of the church from the side where the hospital was built. By incorporating the passages from those two streets into his façade (on the extreme ends), Brunelleschi unified the piazza and his building.

Brunelleschi intended that a matching arcaded building should one day balance his structure on the opposite side, and in the 16th century, one was built. His perfectly proportioned arcade dictated the use of the same forms in the adjacent building. This arcade is the most striking aspect of the façade, but the whole building is based on two geometric modules, the cube and the hemisphere. The generous span of the arches, carried on Corinthian columns, is emphasized by the broad horizontal of the cornice. The second-story windows are above the apex of each arch, providing a rhythmic counterpoint. We see the roundels of infants by Andrea della Robbia (1460s or 1480s). The 10 glazed terracotta roundels in the pendentives of the arches—each with an orphan in swaddling clothes—are an integral part of the building. However, they were added decades later by Luca della Robbia’s nephew, Andrea.

Brunelleschi’s most famous project was the completion of the Cathedral of Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore, commonly called the *Duomo* (aerial view shown in the photo). *Duomo* is the Italian word for any cathedral, but it is often used synonymously with this Florentine cathedral. The word derives from *domus*, Latin for “house,” here, the “house of God.” The cathedral had been underway for more than a century when Brunelleschi assumed the post of architect. Arnolfo di Cambio, the first architect of the cathedral, drew up his plans around 1300; further plans were developed around 1360. The nave was complete and the foundations for the east end were in place when Brunelleschi solved the problem of constructing a dome that could span the great space above the high altar, about 140 feet in diameter.

Our example shows the cathedral’s interior with a view into the dome. This was the highest and widest dome ever attempted, and builders had puzzled over how to construct the dome for more than 50 years. In 1418, a competition was held, offering a hefty reward to solve the problem. One of the fanciful solutions proposed was to fill the cathedral below the dome area with a mountain of dirt in which silver and gold coins would have been scattered. The dirt mountain would have acted as scaffolding for the dome work, and when its purpose was served, the Florentine public could be invited to remove the dirt to reap the rewards.

Let’s examine the *Duomo*’s exterior, the apse and the dome, from the east. Brunelleschi’s solution to building the dome involved new methods of laying

masonry and the construction of a double dome (an inner and outer shell) to reduce the total weight. He also invented a lifting device that could hoist tons of building materials to the great height needed. This work, together with other projects, made Brunelleschi the most visible artist in Florence. His fame, derived from the construction of the cathedral dome, has never waned, and the cupola itself has become a symbol of the city.

Brunelleschi is believed to be the Renaissance inventor of *linear perspective*, a method involving careful study of the mathematical principles of architecture. Linear one-point perspective also radically altered painting during the Renaissance. In addition to the cathedral dome's success, Brunelleschi succeeded in embodying the Humanism of Renaissance art in his work at San Lorenzo and at the Pazzi Chapel. Our example shows the exterior of the Pazzi Chapel (begun in 1440), next to the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce; this was a chapter house for Santa Croce, commissioned by the Pazzi family. The Pazzi Chapel is noted for the geometric clarity of its proportions, articulation of wall surface, and luminous dome.

Our next illustration is the façade of Brunelleschi's San Lorenzo (c. 1422–1428), the church of the Medici family. The façade was never completed. The San Lorenzo nave displays the serenity of an architecture devised from a proportional system. Rationality is equated with Humanism. This is the first great Renaissance achievement in church architecture. *Pietra serena*, a gray “serene stone,” was used to create a sense of peace in the church.

We now turn to the work of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472). His bronze *Self-Portrait* (c. 1435) is signed with his initials on the right side. This was probably made in Florence while Alberti was writing his first important treatise, “On Painting.” This is one of the earliest examples of realistic portraiture in Florence. Note the relation to Roman profile portrait medals and the

Alberti's Rucellai Palace (c. late 1440s, Florence) was built for Giovanni Rucellai, a Florentine merchant, but it was never finished; only about two-thirds of the façade was realized.

Classical drapery around the neck. Beneath his chin is his personal emblem, a winged eye.

Alberti's Rucellai Palace (c. late 1440s, Florence) was built for Giovanni Rucellai, a Florentine merchant, but it was never finished; only about two-thirds of the façade was realized. Alberti designed it but did not oversee the construction, which was managed by Bernardo Rossellino, an architect and sculptor. Even though unfinished, it still influenced later palace design. The façade is three stories of equal height, built of stone, with large square doors and small square windows on the ground floor; in such palaces, the ground floor was always massive and partly fortified in appearance. On the upper floors, large square windows are divided by a mullion and topped by a design of three semicircles enclosed by a wide stone arch. On all levels, the façade was given a screen-like grid by the application of *pilasters* (flattened columns) and by broad horizontal friezes. A massive cornice crowned and enclosed the architectural composition. This composition is not randomly arranged but mathematically determined by a system of proportion that also brought the façade into harmony with human proportions. The linear divisions of the stone façade do not always correspond to the actual blocks of stone—they are imposed upon it—nor are the pilasters at all structural.

The next image represents the façade of the church of Santa Maria Novella (c. 1458–1470, Florence) by Alberti. Giovanni Rucellai also paid the commission to finish this façade. Alberti was asked to design the façade to complete the earlier church, although a façade had been commenced around 1300, and the Gothic elements and typically Italian use of contrasting colors of marble introduced then are still present. Alberti introduced the arcade on the lower story to unite the earlier elements, then designed a wide strip—more a mezzanine than a frieze—to separate the two stories. The second story is given a temple-like appearance, dominated by a large rose window and a steep gable. The problem of church façade design stemmed from elevation, with three naves below and a narrower clerestory level. To make the transition less abrupt (and to disguise the buttress supports for the upper walls of the central nave), Alberti introduced two spectacular volutes. They are decorative and double-curved to smooth out the composition, and they have an important structural role.

Outside of Florence, Alberti designed two churches in Mantua. Our example shows one of these, Sant' Andrea, designed in 1470 but built after Alberti's death. Here, Alberti has produced a great temple, with deep roots in the imperial Roman architectural tradition. The tripartite façade is derived directly from the Roman triumphal arch. Compare the Sant' Andrea façade and the Arch of Titus (81 A.D.). Instead of the attic story on the Roman arch, Alberti tops his façade with a temple gable. Our example shows the Sant' Andrea nave. Its barrel-vaulted single nave and its transverse barrel-vaulted chapels are borrowed from the Basilica of Constantine in Rome (c. 310–320 A.D.). This church became one of the most influential models for later churches, from Bramante and Michelangelo's new St. Peter's in Rome to well into the 17th and 18th centuries. Alberti is one of the seminal figures in Renaissance culture because of his architecture and because of his writings on art and architectural theory and practice. ■

Works Discussed

Leon Battista Alberti:

Church of S. Andrea, begun 1470, Mantua, Italy.

Church of Sta. Maria Novella, 1458–70, Florence, Italy.

Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1452–70, Florence, Italy.

Self-Portrait, 1435, bronze medallion, 8 x 5 ½» (20.3 x 13 cm),
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

Filippo Brunelleschi:

Cathedral of Sta. Maria del Fiore (Duomo), Florence, Italy.

Church of S. Lorenzo, begun 1419, Florence, Italy.

Ospedale degli Innocenti (Foundling Hospital), 1419–24, Piazza SS.
Annunziata, Florence, Italy.

Pazzi Chapel, c. 1440–61, Church of Sta. Croce, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

King, *Brunelleschi's Dome*.

Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does architecture reflect our cultural traditions and values? (Consider Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents. Would this be built today?)
2. Many architects, such as Brunelleschi and Alberti, were also artists. How are the two subjects related?

Masaccio and Early Renaissance Painting

Lecture 13

The Brancacci Chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine was a family chapel, and it was destined to become Masaccio's most famous work, indeed one of the high points of Italian painting and European painting.

This lecture focuses on Masaccio, although it pays tribute to his predecessors, including Giotto and Masolino. Tommaso de Ser Giovanni (1401–1428)—nicknamed Masaccio, from *Maso* meaning “Tom” and *accio* meaning “ungainly” or “large,” but we don’t know for certain what he looked like. Masaccio was born in a village near Florence on the Arno River. At 20, he enrolled in the Guild of St. Luke’s, the painter’s guild in Florence.

In 1425, he was hired to work with the painter Masolino, who had already begun to decorate a chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Maria del Carmine. The Brancacci family chapel became Masaccio’s most famous work and one of the highpoints of Italian and European painting. Soon after he began work on the Brancacci Chapel, he was asked to paint a polyptych in Pisa for the Church of the Carmine. There may have been a connection between the two churches, because Masaccio was permitted to take the new commission. This altarpiece was later dismembered and sold in pieces.

Our example shows a part of this altarpiece, the *Madonna and Child Enthroned* (1426). This painting is monumental and deeply affecting despite its damaged state. The deep blue of the Madonna’s robe is preserved. Note that the Christ Child is putting grapes in his mouth. These symbolize wine, which in turn, signifies Christ’s blood and the Eucharist. Note also the base, the design of which was borrowed from Roman sarcophagi. Compare this work to Giotto’s *Ognissanti Madonna* (c. 1310), done more than a century earlier. The deep humanity that Giotto expressed at the beginning of the Trecento was reborn in Masaccio’s painting.

Our next example shows the Brancacci Chapel (1425–1427, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence) from the right transept. The walls of the Brancacci

Chapel are divided into two tiers, which are then subdivided into narrative fields. There are two small and two large scenes on each of the side walls and two scenes on each side of the altar on the end wall. Over the altar is a Tuscan painting in an Italo-Byzantine style, *Madonna del Carmine* (c. 1250). The subject of the cycle is the life of St. Peter. Peter, who was the first pope, was symbolically associated with the papal party, dominant in Florence at the time. The constant struggle during these decades between the two political powers—the Guelphs and the Ghibellines—is famous in late medieval and early Renaissance history. Significantly, this family chapel was founded in the late 14th century by Piero (Peter) Brancacci and dedicated to his patron saint, Peter.

Masolino was joined in decorating the chapel by Masaccio. Masolino painted the vault, paintings that were destroyed and later replaced by 18th-century works, and three other scenes before leaving for work abroad. Masaccio stayed on, painting five and a half scenes before leaving for Rome. The Brancacci patron was sent into political exile, and the chapel remained unfinished for 60 years, until around 1484, when Filippino Lippi was hired to complete the remaining three and a half scenes.

Our example shows a view of the right wall worked on by Masolino (upper wall) and Filippino Lippi (lower wall). Masolino's *St. Peter Healing a Cripple* (left) and the *Raising of Tabitha* (right) form a simultaneous narrative, both involving St. Peter in the act of healing. Note the marvelous view of daily urban life and the elegantly dressed gentlemen at center—the Brancacci were in the silk trade.

Masolino and Masaccio appear to have worked well together in the chapel, and the two may have already collaborated in 1424 on another altarpiece. Masaccio's painting was bolder and broader than Masolino's, which reflected the International style that was still very much in vogue. Masolino's *Temptation of Adam and Eve* is representative of the International Gothic style. It is an elegant painting, although the figures are bland. Directly opposite Masolino's *Temptation* is Masaccio's *Expulsion of Adam and Eve*. The contrast is remarkable, stylistically and emotionally. The *Expulsion* was painted with great speed and freedom. Masaccio completed it in just four days, with one day each spent on the angel, Adam, Eve, and the gate.

On the left wall of the chapel is the largest painting by Masaccio, *The Tribute Money*. This unusual subject tells a story from the Gospel of St. Matthew (17:24–27). While Jesus and his disciples were in Capernaum, a tax collector demanded that they pay the local temple tax. Peter was angry, but Jesus told him to go to the lake and retrieve a fish that held a gold coin in its mouth. Peter then paid the tax collector. In the center group are Jesus, the tax collector, and Peter. The painting tells the story in a three-part composition within a continuous landscape. The subject must have been chosen because the chapel was dedicated to Peter. It could also be related to the imposition of a recent tax for defense against invading armies. Note the center group—the powerful faces and figures are reminiscent of ancient Roman art and Giotto’s art. Compare this work with Giotto’s *Capture of Christ* (c. 1305, Arena Chapel).

Masaccio’s painting was bolder and broader than Masolino’s, which reflected the International style that was still very much in vogue.

One of Masaccio’s three scenes on the altar wall includes the *Baptism of the Neophytes* (upper tier to the right of the altar). This scene is from the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter preached in Jerusalem and 3,000 people were converted and baptized. The scene’s three male nude figures are typically Renaissance. Note the mountains and the sensation of cold.

Another one of Masaccio’s scenes on the altar wall is *St. Peter Healing with His Shadow* (lower wall to the left of the altar). It is drawn from Acts 5:12–14, where we read that believers “brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” Inspired by this passage, Masaccio invented this scene. Not since Giotto painted in the Arena Chapel had any fresco cycle deserved to be called monumental, though some were larger or more ambitious. In the wake of stylistic reversals of the late 14th century, Masaccio revived Giotto’s powerful figure style. However, Masaccio’s figures move with greater naturalness, a potential that was inspired by Renaissance Humanism.

Our next image shows Masaccio's *The Trinity* (c. 1428, Santa Maria Novella), an extraordinary fresco in the left-side aisle of the church. It was probably painted shortly before the artist's departure for Rome. The fresco, nearly 22 feet high, consists of an elaborate fictive architectural setting, similar to an elevated chapel. Everything is governed by a perspective system presumed to have been invented by Brunelleschi. *One-point perspective* is also called *scientific* or *mathematical perspective*. It is a formula for constructing pictorial space in which apparently three-dimensional figures or buildings seem to be situated as they are in reality. The picture space may be thought of as an extension of the real world or as a separate world, depending on how the system is applied.

The perspective system is also applied to each of the figures and objects in a technique called *foreshortening*. Because this illusion of space is constructed with lines, the system is called *linear perspective*. An example would be a painting of a large room with a tiled floor, in which the horizontal lines parallel to the picture plane intersect with diagonal lines. The diagonals recede into the picture space in the way parallel lines in the real world, such as railroad tracks, are perceived by our eyes as if they were converging in the distance. The point at which the diagonals meet is called the *vanishing point* and is located on the horizon line, usually near the center of the picture. Because this point is aligned with our viewpoint, the picture space can seem like an extension of our space. Leon Battista Alberti first published an explanation of this system in 1435. He used a helpful analogy—that the painted picture surface was like a window.

In his fresco *The Trinity*, Masaccio applied the principles of perspective brilliantly. Perhaps Brunelleschi was associated with the planning of the composition and spatial illusion. Above the tomb are two figures kneeling outside of the architectural chapel. It appears that there are two tall pilasters with columns, an architrave, a red arch, and a barrel vault. Six figures, the patron and his wife, the Virgin Mary, St. John, Jesus, and God the Father, are pictured. Although the other figures are depicted in rational space, God is depicted non-rationally within that illusionistic space. Note the composition of the interlocking pyramids, one from the two donors' base to the head of God and one created by the convergence of the vault's receding diagonals at a point near the bottom of the cross—a point exactly at eye level for an

average person. The intersection of the two pyramids—two triangles—is in the body of the crucified Christ.

The concept of the Trinity—three in one, one in three—is a central tenet of Catholicism that has been debated for centuries. However, Masaccio has conceived and achieved a powerful pictorial comprehension of this intellectual, emotional, and theological concept.

In 1428, having completed *The Trinity* fresco in Santa Maria Novella, Masaccio left for Rome, summoned to another project. Surely he intended to return to Florence to complete the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, but he died in Rome in 1428 at age 26. Despite his short life, he changed the course of Western European art forever. ■

Works Discussed

Masaccio:

Expulsion of Adam and Eve, The Tribute Money, Baptism of the Neophytes, St. Peter Healing with His Shadow, c. 1425–28, fresco, Brancacci Chapel, Church of Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy.

Madonna and Child Enthroned, 1426, tempera on panel, 53 ¼ x 28 ¾” (135.5 x 73 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

The Trinity, c. 1428, fresco, 22’ x 10’ 5” (6.4 x 3.2 m), Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.

Masolino:

St. Peter Healing a Cripple, Raising of Tabitha, and Temptation of Adam and Eve, c. 1424–25, fresco, Brancacci Chapel, Church of Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Ahl, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Masaccio*.

Casazza, *Masaccio and the Brancacci Chapel*.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the introduction of one-point perspective change painting?
2. Does Masaccio's *Trinity* fresco successfully depict the concept he was trying to express? Think about verbal versus pictorial representation.

Jan van Eyck and Northern Renaissance Art

Lecture 14

In this and the next lecture, we are turning our attention back to northern Europe, which we last visited when we looked at Gothic art outside of France, around the year 1300.

In this lecture, we will focus on Jan van Eyck, one of the most famous artists in history. We will discuss two of his works, the *Arnolfini Wedding Portrait* and the *Ghent Altarpiece* in the Church of San Bavo. Both of these works display Renaissance elements that were developing at the time. In addition, we will note some of the differences between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance.

The duchy of Burgundy was identical with the geographic area called the Netherlands, and its political power and independence were supported by a prosperous economy based on production and trade. Its proximity to England, roads into the continent, and access to water routes gave it an excellent trading position. The dukes of Burgundy and the city governments were careful to control all aspects of production and trade through guilds.

Burgundy was roughly equal to the area of modern Belgium, whereas Flanders was a more narrowly defined territory. The modern kingdom of the Netherlands was in the northernmost part of Burgundy and played a relatively small role in the economy and art of the 15th century. Many names have been used to describe this region and its culture, but whether we call it Burgundy or Belgium or speak of Flemish or Netherlandish art is irrelevant as long as we keep chronology in mind.

Art in the Netherlands in the 15th century went hand-in-hand with economic and political factors, and the production of and trade in art benefited greatly from politics. Undeniably, northern Europeans shared the curiosity and sense of discovery that characterized the Italian Renaissance. That included an interest in the observable physical appearance of the world and the place of humans in that world. This, rather than stylistic considerations or an interest in antiquity, is what justifies speaking of a Northern Renaissance.

Jan van Eyck (c. 1390–1441) is one of the most famous artists of the Northern Renaissance, often thought of as the “inventor” of oil painting. Van Eyck served as a diplomat and painter, and his art was known and collected throughout Europe. Although he actually did not invent oil painting, he employed it with great skill. *Oil painting* is the medium in which pigments are suspended in linseed or walnut oil. This method was widely used in the southern Netherlands when van Eyck began to paint. It is a slow-drying medium but durable when dry. The artist is able to paint more slowly, add detail more easily than when working in tempera or fresco, and render changes invisible. Oil painting also offers transparency and brilliant color. The effects of light and shade, reflection and atmosphere, gave the artist more possibilities than in tempera painting and created a greater illusion of realism.

Our example shows van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Wedding Portrait* (c. 1434). We see a man and a woman in a bedchamber with a dog at their feet. Their size is relatively large, but they are not looking at us. The room is lit by a window at the left; light glides across the back wall to the bed at right, and the couple is lit by an unseen source. Some 90 years ago, a critic observed that in its color effect, this and other paintings by van Eyck showed the same characteristics as Rembrandt’s paintings. They are warm and golden, with a darkness that glows with color. This is made possible by the oil medium, but it is a measure of van Eyck’s genius that he could use the medium at a level that could be compared with Rembrandt’s painting of two centuries later.

The painting has long been called the *Arnolfini Wedding* or *Marriage*, but the idea that it represents a wedding, which evolved in the 16th century, is much disputed. The couple is almost certainly Giovanni Arnolfini, an Italian merchant in the Netherlands, and his wife, Giovanna Cenami. The scholar Erwin Panofsky tried to demonstrate that this was a private marriage ceremony. It was unnecessary to have either a priest or a civil authority for a valid marriage, but there are two witnesses reflected in the convex mirror. One is the painter, who also signed the painting above the mirror: “Jan van Eyck was here, 1434.” In Panofsky’s view, the painting serves as a kind of marriage certificate.

There are many symbols that could support the idea of a marriage, but they also can support the view that the painting is a symbol of the close relationship of the couple. The dog symbolizes fidelity, shoes removed allude to sanctity, the spotless mirror equals purity, a single burning candle implies matrimony and unity, and the fruit on the windowsill could indicate innocence before the Fall. The mood of the painting sanctifies the marriage, whether it is the actual ceremony or the continuity of married life. Every object and person in the painting is studied by the artist with the idea that they are worthy of scrutiny, because the visible world was symbolic of the invisible, higher reality.

Our next image shows another van Eyck work, the *Ghent Altarpiece* (c. 1432), a polyptych painted in oil. This is the greatest monument of early Flemish painting. The principal subject is the *Adoration of the Lamb*. Today the *Ghent Altarpiece* is not continually opened and closed, but all its panels are arranged to be visible to the visitor. Originally, it would most often have been closed, as seen here. At the top, two prophets flank two sibyls, pagan women who were believed to have prophesized the coming of Christ. In the middle tier is the *Annunciation*, and on the bottom tier, the donors flank what appear to be two sculptures of saints.

Though we say that this altarpiece was painted by Jan van Eyck, the inscription seems to credit Hubert van Eyck, Jan's brother, as principal painter. However, we know virtually nothing about Hubert beyond this inscription, and usually only God, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist on the interior are assumed to be his, because their style and scale are different. One widely accepted theory is that Jan honored his deceased brother by placing his name first on the altarpiece, which Hubert may have begun as early as 1420, but which Jan finished after his death. This altarpiece was for the donors' chapel in the crypt below the choir, and it was moved up to a chapel in the ambulatory behind the choir in the 16th century. In recent years, it has been transferred to a new room constructed at the front of the nave where visitors can see it without disrupting services.

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Our next image shows a detail of the donors with St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. The donors were Jodocus Vyd and his wife, Isabel Borluut. The passage is a striking example of the descriptive realism of Netherlandish portraiture in the 15th century. Like Enrico Scrovegni and the Arena Chapel, it seems that this couple had a particular reason to commission this altarpiece and offer money to the church—to redeem the family name. Jodocus was the son of the treasurer of the duke of Burgundy, and his father was imprisoned for theft. Altarpieces in northern Europe were often dominated by sculpture, or painting shared the space with sculpture, to a much greater degree than in Italy. Many altarpieces had wooden sculpture because of the great forests in the region. Marble sculpture was less common. Imitated marble sculpture was sometimes introduced into illusionistic niches, as van Eyck has done here.

The second middle level contains the central image of the exterior of the altarpiece with the *Annunciation*. The Archangel Gabriel is at the left, and the Virgin Mary is on the right. The drapery is sharply sculptural but is given the warm tone of muslin, as the figures themselves are rendered in flesh tones. As in Simone Martini's *Annunciation*, Gabriel's spoken words are printed out here, in Gothic script, *Ave gratia plena* ("Hail thou that art full of grace"). Words also proceed from Mary's head, *ecce ancilla* ("Behold the handmaid of the Lord"). These words are inscribed upside down so that they may be read not by the viewer but by God! The dove of the Holy Spirit above Mary's head marks the conception of Jesus. Mary's side of the painting contains a niche in a wall that houses a *lavábo* (a hand-washing dish), a pitcher, and a white towel, each signifying purity and virginity. Above the pitcher is a trefoil window, the three circles symbolizing the Trinity.

When the *Ghent Altarpiece* wings are folded outward to reveal the interior, we see that the space is divided into two levels. The upper level shows the three huge figures thought to be painted by Hubert van Eyck: God the Father, flanked by Mary and St. John the Baptist. This central trio is flanked by two panels painted with groups of musical angels. The figures of Adam on the left and Eve on the right close the sequence. The lower level shows a large multi-figure composition, the thematic focus of the altarpiece, the *Adoration of the Lamb*. There is a pair of panels on each side, and as with the *Annunciation* on the outside, the entire space is represented as continuous.

Adam and Eve, shown after the Fall, represent sinful mankind, and they look toward the enthroned Lord, flanked by Mary and John, who in Catholic theology, are intercessors on behalf of mankind. Mary is also considered a second Eve, redeeming Eve's original sin. Adam is a bearded, full-length nude with detailed anatomy, though covered with a fig leaf. Above the small arch with his name is a sculpture showing the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Note that Adam's feet seem to be below the level of the frame; van Eyck has painted him in a foreshortened view as we see him from the floor level. Eve is holding a small golden fruit "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," not the traditional apple (which has no scriptural basis). Above her is a sculpture of Cain slaying Abel, the first murder following the revelation of good and evil to Eve and Adam. Adam and Eve are un-idealized, with a particular poignancy in their faces, in the curves of Eve's body, and in the musculature of Adam.

The center trio shows the Virgin Mary, God the Father, and St. John the Baptist. This hieratic presentation is close to a standard Byzantine composition. However, the figures do not show the careful observation in realistic representation that is characteristic of the rest of the altarpiece. Between Eve and the Baptist is a smaller, arched panel dominated by an organ played by an angel in a brocaded robe. The faces of four other musical angels are seen behind the organ. The nearest plays a viol while another plays a small harp. Musicians and instruments are well-represented in Netherlandish art of this period. On the left is a group of eight angelic singers behind an elaborate music stand. These are perhaps the only angels without wings in Netherlandish painting of the century. Compare them to Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria* in the Duomo in Florence.

The lower half of the opened altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Lamb* has a landscape teeming with figures. This is flanked by groups on the left and the right. These groups have come to worship the Lamb; most of them belong to the community of saints. The left side depicts Christian knights led by St. George. Behind them are the Just Judges, which may refer to a specific group of dignitaries in Ghent. The original panel was stolen during World War II and has not been recovered. The right side presents the nearest group, Christian hermits. Behind them are pilgrims, led by the giant St. Christopher.

The center panel and largest painting is the *Adoration of the Lamb*. Set in a remarkable landscape, it is as wide as the combined panels of Mary, God, and St. John above it. The title is sometimes given as *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* or *Sacred Lamb*. The Lamb is Jesus and represents sacrifice, the Mass, and the Eucharist. It derives from the Book of Revelation in the Bible, “in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” The interior of the Ghent Altar may be called an *all-saints picture*, in which believing souls gather in worship. It has a pyramidal composition with an intuitive, not mathematical, perspective. Note the high horizon line.

The large groups of figures converge on a central axis of a fountain in the foreground and an altar above it. At lower right are the dignitaries of the Church, including popes and bishops. On the left are gathered patriarchs, poets, and philosophers, mostly Old Testament characters. The fountain is the fountain of baptism, therefore redemption, the fountain of eternal life. Emerging from the foliage at left are confessors and martyrs, while the virgin martyrs are seen to the right. Note van Eyck’s depictions of plants and other living things, which are accurate and highly detailed.

The central act is simple, despite being clothed in symbolism. It is Christ in the guise of the Lamb, his blood pouring into a chalice offered by the Church. The landscape continues to *Heavenly Jerusalem*, with its richly detailed architecture. The landscape is contiguous with that of the central *Adoration*. The beginnings of northern European painting are here, from the Naturalism of detail to the broad sweep of unifying landscape, from the preoccupation with Christian themes to the embracing of the Humanistic response to the world. ■

Works Discussed

Jan van Eyck:

Arnolfini Wedding Portrait, 1434, oil on panel, 32 ¼ x 23 ½” (82.2 x 60 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Ghent Altarpiece, 1432, oil on panel, closed: 12 ½ x 8 ½’ (3.5 x 2.2 m), open: 12 ½ x 17’ (3.4 x 4.4 m), Cathedral of St. Bavo, Ghent, Belgium.

Suggested Reading

Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist*.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Jan van Eyck's work differ from the Italian Renaissance style we have examined in previous lectures?
2. How does the medium of oil painting differ from the use of tempera?

Northern Renaissance Altarpieces

Lecture 15

In the second of the lectures we are devoting to the Northern Renaissance, we are going to look at a handful of remarkable altarpieces and one very beautiful portrait in contrast; that is the content of this lecture. ... [T]hese large altarpieces will help us to observe the remarkable expressive and stylistic range of 15th-century northern painting through these masterpieces.

We will see how three artists, Robert Campin, Rogier van der Weyden, and Hugo van der Goes, depicted religious subjects on their altarpieces. In addition, we will explore the expressive and stylistic range of northern painting, examine elements of symbolism, and relate advances in technique in these works.

Robert Campin (c. 1375/80–1444) was one of the founders of Netherlandish painting. Campin worked in Tournai, south of Bruges and Ghent, and his paintings often incorporate views of the town. Our first example is his oil-on-panel triptych of the *Annunciation*, picturing the donors and St. Joseph (c. 1425). This is sometimes referred to as the *Mérode Altarpiece* for the family that owned it for many years. It was commissioned around 1425 by a couple named Inghelbrechts in the city of Tournai. This portable altarpiece is only 25” x 46” when open. On the left wing, the donors are seen kneeling in a small courtyard just outside a door that leads to the room in which the Annunciation unfolds. The woman was added, probably after the couple was married, since she is painted over the grass. A servant stands at the gate to the town; one historian has suggested that this is a self-portrait of Robert Campin.

On the central panel is the *Virgin of Humility*, who seems not to notice the angel who has come through the door. The *lavábo* and towel in the niche parallel those we saw in the Ghent Altar *Annunciation* and carry the same symbolic meaning. The lilies on the table also refer to Mary’s virginity and the Incarnation. The Incarnation is imminent; a tiny figure carrying a miniature cross has entered the room through the glass window at the left,

without breaking it, signifying the perpetual virginity of Mary. Everything in the room can be read symbolically, but we also are affected by its warmth. Although the angular drawing of the robes reflects the style of traditional Gothic art, the comfortable interior reflects a contemporary Flemish home and furnishings.

On the right wing is Joseph's workshop. He was a carpenter, and he is busily boring holes in a board, probably the top of a stool. The image also shows Joseph's mousetraps, which are meant to catch the devil—an analogy of St. Augustine's, in which the Incarnation was devised to fool the devil, as mice are fooled by bait. One trap is shown on Joseph's work table and another on a ledge projecting from his window. Although this work is very small, the others that we will study are quite large. In all of them, the artists have lavished their attention on small details even while constructing larger forms. The ability to paint small details with compelling clarity is a mark of artistic genius, not just a technical accomplishment. When viewers look at these paintings closely, they are entering the painted world in an entirely new way—through the looking-glass into both the microcosm and the macrocosm of the world. Once immersed in the painted universe of the Flemish masters, you are launched on a fascinating voyage of visual and intellectual discovery. This can only happen completely in front of the *original* paintings.

Our next image shows Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition* (c. 1435). Rogier was the pupil of Robert Campin, but he was of a different temperament. This altarpiece is one of the most startlingly original of all Flemish paintings. The body of Christ is lowered into the center of the picture, but the scene is not realistic. Set in a shallow, golden, box-like space rather than a landscape, it resembles a painted wooden sculpture. This painting was above an altar. Therefore, the upward projection of the panel might have suggested the moment during the Mass when the priests elevate the Host, the wafer representing the body of Christ. Moreover, the nearly horizontal position of the body suggests a lowering of it onto the altar table.

Note the emotional significance of the 10 closely packed figures. St. John and Mary Magdalene bracket the scene. The cross is short and seems to grow from Christ's body. The colors are varied and intense. The detail shows the hands of Christ and the Virgin. The realism is intense, yet it is placed in an

artificial situation, suggesting painted sculpture that has come to life. The anguish in this painting is expressed in many subtle and vivid ways. St. Mary Magdalene displays a physical spasm of grief, while the female saint whose head is at the far left internalizes her grief. She almost presses it back into her head, but her head and neck cloth betray her emotions, made visible by the tightly pulled creases and knots. This public altarpiece is also one of the most private, personal devotional pictures of the 15th century, a compelling response to intense contemplation.

A decade later, Rogier fulfilled a major commission for the Hôtel-Dieu (“hostel of God”), a hospital at Beaune, south of Dijon in present-day France. The building has survived, and its interior has been restored to a semblance of its original appearance, but the altarpiece has been moved to another part of the monastery. Our illustration shows the courtyard at the hospital at Beaune. The interior shows the main ward (*grand salle*), built from 1443–1451. Nicholas Rolin, the powerful chancellor of Burgundy under Duke Philip the Good, wanted to build a hospital for the poor. The plan was a response to a great famine in 1438–1439 which, together with epidemics, had devastated Burgundy. Rolin offered a detailed plan for the use, design, and equipping of the hospital, as well as for financing it in perpetuity. In 1442, the pope approved the plan and granted exemption from feudal taxation and the control of neighboring bishops.

Rogier’s *Altarpiece of the Last Judgment* (c. 1445–1448) is on the exterior. When closed, the tall central section showed two fictive sculptures of the Annunciation at the top, with fictive sculptures of St. Sebastian and St. Anthony Abbot below. Both saints regularly were invoked for protection against the plague. The flanking panels are portraits of Chancellor Rolin and his wife, Guigone de Salins. The hospital complex also was to serve as their funerary monument to secure the absolution of their sins, as an exchange of temporal goods for spiritual benefits. This sober exterior, all imitation white marble and black robes, opens to an explosion of color and dramatic figures in the *Last Judgment*.

The *Last Judgment* in the interior has nine panels. Looking at the bottom of this painting, we see the dead arise from their earthly graves and head toward their eternal reward. The blessed are on Christ’s right and the eternally

damned are on Christ's left. Above them are the figures of the apostles, the Pope, Philip the Good, Rolin and his wife, the Virgin Mary, and St. John the Baptist. In the tall center panel is Christ, enthroned on a rainbow, with St. Michael. In the small flanking panels are angels bearing the instruments of Christ's Passion. Christ dispenses final judgment with his gestures, while St. Michael weighs the souls to see how heavily their sins weigh upon them. One of the most magnificent figures in 15th-century painting is St. Michael. He is tall and elegant, a perfect vertical center pole for the altarpiece.

***Adoration of the Shepherds* shows un-idealized shepherds with Naturalistic details that had an immediate impact on Florentine artists.**

Flemish painting includes many smaller and more direct works, such as van der Weyden's *Portrait of a Lady* (c. 1460).

Our next altarpiece is unusual because it was painted in the Netherlands for an Italian patron, then shipped to Florence for placement in the Church of Sant' Egidio at the

Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova about eight years after completion. This work is Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece* (c. 1475–1476). The patron was Tommaso Portinari, the head of the Medici bank in Bruges. Because this painting was intended to go to Italy, the figures are monumental or, to put it in other words, in their scale and proportions, they are more Italian than northern. This work demonstrates that painstaking detail is also found in a large painting. The descriptive realism and atmospheric richness of the oil medium overwhelmed the Italian public and artists. The painting became one of the most influential foreign paintings in Florence in the Renaissance. On the left wing are Tommaso Portinari, his sons, and their hieratic patron saints, with a rocky landscape behind them. On the right wing are Portinari's wife, Maria Baroncelli, their daughter, and saints. The barren landscape brought a Flemish winter to Florence.

The *Adoration of the Shepherds* shows un-idealized shepherds with Naturalistic details that had an immediate impact on Florentine artists. Everyone is seen adoring the child—Joseph, Mary, and the angels. The child is not in a manger but on the bare floor, with only his own radiance to support him. This scene is also symbolic. Note the angel with the priest's

vestment, on the edge of which is embroidered the words *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*. In a variation on similar sacramental paintings, the infant is on the ground among the adoring throng. Everything points to an embodiment of the mystery of transubstantiation, which is the Mass. This painting was displayed above the high altar of St. Egidius. The still life of flowers in the foreground would have been at eye level, its compelling realism pulling the viewer into the painting just in front of the Christ Child.

Shortly after painting the *Portinari Altarpiece*, van der Goes painted another remarkable altarpiece with the same subject, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (c. 1480). We will not dwell on this painting, but we should note how different it is in conception. The wide, low format compels the shepherds to bend over as they rush into the stable, forcing them to kneel like Joseph and Mary.

The subject is treated almost like a vision, as two prophets draw back curtains on either side. One looks directly at us with a tragic expression as they invite us to witness and even to kneel ourselves. The intensity of van der Goes's paintings was undoubtedly related to his inner life. His emotional equilibrium was uncertain. Like another artist from the Netherlands 400 years later, Vincent Van Gogh, he was often on the psychological brink. He died in a monastery after mental collapse and attempted suicide. But he left us paintings that instill a sense of awe—in believer and nonbeliever—in the presence of the divine mysteries. ■

Works Discussed

Robert Campin:

The Annunciation Triptych (Mérode Triptych), c. 1425, oil on wood, overall (open): 25 3/8 x 46 3/8" (64.5 x 117.8 cm), central panel: 25 1/4 x 24 7/8" (64.1 x 63.2 cm), each wing: 25 3/8 x 10 3/4" (64.5 x 27.3 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Hugo van der Goes:

Adoration of the Shepherds, c. 1480, oil on panel, 3' 2 ¼" x 8' (99 x 240 cm), Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, Germany.

Portinari Altarpiece, c. 1475–76, oil on panel, center panel: 8 x 10' (2.4 x 3 m), lateral panels: 8 x 5' (2.4 x 1.5 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Rogier van der Weyden:

Altarpiece of the Last Judgment, c. 1445–48, oil on panel, open: 7 x 18' (2.1 x 5.4 m), Musée de l'Hôtel Dieu, Beaune, France.

Deposition, c. 1435, oil on panel, 7' 2 ½" x 8' 7" (220 x 262 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Portrait of a Lady, c. 1460, oil on panel, 13 3/8 x 10 1/16" (34 x 25.5 cm), Andrew W. Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Suggested Reading

Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist*.

Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence*.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*.

Questions to Consider

1. The artwork on altarpieces was usually commissioned. In what ways would this possibly affect an artist's work?
2. Despite a painting's size, it can have minute detail. Name a small detail in one of the works discussed in this lecture that you noticed that added significantly to the painting's subject.

Piero della Francesca in Arezzo

Lecture 16

Unlike most of the Italian artists we have studied so far, Piero della Francesca, who was born about 1420 and lived until 1492, was not from Florence or Siena, or any of the major Tuscan centers of art, nor did he spend much time in them. He did, of course, visit these cities and work briefly in Florence.

Looking at three of his paintings, we will continue in the same vein as previous lectures by exploring his artistic renditions of sacred subjects, his use of symbolism, and his handling of specific Renaissance techniques. We will take a closer look at the rigorously designed paintings for which Piero is famous and discuss some of the artistic influences apparent in his works.

Piero was born and died in the village of Borgo San Sepolcro, belonging to the Papal States. He spent his career painting in small cities, such as Urbino and Arezzo. His fame did not spread much beyond those places until the 20th century, when a perceived quality of geometric abstraction in his figure compositions attracted the attention of modernist painters and critics.

Our example shows Piero's *Baptism of Christ* (c. 1450). This was painted for a church in San Sepolcro as the center panel of a triptych, although the wings are by another artist. It was sold to a private collector in London in 1859 and was acquired by London's National Gallery in 1861, a remarkably early time for a museum to have shown interest in Piero's art. The composition has an arched top that includes extensive landscape and figures. If we follow the arched top, inscribing an imaginary circle below, it includes the head and shoulders of St. John the Baptist and Christ. The painting is divided vertically by the figure of Christ and divided horizontally in many other places with geometrical clarity. Compare the figures to *Baptism of the Neophytes* in Masaccio's Brancacci Chapel; the nude figures are surely the inspiration for Piero's figures.

Arezzo is a provincial town about 40 miles from Florence, which would seldom be visited by modern tourists were it not for the important fresco cycle that Piero painted, the *Legend of the True Cross*. This was painted in the chancel of the church of San Francesco. Piero would have seen the same subject painted in the same location in the Florentine church of Santa Croce. That fresco cycle of the 1380s was especially appropriate, because the church was dedicated to the Holy Cross. These pre-Renaissance paintings would have offered a model for the individual subjects from the legend but not for Piero's unique style. The complex *Legend of the True Cross* is a medieval narrative that can be read in the *Golden Legend*, an essential source for the lives of the saints. Compiled by a Dominican friar (later archbishop) in Genoa named Jacobus de Voragine around 1260, it is also the principal source for the story of the True Cross. The decoration of the chancel in San Francesco was begun by another artist who died after completion of the vault, which gave Piero the opportunity to paint the main scenes. Despite severe water damage, the cycle remains a pilgrimage goal for lovers of Renaissance art.

We will look at three views of the walls of the chancel so that the layout can be visualized. The largest frescoes are on the lateral walls, three on each, and there are two smaller scenes on each side of the tall Gothic window at the end of the chancel. The right wall contains the *Death of Adam* at the top, the *Story of Solomon and Sheba* in the middle, and the *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge* on the bottom. This last scene is preceded by the *Dream of Constantine*, painted on the window wall abutting the battle scene. The left wall comprises the *Battle of Heraclius and Chosroes*, out of sequence at the bottom, and the *Discovery and Verification of the True Cross* in the middle, preceded by a scene on the window wall showing a Jew named Judas compelled to reveal where the cross was buried; this is next to the scene of *Discovery*. The *Emperor Heraclius Returns the Cross to Jerusalem* is seen at the top. The window wall represents the *Burial of the Wood* at the upper right, and the *Dream of Constantine* on the bottom right; the *Jew Removed from the Well* is on the top left, and the *Annunciation* is on the bottom left.

On the right wall, we will look closer at the *Death of Adam*. On the right side, Adam sits on the ground and Eve supports him, while his descendants contemplate his imminent death. Note the classical nude man leaning on his

staff. On the left side is a severely damaged scene in which Adam has died. His son, Seth, has obtained a shoot from the tree of knowledge of good and evil brought from Eden, and he plants it in Adam's mouth. In the background, an enormous tree has grown from that shoot. This is an alternative account, because the *Golden Legend* says that Seth planted it "over Adam's grave, where it grew to be a great tree and was still standing in Solomon's time."

Our next scene shows the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. Solomon had cut down the great tree, mentioned above, to use for building his temple, but because the beam fashioned from it was too large, he used it for a bridge. When the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, she stopped at the bridge, and having the gift of prophecy, she knew that it would one day become the cross on which the Savior would hang. Hearing her prophecy, Solomon believed that the beam would lead to the destruction of the kingdom of the Jews, so he had it buried deep in the Earth.

The painting is clearly divided into two sides. On the left is the Queen of Sheba and her entourage; the queen is pictured kneeling to adore the wood. Note the strong foreshortening of the white horse.

On the right, the queen is meeting with Solomon in a subdivided interior. Compare this scene to Giotto's *Marriage of the Virgin*. Piero probably had seen this work, and consciously or otherwise, it figures in his composition. Note the division into exterior and interior, the severe figure style, and the clearly conceived cells of space. However, Piero brings a more mathematical and rigorous system to his space using an interior cube and, for his figures, stylizes the noble volumes of Giotto.

Dream of Constantine depicts the story of the emperor's vision on the eve of battle against Maxentius. In his vision, Constantine saw the sign of the cross blazing in the sky, and an angel announced, "In this sign thou shalt conquer." He was unsure of the meaning until Christ appeared to him, telling

The Italian word *terribilitá*, which means "awesomeness," is often applied to Michelangelo's figures, particularly in the Sistine Chapel, but it is also applicable to Piero's *Resurrection*.

him to have a battle standard made with the sign of the cross. Constantine triumphed in the historic battle at the Milvian Bridge near Rome, which led to his conversion to Christianity.

Note the volume of the tent where Constantine sleeps. The scene is illuminated by a magical light, an angel carrying the sign of the cross that has been badly damaged. The light plays an important role in Constantine's vision. After this dream, Constantine sends his mother, Helena (St. Helen), to the Holy Land to find the True Cross.

Discovery and Verification of the True Cross is a two-part scene that is placed directly opposite the painting of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. The two scenes are against a common background and are reminiscent of Masaccio's *Tribute Money*, with its architectural perspective on the right and an atmospheric perspective in the deep space of the landscape on the left. Three crosses have been excavated, but the True Cross is found only during a funeral procession. The three crosses are held in turn over a dead man's body, which is restored to life with the True Cross. Note the powerful geometry of the architecture in the painting, which had no parallel yet in Renaissance Italy.

The next image shows the *Annunciation*, which doesn't seem to have any place in the cycle. For that reason, it is sometimes called the *Annunciation to St. Helen*, telling her where the cross can be found. It follows the standard iconography of the Annunciation to Mary, except that the dove of the Holy Spirit is nowhere to be seen. The dove may have been painted in *fresco secco* and, thus, may have flaked off. The two stories may have been intentionally merged.

We can consider another masterpiece of Piero's career, the *Resurrection* (c. late 1450s, Town Hall, Borgo San Sepolcro). This painting shows the tomb, a Classical sepulcher, behind the front of the pictorial space. The guards surround it, most of them asleep, although one appears to be waking. The painting is organized geometrically, with Christ's head at the top of a pyramid shape. The torso of Christ is Classical (archaic manner), and his left leg is raised in motion. There is another division down the middle and across the center, with the lines crossing precisely at the navel of Christ. Winter

and spring are both pictured in the landscape, which is symbolic of the Resurrection. Piero treats the subject objectively, letting it stand on its own. The Italian word *terribilità*, which means “awesomeness,” is often applied to Michelangelo’s figures, particularly in the Sistine Chapel, but it is also applicable to Piero’s *Resurrection*. The painting was made for the building in which it remains, the town hall of Borgo San Sepolcro, the name meaning town of the Holy Sepulcher. ■

Works Discussed

Piero della Francesca:

Baptism of Christ, c. 1450, tempera on panel, 66 x 46” (167 x 116 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Legend of the True Cross and details: *Death of Adam*, *Story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, *Dream of Constantine*, *Discovery and Verification of the True Cross*, *Annunciation*, c. 1455, fresco, Church of S. Francesco, Arezzo, Italy.

Resurrection, late 1450s, fresco, 7’ 6” x 6’ 6 ½” (228.6 x 198.3 cm), Pinacoteca Comunale, San Sepolcro, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Bertelli, *Piero della Francesca*.

Lightbown, *Piero Della Francesca*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does geometry contribute to Piero della Francesca’s paintings?
2. How does scene placement in a work like the *Legend of the True Cross* affect the overall significance or success of the art?

Sandro Botticelli

Lecture 17

Botticelli was very popular in Britain during this period. But, it is an oversimplification of Botticelli's art, as we shall see, to call him only a "master of linearity."

We will delve into many of Botticelli's works to develop an understanding of his artistic range. We will also consider the historical times in which he lived and focus on a few events that may have influenced his painting. In the late 19th century, no name in 15th-century Renaissance painting was held in higher regard than that of Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510). He had a reputation as one of the greatest masters of the single line, or pure linearity, and his elegant, attenuated figures, and his admirers were considered persons of high taste. Yet his reputation in his lifetime was tied to the turbulent political and religious events of the day, the fortunes of his Medici patrons, and his own changeable temperament. Botticelli fell from favor in the early 20th century, only to regain it as the range of intellectual and emotional expression in his art was better understood. It is this stylistic variety and the political upheaval of the last quarter of the 15th century that we will discuss in this lecture.

Our first image shows Botticelli's *Mars and Venus* (c. 1475–1478), which has also been dated in the 1480s. This is just one example of the dating problems with Botticelli. This painting was probably a decoration for a bed, bench, or chest to celebrate a wedding. The painting shows a sensually clothed Venus regarding her lover, the naked god of war Mars. Baby satyrs have taken over his helmet and lance, clearly a phallic symbol, and one blows a conch shell in his ear, but nothing wakes him from his deep sleep after lovemaking. Venus remains alert and in command. The pronounced sensuality of this painting often surprises the viewer who associates Botticelli with Madonnas. Venus's legs are wrapped in curving drapery, while those of Mars are angular. Botticelli uses line to create a plastic or three-dimensional quality. It has often been suggested that the mythological lovers should be associated with the famous platonic romance between Giuliano de' Medici and Simonetta Vespucci, given that *vespe* means "wasps," and some can be seen near Mars.

Two of Botticelli's most famous paintings were commissioned by the same secondary branch of the Medici family for a villa near Florence. The first of these is the *Primavera* ("Spring") (c. 1477–1478). This 10-foot-wide painting is symmetrical but with a suggestion of movement from the right toward the left. The figures are in an orange grove with a carpet of flowers. The central figure looking at us is *not* Spring but Venus, a Madonna-like figure who presides over the gathering in this grove dedicated to Love. Cupid is pictured above her. To the left of Venus are the Three Graces, thought to be her daughters and representing culture in Renaissance thought. At the far left is the god Mercury, the symbol of reason, who seems to be brushing away tiny clouds with his wand, in this sense, unclouding the mind.

The beautiful and tantalizing figures at the right are the North Wind Zephyr blowing in and seizing the nymph Chloris. She is saved from his attack by the Classical trick described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—changing her nature. Chloris metamorphoses into Flora, goddess of Spring. The flowers on Flora's gown are actually on top of one of Chloris's right-hand fingers. The Humanist scholars in the Medici circle could have found multiple meanings in this scene to stimulate their conversation and thinking. One reason for the commission and invention of this painting may have been a wedding, like the one that probably inspired *Mars and Venus*. In 1481–1482, Botticelli worked in Rome on the Sistine Chapel fresco decorations, but otherwise, he remained in Florence, where he had a large workshop.

Our next image shows the second painting commissioned for the Medici villa in Florence, *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1482). This is a Classical image of the birth of Venus, who was born from the sea and carried on a shell, by the wind, to shore. Venus, accompanied by rose petals, is moved toward the shore by the wind and water. She is taken in by the allegorical figure of Land, who clothes her. Botticelli had to visualize and invent this depiction because this subject had never before been painted. He looked to other subjects for his compositional model, a *Baptism of Christ* like one by Giotto.

The Adoration of the Magi (c. 1478/1482) is our next image. The nativity architecture is a stable with a wooden roof in a Classical architectural ruin. There are triangles in the roof, representing the Trinity, and crosses can be seen inside the triangles. The new order of Christianity is symbolized by

the stable, set within the old pagan order, which will crumble. Note the extraordinary range of colors in this painting. Although this work is undated, we can date it by the poses of the magi and the horses. These details suggest that Botticelli had seen Leonardo da Vinci's unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* in Florence about 1482.

Botticelli's *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1488–1490) was originally in the Church of San Marco in Florence. This painting depicts the coronation of the Virgin in the sky—Christ crowning his mother in heaven. Four saints are pictured: John the Evangelist, Augustine, Ambrose, and Eligius. (Remember the Lorenzo Monaco altarpiece with the same subject.) The composition is divided into two tiers that show the subtlety with which the artist connects the standing saints with the heavenly level, where Christ and the Virgin are surrounded by angels. This design became one of Raphael's favorite compositions, possibly with an eye to Botticelli's example. This painting is a splendid prototype for this design and an inspiration for other artists, including Titian, who used this type of composition. The angels anticipate those in one of Botticelli's last paintings.

Venus, accompanied by rose petals, is moved toward the shore by the wind and water. She is taken in by the allegorical figure of Land, who clothes her.

Our next image is the *Calumny of Apelles* (c. 1490s). *Calumny* refers to a painting by Apelles that no longer exists but was described by an ancient writer. As he had with *The Birth of Venus*, Botticelli based this painting on a written description of a lost work of antiquity. Leon Battista Alberti may have provided the impetus for this painting, because he advised artists to paint subjects that were described by ancient writers. In the center of the painting, an innocent man is dragged before an unjust judge, Midas. We recognize Midas because he has the ears of an ass that were the punishment for one of his previous sins. Midas's advisors are whispering untruths into his ears. Hatred, in black with a torch, leads the trio of women who represent Calumny, Deceit, and Fraud. They drag the victim by his hair. At the left, Penitence is shown as an old woman in black, and Truth, literally the naked truth, proclaims the man's innocence. Of the many fictive sculptures in

the niches, the one directly above the innocent man resembles Donatello's *St. George*, a defender of the weak.

This work was not a commission, and it seems doubtful that Botticelli painted it only to follow Alberti's advice. The work may be political. The passion that emanates from the painting may be attributed to the controversy over the Dominican preacher Savonarola, whose denunciation of contemporary morals and the ruling Medici split Florentine opinion. Botticelli was sufficiently moved by Savonarola's new morality that he threw some of his own paintings of nude figures onto the infamous bonfires of the vanities that Savonarola incited. Depending on its date, the painting could be an early defense of the monk whom many hated, or it could be a memorial of Savonarola's excommunication in 1497 and brutal public execution in 1498.

Another work, the *Mystic Nativity* (c. 1500), is a beautiful but strange painting. We see a ring of dancing angels in the sky, above a row of men embracing angels in the foreground. The Madonna is depicted adoring the Christ Child, while St. Joseph cowers in the nativity shed, and a fissure in the Earth reveals demons. The inscription on a band across the top of the picture is full of references to the Book of Revelation and refers equally to French invasions of Italy and to the trial and execution of Savonarola. This is a profoundly personal painting, done toward the end of Botticelli's career.

After 1500, Botticelli painted very little, but his tragic *Lamentation* (c. 1495–1500) may be one of his last major efforts. The composition contains curves and angles, parallelisms of figures, strong symmetry, and shallow space. The painting shows Christ supported by St. John and another holy woman, with St. Mary Magdalene at his feet and another woman supporting his head. These figures are brilliantly lit against the darkness. St. Peter is at the right holding his attribute of keys. St. Jerome, with stone, and St. Paul, with his sword, are on the left. *Pathos* is the quality in something experienced or observed that arouses feelings of pity, sorrow, sympathy, or compassion. The *Lamentation* has this quality magnified, and from it, we learn how to feel more intensely and cope with our own losses. It is a towering expression of both universal and particular grief. These works give some idea of the range of Botticelli's art, which is much more than sweet paintings of Madonnas. ■

Works Discussed

Sandro Botticelli:

The Adoration of the Magi, c. 1478/1482, tempera and oil on panel, 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 40 $\frac{3}{16}$ " (68 x 102 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

The Birth of Venus, c. 1482, tempera on canvas, 5' 9" x 9' 2" (1.75 x 2.79 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Calumny of Apelles, 1490s, tempera on panel, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36" (60.96 x 91.4 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Coronation of the Virgin, c. 1488–90, tempera on panel, 12' 5" x 8' 6" (3.78 x 2.59 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Lamentation, c. 1495–1500, tempera on panel, 54 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 82" (137.16 x 208 cm), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

Mars and Venus, c. 1475–78, tempera and oil on panel, 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 68 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (69.2 x 173.4 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Mystic Nativity, 1500, tempera on canvas, 42 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (108.6 x 74.9 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Primavera, c. 1477–78, tempera on panel, 6' 8" x 10' 4" (2 x 3.14 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Deimling, *Sandro Botticelli, 1444/45–1510*.

Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Botticelli's work contrast with the earlier painting of Masaccio? How has your impression of Botticelli's work changed since listening to this lecture?

2. Consider Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and *Calumny of Apelles*, which had never before been painted. What might be the advantages of painting a subject never before depicted? What might be the disadvantages?

Andrea Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini

Lecture 18

In this lecture, we move from Tuscany to the north of Italy—specifically, to the north of Italy near the Adriatic.

We begin with our focus on two artists in northern Italy, Andrea Mantegna (1430/31–1506) and Giovanni Bellini. We will look at several of Mantegna’s works, including both sacred and secular subjects. Looking at his famous frescoes in the Ducal Palace in Mantua, we can appreciate the illusionism, in his paintings of the Gonzaga family, that influenced artists for centuries to come. Mantegna also influenced Bellini, the other subject of this lecture. We will explore two of Bellini’s early works, *Christ on the Mount of Olives* and *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, and contrast them with those of Mantegna.

Mantegna was born near Padua, close to the Venetian Lagoon and about 20 miles from Venice. Although Padua fell under Venetian control in 1405, it remained an important artistic center throughout the 15th century. As a Paduan artist, Mantegna worked in a city steeped in learning and supportive of the new Humanism of the 15th century.

Many minor artists stand apart from the major styles of their time because they do not grasp the importance of the developments that are taking place. But there are also great artists who understand what is important in their time, appreciate it, participate in its development, and still stand somewhat apart from it. Andrea Mantegna is one of those unusual artists. Mantegna is a Renaissance artist. He shared that period’s intellectual and Humanistic ideals, used the linear perspective system with precision, tapped the Greco-Roman sources of style, and balanced the secular aspect of Humanism with the established Christian culture. He is distinguished by his exaggerated approach to some of these ideas. Mantegna’s foreshortening and perspective are rigorous and accentuated, and his picture structure is mathematically analytical. His figures often look like painted statues. His love of Roman architectural and sculptural remains was almost obsessive. He incorporated his archeological “finds” into his painting. His figures can seem detached,

even unemotional (like those of Piero della Francesca), while at other times, they are anguished in their emotional fervor. Mantegna painted altarpieces and narrative frescoes for churches and chapels, and he was one of the most innovative decorators of palace interiors, developing both perspective and other illusionistic devices. His influence in this area continued for centuries.

Our first example shows Mantegna's *St. Sebastian* (c. 1460). St. Sebastian almost appears carved rather than modeled, showing a comprehension of anatomy that seems learned from ancient sculpture rather than the living body. Note the complex architectural ruin. Given that St. Sebastian was a Roman soldier, the Roman architecture is historically appropriate. Mantegna immersed himself in the study of antiquity, and he took this opportunity to show fragments of Roman architecture. The saint is bound to a Corinthian column attached to a square pier from which an arch rises until it is cut off by the frame. A marble terrace is behind him, and fragments of sculpture are scattered about. A mountain landscape at left leads the eye to a blue sky with brilliant white clouds that look three-dimensional and tangible.

St. Sebastian was a popular subject in Renaissance times because painting him gave the artist an opportunity to study and reproduce the nude figure. The saint, a Roman soldier, had converted to Christianity and sought to convert others. He was arrested and sentenced to death. In the countless paintings and sculptures of St. Sebastian's intended execution by an archery squad, artists treated the subject in many ways, and the number of arrows in his body varies from one to a quiver-full. Mantegna multiplies the arrows so that contemplation of the saint is painful, especially the arrow piercing his skull from the neck through his head. In this overemphasis on physical torment and in placing the tortured body at the front of the picture, Mantegna commands our attention and empathy. St. Sebastian survived the archery squad, was nursed back to health by St. Irene, and returned to preaching Christianity. He was later beaten to death with clubs, and his body was thrown into a Roman sewer.

In 1460, Mantegna was invited by Ludovico Gonzaga, ruler of Mantua, to move to that city, not far from Padua. Inland and south of Verona, Mantua was situated in a swampy, unappealing locale. It was also the capital of the Gonzaga family, a rich and powerful dynasty whose taste for culture was highly developed and who invited artists, writers, and musicians from other

areas to visit or settle at their court. Mantegna arrived when he was about 30 and remained for the rest of his life. His principal legacy is there, a famous frescoed room in the Ducal Palace.

Our image shows the frescoed room, the Camera degli Sposi (Ducal Palace, Mantua), which was completed in 1474. The completion of this epochal decoration coincided with the start of construction of the Church of Sant'Andrea, designed by Leon Battista Alberti, also commissioned by Ludovico. Two such concurrent commissioned projects indicate the scope of the Gonzaga family's cultural ambition.

The image shows a corner view of the room with a chimney piece at right. Located in one of the towers of the palace, this room's name, which translates roughly as the "chamber of the married couple," or "of the bride and groom," was assigned later, based on the inscription painted on the illusionistic plaque over the door. The inscription commemorates the married life of the Marchese and Marchesa Gonzaga rather than their wedding. The room was used as a banquet and entertainment hall and a place where precious artworks were displayed. It was known to contemporaries simply as the *camera picta*, the "painted room."

The oculus is a vaulted room, which is largely covered with smaller figures painted in monochrome, as if they were small sculptures.

It is the astonishing illusionism of Mantegna's frescoes that, together with their beautiful design and color, constitutes their significance in art history. This is the first known instance of a painted decoration that was conceived as a continuous composition over the walls *and* the ceiling of a room and was designed to give the illusion that the painted space on the walls and ceiling was a continuation of the real space of the room. In the picture, it appears that we stand not in a completely enclosed space but in a loggia open to other spaces in the palace. The plaque over the door appears to be bronze or gilded metal with an engraved inscription. The plaque is supported by standing and flying *putti*, winged children, not angels, with a blue sky beyond them as though we are looking beyond this imaginary loggia.

On this same wall, to the right of the door, is a fresco that depicts the *Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga*; he is returning to Mantua from Rome. This section of the wall is meant to be read as continuing the landscape glimpsed behind the plaque-carrying *putti*. The cardinal is greeted by his father, the marchese. The other figures include a trio of Gonzaga children; the eldest of them is the cardinal's younger brother, Ludovico. The cardinal holds Ludovico's right hand while the youngest child, Sigismondo, grasps Ludovico's left hand. This is a moment of family intimacy uncommon in Renaissance painting. Behind the figures is a hilly landscape unlike marshy Mantua; it is dotted with buildings that evoke Rome, from which the cardinal has come.

The windows of this square room illuminate only two walls, leaving the other two in shadow. Mantegna painted the two lighted walls, those with doors, and the rib-vaulted ceiling. By making them appear open to the sky, he created the illusion of more light entering the room. The wall to the right of this scene contains one of the most well-known Renaissance frescoes, *The Gonzaga Family*, which depicts Marchese Ludovico Gonzaga and his family and court. No such painting of an aristocratic family group in a domestic architectural setting had ever been seen in Italy.

Mantegna turned the mantelpiece of the huge fireplace into a stage on which he presented the Gonzaga family and their court. Leading up to that stage, he painted a staircase at the right with courtiers arriving to greet the Gonzaga family. As the small procession reaches the "stage" level, Mantegna introduces a dramatic pause with the elegant young man standing in front of the decorated pilaster. The architecture visible at the top of this image, the triangular area terminating in or supported by an urn-shaped bracket, is real architecture, part of the structure of the room. The flat pilaster is as unreal as the young man who stands in front of it on the "real" mantelpiece. Both are painted illusions.

The group framed by illusionistic pilasters includes the marchese at the left, the marchesa, and numerous family members and retainers. Among the retainers is an older female dwarf. Renaissance and Baroque courts in Europe frequently retained dwarves, in part because of their strangeness.

Mantegna has painted this small woman naturalistically, which is part of the Humanism, as well as the humanity, of the artist.

The oculus is a vaulted room, which is largely covered with smaller figures painted in monochrome, as if they were small sculptures. The center features an illusion of an open *oculus*, a circular opening to the cloud-filled blue sky above. It is surrounded by female heads looking down at us and by small *putti* standing on the cornice of the fictive balustrade around the opening. This began a tradition of illusionistic ceiling painting that continued for centuries. Many later artists who painted splendid illusionistic decorations visited Mantua to see this initiator and paradigm of the type; Correggio, Veronese, Titian, Rubens, and Tiepolo all found their model here.

Around 1460, Mantegna painted *Christ on the Mount of Olives (Agony in the Garden)* (c. 1460). This event follows the Last Supper, when Jesus, Peter, James, and John go to Gethsemane (the Mount of Olives). Jesus then asks the three apostles to watch and wait, but they fall asleep while he prays for the “cup” of approaching death to be taken from him. The landscape is rocky and expressive. A city meant to be Jerusalem can be seen in the distance. A group of soldiers led by Judas makes its way up the path to capture Christ. In the upper left-hand corner is a group of five angels who bear the instruments of Christ’s Passion.

Compare this rendition to Giovanni Bellini’s *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (c. 1465–1470), which was painted a few years later. Bellini, a Venetian artist, shows the same scene taking place at dawn. His painting features a sloping landscape like that of Italy. Judas is again seen with a group of soldiers in the background. Although there is an extraordinary stylistic contrast, the scenes are similar in appearance. This similarity can be explained by the fact that Mantegna married Bellini’s sister. The two artists were in direct contact, and here Mantegna inspired Bellini.

Our next painting is useful to mark the transfer of the center of artistic activity in northern Italy from Padua to Venice. Venice developed into one of the most vital cities for the production of Renaissance art in the 16th century. Our example shows an oil painting by Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516), *St. Francis in Ecstasy* (c. 1480–1485).

Few paintings of the Renaissance period convey as powerful a sensation of a landscape flooded with light as this one. Light penetrates the crevices of rocks and reveals wildflowers and small animals, which St. Francis greets with his arms spread in adoration of God's nature. It is dawn, as in *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Light is life; the Earth is awakening. St. Francis of Assisi is not presented here in the usual way, as the praying saint receiving the stigmata; in this painting, he already has the wounds of Christ's crucifixion. Bellini represents the St. Francis whose religious Humanism transformed the Church in the 13th century. His fervent love of nature was his most beloved characteristic, and his humility and simple life were admired. Contrast Mantegna's *St. Sebastian* and Bellini's *St. Francis*, and the contribution of Bellini's innovations to subsequent Venetian art is clear. ■

Works Discussed

Giovanni Bellini:

Christ on the Mount of Olives, c. 1465–70, tempera on panel, 32 x 50" (81.3 x 127 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

St. Francis in Ecstasy, c. 1480–1485, tempera and oil on panel, 49 x 55 ¾" (124.4 x 141.9 cm), The Frick Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Andrea Mantegna:

Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, The Gonzaga Family, and ceiling oculus, 1474, fresco, Camera degli Sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, Italy.

Christ on the Mount of Olives (Agony in the Garden), c. 1460, tempera on panel, 24 ¾ x 31 ½" (62.9 x 80 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

St. Sebastian, c. 1460, tempera on panel, 26 ¾ x 11 ¾" (68 x 30 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Suggested Reading

Batzner, *Mantegna (Masters of Italian Art Series)*.

Christiansen, *Andrea Mantegna*.

Humfrey, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Mantegna use illusionism to extend the space in the Camera degli Sposi in the Ducal Palace?
2. How does Bellini introduce light into a painting? Is this unique or similar to other artists' portrayal of light?

High Renaissance Painting in Venice

Lecture 19

When the oil medium was introduced into Venetian art, Venetian painting magnified it. It was enabled to achieve the highest level of brilliance and saturation of color, to which it had always aspired. Venetian art was steeped in the reflective gleam of countless Byzantine mosaics for hundreds of years.

In this lecture, we continue to explore Venetian painting with Giovanni Bellini, then proceed to his great pupils, Giorgione and Titian. First, we will look at a portrait by Bellini and one of his great altarpieces in the Church of San Zaccaria. Next, we will study only one of Giorgione's works, which has been in the Louvre for centuries. Finally, we will look at Titian in greater detail, including two altarpieces and a sensual portrayal of an ancient myth, *Bacchus and Ariadne*.

When the oil medium was introduced into Venetian art, it was magnified by Venetian painters, enabling it to reach the highest level of brilliance and saturation of color. Steeped in the reflected gleam of countless Byzantine mosaics, Venetian artists quickly understood the expressive potential of oil painting, and from the late 16th century through the mid-18th century, they explored and refined the range of color and its decorative and expressive possibilities.

Our first example shows Bellini's painting *Doge Leonardo Loredan* (c. 1501). The painting is signed in Latin on the *cartello*, the small piece of paper illusionistically depicted on the parapet. The *doge* ("duke") was head of the Venetian state, elected for life from the aristocracy by his peers, although his powers were severely restricted by the Council of Ten and a constitutional charter. This portrait was probably painted upon the accession of Loredan as doge. He served for 20 years during one of the most dangerous periods for the survival of the Venetian Republic. The Papal States, the Holy Roman Empire, the French, and other powerful enemies were arrayed against Venice, but the republic closed ranks around Doge Loredan and held off the combined enemies, partly through luck and partly through courageous

action. The republic survived with most of its territories intact and unharmed, although its financial situation was weakened.

This is one of the most hypnotic portraits in Italian art. The purity of line and shape translates into character, while the clarity of light and form translates into intellect. Loredan seems to look toward the late afternoon sun, which reflects light in his pupils. The contrast of the lit and shadowed sides of his face is typical in portraiture. The dark side is usually the left side and represents vulnerability. Here, the duke's face is mostly in the light. Loredan makes no gesture or counter-movement, which translates into dignity and moral superiority. There is a vivid but restricted palette and a strong pattern in the fabric, constituted of damask woven with golden thread. This painting owes much to Netherlandish painting, including the effects from the oil medium, aspects of the character, and the presentation of a figure.

Bellini's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints (San Zaccaria Altarpiece)* (c. 1505) is in a prestigious church dedicated to the father of St. John the Baptist. The church was founded by a doge and the eastern emperor in the 9th century and was always closely associated with the doges. The painting shows a gathering of saints called a *sacred conversation*. From the left is St. Peter and behind him is St. Catherine of Alexandria. Near the Madonna is St. Lucy with an oil lamp and St. Jerome in the red cardinal vestments.

The architectural frame is integral to the altarpiece, with the painting slightly behind it. The Madonna and Child are on the throne with a half dome decorated in mosaics above them. The figures are arranged in a pyramidal shape, with the two male saints forming the corners and the Madonna's head as the top. Note the way the light falls across the figures from the left. St. Lucy is struck fully by the light, which is appropriate given that light equates with purity. The male saints are painted from a frontal view, whereas the female saints are painted in profile turned toward the Madonna. This painting was the masterpiece of Bellini's old age.

As seen in *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, Bellini reveled in the landscape of the Venetian mainland territory, producing a vibrant record of nature in detail and in sweep. This love of landscape is a crucial feature of Venetian painting,

and it was principally by Venetian painters that landscape art was introduced from northern Europe into Italy, where it increased in importance during the 16th and 17th centuries. This interest in landscape continues with the great pupils of Bellini, particularly Giorgione and Titian.

Giorgione (1476/78–1510), born in Castelfranco, was a student of Bellini during the mid-1490s. We see his *Pastoral Concert* (in French, *Concert Champêtre*, or *Fête Champêtre*) (c. 1510–1511). In the past, this painting was sometimes attributed to Titian, but the attribution to Giorgione now is generally accepted. Giorgione developed his own style based on Bellini's example and was extremely influential on later artists. There are four principal figures in the foreground, two clothed males and two nude females, a puzzling arrangement. Music forms part of the core of the painting. One man plays a lute, and one woman has a wind instrument. In the Renaissance, music was associated with passion. The other woman pours a crystal glass of water into a stone urn. This figure may represent the Classical ideal, while the seated woman may represent human passion. The landscape is based on the

Bellini's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints (San Zaccaria Altarpiece)* (c. 1505) is in a prestigious church dedicated to the father of St. John the Baptist.

Venetian mainland territory. This painting often is associated with Arcadian Classical poetry, in particular the work of Virgil and Ovid, and may represent a golden age now past. This painting, on display in the Louvre for 200 years, has been a great influence on countless painters, poets, and writers.

Titian (1488/90–1576) was born Tiziano Vecellio in the village of Pieve di Cadore, north of Venice in the foothills of the Dolomite mountains. As a boy, he may have been apprenticed to mosaicists in Venice,

then to Gentile Bellini, followed by his brother, Giovanni. He was also a friend and colleague of Giorgione, who was about 10 years older. They developed their styles together but had different temperaments. Giorgione died young, leaving some unfinished paintings. Titian probably completed a number of those works while continuing to develop his own unique style over the course of a long career. He was probably not yet 30 when his early masterpiece was completed, for the high altar of the Basilica of Santa Maria

Gloriosa dei Frari, commonly called the Frari, the venerable Franciscan church in Venice. In our example, we are looking through the nave and choir door into the apse. Titian's High Renaissance painting is in the major chapel (*cappella maggiore*). The *Assumption of the Virgin*—the altarpiece—is in perfect harmony with the Gothic architecture of the apse.

The 23-foot-tall *Assumption of the Virgin* was consecrated on May 19, 1518. This work is a three-tier composition. From the bottom up, it depicts the apostles at the empty tomb of the Virgin, Mary being carried up to heaven, and Mary greeted by God at the top. The scenes are linked together by the apostles' hands reaching up and the light connecting Mary and God. This is a perfect example of the High Renaissance style as developed in Florence and Rome, as we will see later in Raphael.

Another altarpiece, the *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* (c. 1519–1526), 16 feet tall, was commissioned for the left side of the nave. The Madonna and Child are at the right; St. Peter is in the center; Jacopo Pesaro, who defeated the Moors in battle, is at the lower left. Behind Jacopo, an armored soldier holds a banner with the Borgia family coat of arms. Jacopo commanded papal forces in the victory, and the pope was a Borgia; this also explains the dominant position of St. Peter, who represents the Church. At the lower left are two Moorish captives. At the lower right are male members of the Pesaro family. Above them, St. Francis and another Franciscan commend the family members to the Madonna. On the cloud bank above, two cherubs hold a cross. This asymmetrical composition with an upward diagonal sweep was new and was very influential.

Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c. 1522) was painted for Alphonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara, for a room called the Alabaster Chamber in his palace. Giovanni Bellini had completed one of his last paintings for this room, and Titian executed the remaining three paintings. The subject is Bacchus discovering Ariadne. Ariadne has just been abandoned by Theseus, and Bacchus leaps from his chariot to rescue her. Note the energetic design of the space between Bacchus and Ariadne as well as the crown of Ariadne in the sky. Titian had access to the translations of ancient literary sources from the duke's library, from which he derived this scene.

VIII. Titian's *Rape of Europa* (c. 1562) was painted for Philip II of Spain, who was one of the greatest collectors of Titian's work. The subject is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, when Jupiter adopted the appearance of a white bull and approached the daughter of the king of Tyre, whom he desired. The king's daughter, Europa, climbed aboard and was immediately taken out to sea and to Crete by the swimming bull-god.

The eroticism is overt, yet the sublime palette and extemporizing brushwork of the aged Titian are the true protagonists. Venetian painting is famous for this kind of sensuality and splendid color. The composition is asymmetrical, with the bull carrying Europa about to leave the picture. ■

Works Discussed

Giovanni Bellini:

Doge Leonardo Loredan, c. 1501, oil on panel, 24 ¼ x 17 ¾" (61.6 x 45.1 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

San Zaccaria Altarpiece, 1505, oil on panel, c. 16' 6" H (5 m H), Church of S. Zaccaria, Venice, Italy.

Giorgione:

Pastoral Concert (Concert Champêtre), c. 1510–11, oil on canvas, 43 ¼ x 54 ¼" (110 x 138 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Titian:

Assumption of the Virgin, 1516–18, 23' H (7 m H), Church of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice, Italy.

Bacchus and Ariadne, c. 1522, oil on canvas, 5' 9 ½" x 6' 3 ¼" (176.5 x 191 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Madonna of the Pesaro Family, 1519–26, oil on canvas, c. 16' H (4.8 m H), Church of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice, Italy.

Rape of Europa, 1562, oil on canvas, 5' 10" x 6' 8 ¾" (178 x 205 cm), Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Suggested Reading

Cole, *Titian and Venetian Painting, 1450–1590*.

Humphrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*.

Questions to Consider

1. How is landscape exploited in the paintings of Venetian Renaissance artists?
2. Many Venetian artists painted both secular and sacred works. Did they approach these subjects in similar or different ways?

The High Renaissance—Leonardo da Vinci

Lecture 20

Leonardo's art is difficult and frustrating, for a variety of reasons. First, he was a genius—not merely a great painter, but a genius whose mind ranged over everything. There was nothing that did not interest him, nothing that he did not ponder, explore, question, and confront.

Although Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) explored many subjects and techniques during his lifetime, we will consider only one drawing and three paintings. We will examine how Leonardo used various media in his art and discuss his influential innovations in the *Madonna of the Rocks*, the *Mona Lisa*, and *The Last Supper*.

Our first example is a pen-and-ink landscape drawing dated August 5, 1473 (Uffizi). This depiction of the Arno River valley, drawn when Leonardo was 21 years old, is a vivid introduction to the artist's interests and abilities. We have seen the beginnings of Naturalistic painting of landscape motifs in northern European painting and its gradual introduction into Italian art, but Leonardo discovered the natural world for himself. His drawing reveals a new and rare quality in the depiction of landscape. He conveys the sense of a landscape in process, with movement and growth, as well as an underlying geological structure.

Leonardo suggests the source of the living natural world with a line that vibrates or by applying rapidly drawn lines laid down side by side. His trees, drawn with parallel lines or with stacks of repeated arcs, are growing and moving in the wind. He understands and finds a linear equivalent for the movements of water. His pen line is alive, and his command of space is convincing. This is a drawing that suggests both observation and rapidity of execution. He knew both this landscape and his medium completely.

In 1481 or 1482, Leonardo left Florence for Milan. He worked there for nearly 20 years for the duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza, as well as other patrons. Soon after his arrival in Milan, he received a commission—shared with two Milanese artists—for the altarpiece for a new chapel in the Church

of San Francesco Grande. The commission came from the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, and Leonardo was to paint the center panel. This painting is the *Madonna of the Rocks* (begun in 1483).

The subject required was a Madonna and Child with angels, but Leonardo created something more ambitious and less comprehensible—a kneeling Madonna with the Christ Child, a single angel, and the child St. John the Baptist. The Madonna kneeling on the ground—a Madonna of humility—was not a new subject. Usually, the Madonna was shown adoring the Christ Child, but in this painting, she looks at John with downcast eyes and embraces him. John folds his hands in prayerful adoration of Jesus, who raises his hand in blessing toward John. St. John the Baptist was the prophet who proclaimed “there is the lamb of God” upon baptizing Jesus. A non-canonical author added the story that the Holy Family, on the return from Egypt, stayed with Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin, and that her young child, John, recognized the divinity of the infant Jesus and adored him. This subject is not found in painting before Leonardo.

Jesus is “crowned” by two hands: Mary’s left hand at the top, extended in a gesture of benediction, and the angel’s hand, which points toward the infant John. It seems as though John is the center of attention. The Madonna’s hand protects him, the angel focuses on him, and the Christ Child blesses him. The greater mystery of the painting may be its landscape setting. The figures are in front of a dark grotto capped with sky above, which opens into the light in the distance, but the area between the foreground and the distance looks like an underground cavern. The modeling of the figures is subtle, a spreading of light into dark so gradual that it seems as if a newly invented painting tool, finer than a brush, must have been used to control this smoky, gliding atmosphere. The effect is to slow down the tempo of our viewing.

The monumental figure group is stable and static, the landscape develops slowly, and the gradation of light is dreamlike but controlled. This is an original, yet ambiguous interpretation of the Madonna and Child. This painting was still incomplete in 1506, though it was provisionally accepted by the confraternity, and there is some debate about its subsequent history. Leonardo had a restless imagination and often left works incomplete, and his experimental techniques sometimes caused his finished works to deteriorate

rapidly. The deepest darks in Leonardo's paintings are profound. This led his followers and imitators to further exaggerate darkness and make the contrast between light and dark their aim rather than the gradation from light to dark.

The next example is Leonardo's enigmatic portrait, the *Mona Lisa* (c. 1503–1506). This painting represents a half-length portrait of a woman seated in an armchair in front of a parapet with a loggia behind. Her left arm rests on a chair arm while her right hand rests on her left arm. She is well dressed, in a robe with a scarf draped over it and with a dark veil covering her hair. A close-up portrait of this size, with ample pictorial space to embrace the sculptural volume of the sitter, had not been seen before, and its influence was immediate. The painting has been cut down on the sides, but there is still a partial column on the parapet at the left and the base of another at the right. The landscape behind her shows a winding road and a bridge in the middle ground, but it changes from a real and inhabitable landscape as it stretches into the background, where it is dominated by water and rocks that recall those in the *Madonna of the Rocks*. The horizon is at the sitter's eye level, which brings us back to this famous face. It is famous for the modeling, which is the same subtle, smoky painting of flesh as in the *Madonna of the Rocks*, and for her enigmatic smile.

It is believed that the sitter was a Florentine named Lisa Gherardina. *Mona* is the abbreviated version of *Ma Donna* ("My Lady"). Combined with her first name, we get *Mona Lisa*, the title universally used in the English-speaking world. Lisa was married to a silk merchant and local politician named Francesco del Giocondo. In Italy, the portrait is called *La Gioconda* (and, in France, *La Joconde*). *Giocondo* means "joyous" in Italian, and it has been suggested that Leonardo used her married name as an emblem, an idea that would be central to the portrait. It was not a new idea to identify a sitter by a punning reference to his or her name, but it was usually a plant or animal or object that provided the reference point. To use a facial expression was an original idea. The painting has become famous because of the character of the smile, not because of its connection to her name. The famous smile is hard to characterize, partly because of Leonardo's smoky modeling, which leaves the shadowy corners of her mouth ambiguous in expression. Renaissance ideals of decorum may also have influenced the smile. A 16th-century Italian writer suggested that a fashionable woman should smile "as if you were

smiling secretly ... not in an artificial manner, but as though unconsciously ... and accompanied by ... certain movements of the eyes.”

The Last Supper (c. 1495–1498, refectory) belongs to an earlier moment in Leonardo’s career, shortly after he had begun work on the *Madonna of the Rocks*. The story of the Last Supper, recounted in all the Gospels, was a celebration of the Jewish feast of Passover, which for Christians was accorded a new meaning. Mural paintings, usually frescoes, of the Last Supper often were painted in the refectories (dining halls) of monasteries, where the monks would contemplate the Last Supper of the Lord, which was the prototype of the Mass, the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist. The painting spans the end wall of a long room, and it is designed so that the space in which Christ and his apostles have gathered looks like an extension of the architecture of the refectory itself. At the front of this painted space is the dinner table, its white tablecloth virtually identical with the wall surface.

The recession of the side walls is measured by wall hangings. Although very dark today, they were representations of tapestries with an overall floral design. The right wall is illuminated; the left is in shadow. The ceiling of the room also contributes to the illusion of recession, because it is painted as if coffered and the coffers follow the rules of perspective. The rear wall of the mural is pierced by three windows with a view onto a distant landscape. The center window, behind Christ, has a semicircular pediment, suggestive of a halo. The figure of Christ, his outstretched arms touching the table, forms a triangle. The 12 apostles are divided, first, into two groups of six to each side and, second, into subgroups of three. Each subgroup is tightly knit compositionally. Scanning the row of heads, there is a wave-like arrangement, surging and ebbing, contained by the two apostles on either end who close the composition.

The apostles are agitated, and this emotion sets this interpretation of the subject apart from previous works. Compare this to Domenico Ghirlandaio’s

Leonardo’s *The Last Supper* is a ruin. He was not a fresco painter, and he painted on this wall ... with a mixture of oil paint and tempera.

Last Supper (c. 1480) in the refectory of the church of the Ognissanti in Florence. In Leonardo's painting, the apostles are responding to something that has been said—Christ's announcement that "one of you will betray me." Other depictions of the Last Supper may also show a response to that declaration, but it is inward, contemplative, or disbelieving. More frequently, the Last Supper is treated as a sacramental, not a dramatic, occasion because the ritual of the Mass is deemed more important than the human drama.

Leonardo showed a range of response to this statement by painting each apostle with a character-revealing reaction—anger, astonishment, fear, gesture of devotion, or self-doubt. Only one of them makes no assertive response to the declaration—Judas, who has already accepted payment to betray Jesus. In previous representations of the Last Supper, Judas is placed alone on the near side of the table, so that the viewer has no doubt about his identity. Instead, Leonardo includes him with the others. But Judas shrinks back, his right forearm on the table, the money bag grasped in his hand. No other apostle's arms—only hands—are on the table. Only Judas's face is in partial shadow, and his head is lower than any other. His body is smaller; he shrinks from the words that he alone, of all the apostles, knows to be true. Judas's head is grouped with those of Peter and John. Christ's simple pose is complex in detail and meaning—he is silent, sad, and submissive. His right hand extends toward Judas, whose hand is near his. Christ's hand is palm down, accusing Judas, "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." At the same time, Christ's right hand indicates the glass of wine, the symbol of his blood used in the Mass, while his left hand extends toward the bread, the symbol of his body.

The triangular pose of Christ is a reference to the Trinity, an emblematic abstraction of his words, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." The hand with forefinger pointing straight upward to the right of Christ belongs to Thomas, whose probing finger verified the physical resurrection of Christ and, here, pointing to heaven, is a harbinger of the physical ascension. Leonardo's *The Last Supper* is a ruin. He was not a fresco painter, and he painted on this wall (an outside wall, with no room on the other side to prevent the incursion of water) with a mixture of oil paint and tempera. The paint did not adhere well to the wall and was decaying even during Leonardo's lifetime. In spite

of this, other artists who saw the work or copies of it were influenced by it and tried to emulate Leonardo's genius. ■

Works Discussed

Leonardo da Vinci:

Landscape, 1473, pen and ink drawing, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (19.6 x 28.7 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

The Last Supper, 1495–98, tempera and oil on plaster, 15 x 29' (4.6 x 8.8 m), Refectory, Church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Italy.

Madonna of the Rocks, begun 1483, oil on canvas, 6' 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 4' (199 x 122 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Mona Lisa, 1503–06, oil on panel, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (77 x 53 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Domenico Ghirlandaio:

The Last Supper, 1480, fresco, Refectory, Church of the Ognissanti, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*.

Marani, *Leonardo da Vinci*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Leonardo's treatment of light and dark influence his painting? Is his technique appropriate for the subject(s) when used?
2. It has been said that the *Mona Lisa's* smile is her identifying mark. What other personal identification marks or symbols have been used in paintings? Do you think this is, in fact, an identification mark or merely coincidental?

The High Renaissance—Raphael

Lecture 21

Raphael was trained in fresco painting, as well as in oil and tempera, trained in large part by a painter named Perugino, who was very accomplished and who worked in Rome on the early Vatican frescoes in the lower part of the Sistine Chapel.

We again will study a single artist in this lecture—Raphael. Celebrating the variety of Raphael’s work, we will look at examples of his frescoes and portraiture, and subjects ranging from the Madonna to Roman mythology. We also will look at the artist’s compositional innovations of movement and stasis, and the expressive contours of his figures.

Raphael (1483–1520) was born in Urbino, the son of a minor painter named Giovanni Sanzio. He was a youthful prodigy with a pleasing personality. He trained in fresco, oil, and tempera painting, and the science of perspective. His reputation, like Botticelli’s, was virtually unassailable in the 19th century, when his work was considered the apogee of good taste in art. Although Raphael’s reputation has had ups and downs, the variety of his achievement remains impressive.

Our first example is the *Sistine Madonna* (c. 1513). The *Sistine Madonna* was painted for the Church of S. Sixtus in Piacenza, which was supported by Pope Julius II. (The adjective “Sistine” derives from the name Sixtus.) St. Sixtus was an early Christian pope who was the patron saint of the Della Rovere family, and since Pope Julius II was a Della Rovere, in this painting, St. Sixtus has the features of Julius II. Although Raphael is famous for his paintings of Madonnas, this example is unique. This Madonna and Child stand on clouds rather than appearing seated in a chair or kneeling in a landscape. She is flanked by St. Sixtus and St. Barbara and revealed by curtains that have been drawn back. The curtains are an illusion, but they are painted as if they were supported by a rod and drawn back to reveal a painting or a vision. The work is nearly 9 feet tall, singular in its monumentality among Raphael’s images of the Madonna.

Raphael employed a triangular composition in illusionistic depth, creating a pyramidal shape that is characteristic of the High Renaissance. St. Sixtus has a beard, for which there is an unusual explanation. During the war with France, Pope Julius II grew a beard and swore that he would not shave it off until the French were driven from Italy. Though painted around 1513, the illusionism in this work offered inspiration to artists of the Baroque era. Raphael's greatness is attested by the continuous borrowing from and reference to his works by artists of later centuries. The little angels depicted at the bottom are still irresistible despite commercial exploitation.

Our next example is *Galatea* (c. 1513–1514, Farnesina, Rome). Agostino Chigi, Sienese banker and treasurer to the pope, built a pleasure villa on the banks of the Tiber River and had it decorated with painted rooms. *Galatea* is a fresco in a room where the decoration remained incomplete. This work is an excellent example of movement balanced with stasis. The subject is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; the nymph Galatea flees from Polyphemus, a one-eyed giant. She rides in her chariot, a giant cockleshell pulled by dolphins, accompanied by sea deities, including the intertwined pair at lower left. From above, three cupids aim their amorous arrows at Galatea. Note that Chigi built this villa for his mistress.

During the High Renaissance (c. 1480–1520), artists favored the pyramid as a composition device. The greater development of volumetric solids in perspective space gave the appearance of a full-rounded pyramidal figure or group, as in our example. Galatea moves to the right in her chariot with her arms stretched to the right, while her legs and torso face the picture plane, and her head turns back to the left, watching Polyphemus. Her hair and the echoing drapery move toward the left.

The tritons in the right middle ground also maintain the balance of opposing directions, one figure moving right, two moving left. The cupids in the sky form the corners of another triangle, effectively putting the capstone on the group below and canceling out the various directional cues. The compositional core remains Galatea, and the fresco's composition is generated by her S-shaped pose. She is one of Raphael's most inspired figures, and he repeated the design more than once. Polyphemus is, in fact, in another fresco by a different artist. Galatea looks across the corner of the room at him, thus

including the actual space of the room in the drama, something that had a precedent in ancient painting.

When Raphael painted *Galatea*, he had already completed some of the major monumental frescoes of the Renaissance in the papal apartments of the Vatican. Among these, the most famous is the *School of Athens* (c. 1510–1511) in the Stanza della Segnatura. The room that houses this painting takes its name, *Segnatura* (“signature”), from its later function as a chamber of the papal council where the pope signed Church regulations. When decorated, it was Julius II’s private library, which explains the subjects of its principal decorations, two frescoes devoted to theology and philosophy. The one representing philosophy is called the *School of Athens*, but the name was not associated with it until the 18th century.

The wall of the painting is designed as a great semicircle. Raphael may have taken his cue from this sweeping curve to design within it an architectural space dominated by a great barrel vault. This barrel vault, together with the domed space perceived beyond it, is probably a reflection of St. Peter’s Basilica, then under construction to replace the ancient Constantinian basilica. The new St. Peter’s was a gigantic structure designed by Donato Bramante, who may have helped Raphael design the setting for this painting.

The figures are numerous, and although some are “extras,” others are intended as historic personages or portraits of living subjects or both. The group in the right foreground includes the ancient Greek mathematician Euclid bending over to demonstrate a geometric theorem. Raphael gives Euclid the features of Bramante. In the left foreground group, the half-kneeling, half-seated figure represents Pythagoras, putting down his proportional system. To the right of him, a figure props a book on his knee; this is the figure that Raphael reworked in the fresco of *Galatea*. The bearded man seated alone, leaning on a block of marble and writing down his ideas, is Michelangelo. His pose is

Raphael had designed the structure of the *School of Athens* to epitomize rational control, an ordered composition centered on a pair of intellectual giants from the Classical world.

loosely based on one of Michelangelo's figures on the Sistine ceiling, which was then being painted next door to the rooms being decorated by Raphael.

There are more such portraits, but the center of the fresco is occupied by two powerfully conceived men who walk toward us, framed by the receding arches of the architecture. On the left is Plato, who is depicted with the features of Leonardo da Vinci. On the right is Plato's pupil Aristotle. Aristotle points to the Earth, the source of his rational observations, while Plato points to the heavens, the object of his metaphysical speculations. The receding lines of the architectural perspective grid cross in an X-shaped design that both unites and separates these two seminal philosophers. Perspective is wedded to meaning and significance by the artist.

When Raphael had finished the Stanza della Segnatura, with the aid of many assistants, he moved on to the Room of Heliodorus (the Stanza d'Elidoro). Here he painted the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* (c. 1511–1512). Pope Julius II is carried into the biblical scene on the left. The tale of Heliodorus, the treasurer of King Antiochus who was sent to appropriate the temple treasure, is related in the second book of Maccabees, an apocryphal book of the Old Testament.

Raphael had designed the structure of the *School of Athens* to epitomize rational control, an ordered composition centered on a pair of intellectual giants from the Classical world. The structure of the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* is an asymmetrical composition disrupted by a rush away from the center, a design that threatens reason and order. An armed man on horseback appears, accompanied by two avenging figures with scourges, and they ride down Heliodorus and his soldiers as they try to leave with the temple treasure. The treasure has been spilled beside Heliodorus. The cause of this miraculous salvation was the prayer of the high priest, who kneels at an altar in the center of the background. The center becomes a vacuum, while the violent assault at the right attracts the viewer's attention. This is not a modern observation; it was shared by Vasari, a 16th-century artist and biographer, writing soon after Raphael painted the fresco. Vasari focused on the group at the right, pointing out that only Heliodorus could see the heavenly visitation that attacked him.

Note the disruption of pictorial and emotional balance. Scholars once said that the period following Raphael's death witnessed the dissolution of Renaissance artistic style. Now, however, we recognize that this crumbling of the Renaissance pictorial order began with Raphael. The hallmarks of Renaissance painting were replaced with a style called *Mannerism*, which dominated the 16th century. The social order itself was crumbling—the Protestant Reformation had begun, and the French invasions of Italy would soon lead to the invasion of Emperor Charles V's mercenary armies and the Sack of Rome.

Our next example is *Baldassare Castiglione* (c. 1514–1515). This portrait portrays a valiant soldier who was also the author of *The Book of the Courtier* and a friend of Raphael. This painting emulates the *Mona Lisa* in pose, but Raphael eliminated the details of the setting, including the chair, the loggia, and the background landscape. The figure is fuller than Leonardo's and has an air of self-confidence. The palette is a balance of grays and blacks, of flesh tones and whites, against a luminous background of gray mingled with brown-beige tones. The figure, with its superbly drawn contour, is one of the touchstones of great portraiture. Later, Rubens would copy it and Rembrandt would borrow from it.

Raphael recreated not just an appearance but a complete personality. Castiglione wrote *The Courtier*, a book that provided entry into a group of the most cultured people in the Italy of Raphael's day, those who lived at or visited the court at Urbino, the small principality near the Adriatic. During conversations, these intellectuals, presided over by the duchess of Urbino, considered both light and contentious topics, with each monologue preceded by "he smiled and said" or "she laughed and replied"—serious debates conducted in a civilized manner. Such questions as whether one should serve or leave an evil master, or whether the most beautiful music is vocal or instrumental, or the advantages of speaking several languages, concerned these cultivated persons and the gentleman who still lives through the skill of Raphael's brush. ■

Works Discussed

Raphael:

Baldassare Castiglione, c. 1514–15, oil on canvas, 32 ¼ x 26 ¼” (82 x 67 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Expulsion of Heliodorus, 1511–12, fresco, Stanza d’Eliodoro, Vatican Palace, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Galatea, 1513–14, fresco, 9’ 10” x 7’ 2 ½” (300 x 220 cm), Villa Farnesina, Rome, Italy.

School of Athens, 1510–11, fresco, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican Palace, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Sistine Madonna, 1513, oil on canvas, 8’ 10” x 6’ 7 ¼” (269.5 x 201 cm), Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany.

Suggested Reading

De Vecchi, *Raphael*.

Santi, *Raphael*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the commercialization of a painting or drawing, as mentioned in connection with the angels in the *Sistine Madonna*, affect your viewing of the work of art as a whole?
2. How does Raphael use movement to drive his paintings? Think of *Galatea* and *Expulsion of Heliodorus*.

The High Renaissance—Michelangelo

Lecture 22

Like Titian, [Michelangelo] lived into his late 80s, productive to the end. But, in spite of Titian's great influence on the art of his time and later times, Michelangelo had a much more radical impact upon the art of the 16th century. He did not simply reflect the stylistic changes that occurred during his lifetime, he decisively affected them.

Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475–1564) lived a long and productive life, and for this reason, we will limit our focus to the most famous masterpieces of the first half of his career—the *Pietà* in St. Peter's, the *David* in Florence, and the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican. We will contemplate the unusual composition of the *Pietà*, compare Michelangelo's *David* to Donatello's, and spend some time exploring the magnificent figures and scenes of the Sistine Chapel frescoes.

By 1520, he was probably the most influential artist in Europe, and his later work moved farther from the ideals of the Renaissance toward the pessimism and angst characteristic of the middle decades of the 16th century in Italian art. Michelangelo was born in the village of Caprese, 40 miles east of Florence. He was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, whose Florentine workshop was among the busiest in the city. Later, Michelangelo was invited to live and work in the Medici Palace, where Lorenzo de' Medici had established an informal academy. His abilities were quickly demonstrated, and when he was 23, he was commissioned by a French cardinal at the Vatican to design and carve a marble sculpture for his tomb in St. Peter's, the renowned *Pietà*.

The *Pietà* (c. 1498–1499) was moved from its original chapel when the new St. Peter's replaced the old basilica. The *Pietà* attracted attention and respect from the beginning, partially because the subject had not been treated in Italian sculpture before. The prototypes for this subject in sculpture are in northern art, such as the wooden Gothic sculpture we saw in Lecture Five (*Pietà*, German, c. 1300). Michelangelo's sculpture belongs to the Italian Renaissance. It is idealized and its grief is controlled, not expressionistic. Still, the concept is northern, and it may have reached Michelangelo through

the medium of prints. Some considered Michelangelo's *Pietà* blasphemous because there was no support for the scene in the Gospels. During the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, a Catholic writer called the subject "a Lutheran notion."

The youth of the beautiful Virgin Mary, apparently no older than her dead son, was a subject of debate. Michelangelo is said to have explained it by saying that Mary's eternal chastity was demonstrated by the unchanging flower of her youth. In the sculpture, the group is supported by an oval base imitating a rock that serves as a seat for the Virgin Mary. Her robe, overlaid by the winding sheet in which Jesus was lowered from the cross, spreads out over the base of the stone in broad folds. From this base, the group is composed in a pyramidal shape culminating at Mary's head.

The eye follows the ascent on the right with Christ's projecting left leg and the Madonna's extended arm, and on the left, by the curve of the winding sheet, which Mary pulls up to support Christ's shoulder. The curve of his right arm echoes this upward movement and introduces a circular motion that continues through his head and her shoulder. The invention of the broad base of drapery, together with the integration of the body into Mary's lap and the rhythms of the cloth, was necessary to convincingly support the large body of Christ.

His long, smoothly modeled body provides the emotional focus. It is tilted slightly forward in an almost ritual display of the *corpus domini*, the body of the Lord, the symbol of the Christian communion. Above it, the upper robe of the Virgin's torso is arranged in deeply cut broken folds that crystallize her inner emotion. Note the contrast between Christ's limp left hand and the open gesture of Mary's left hand. This is the most highly finished and detailed sculpture Michelangelo ever made. It is also the only sculpture he ever signed; the signature is on the sash across Mary's breast.

Our next example is the famous *David* (c. 1501–1504). It would be difficult to imagine a more complete contrast than that between this *David* and Donatello's bronze *David*. Not only the medium differs—marble instead of bronze—but Michelangelo's figure is a heroic young man, not a rather epicene boy. Michelangelo's work is huge when compared with Donatello's,

measuring 16 ½ feet tall without the base. Michelangelo was reworking a block of marble that another sculptor had begun to carve. The figure was originally intended to be placed on one of the buttresses of the Cathedral of Florence, so it would have had to have been huge to be seen from the ground. It is not clear whether a buttress was still the intended position when Michelangelo took over the task of completing the statue, but by the time he finished, there was no thought of placing it there.

Michelangelo's achievement, not only in successfully working from an inadequately thick block of stone that had already been abandoned, but in creating a potent image of a biblical hero, was instantly acknowledged. The cathedral authorities assembled a commission of prominent artists to decide where the *David* should be placed. They selected a spot beside the main entrance to the Palazzo della Signoria, the seat of Florentine government. It remained there until 1873, when it was moved to the Academy.

Michelangelo's *David* owes one thing to Donatello's—its nudity. The artist's decision to create nude biblical figures was repeated many times in the Sistine Chapel; thus, it is difficult for us to realize how little precedent it had. Apart from Adam and Eve, nudity in a church setting was uncommon, despite the widespread Renaissance interest in the representation of the naked body. For Michelangelo, the body was the principal means of expression. When nudity was completely inappropriate, he clothed his figures, but even then, he produced such sculptures as a *Risen Christ* without a loincloth.

As had the sculptors of antiquity, as well as Donatello and other Renaissance predecessors, Michelangelo mastered the easy, asymmetrical balance of the standing figure by making one leg weight-bearing while the other is relaxed. The body has a straight, vertical side, closed, with muscular potential, and David holds a stone in the hand by his side. The other side is open, his left arm raised with the end of the slingshot held in his hand. He also looks left; this is the vulnerable side, but the body is curved like a drawn bowstring. The hands and head are oversized, stressing the fundamental qualities of a guardian. Here, David is the civic protector of Florence, and his apparent age and size—at odds with the Old Testament description—have identified him with Hercules in the public mind. A citizen wrote of Michelangelo's *David*,

“Just as David defended his people and governed them justly, so those who govern this city should act.”

Our next example shows the Sistine Chapel ceiling (c. 1508–1511, Vatican) in a view of the chapel looking toward the altar wall. The private chapel of the pope, located between the papal apartments and the basilica of St. Peter, it is one of the most sacred places in the Vatican. The chapel was founded by Pope Sixtus IV. It was built and decorated in a brief span of time. It originally consisted of a painted ceiling and a lower group of frescoes painted by a number of artists in 1481–1482. The double sequence of scenes on the ceiling shows the *Creation* through the *Expulsion from Eden*, followed by scenes from the life of Noah. The *Expulsion* is directly above the gate that separates the clergy from the laity. On the coved sides, prophets alternate with sibyls, with the ancestors of Christ in the triangular areas and Old Testament scenes in the four corners. Although there is the illusion of architecture on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, everything is painted.

Michelangelo's work is huge when compared with Donatello's, measuring 16 ½ feet tall without the base.

The ceiling is famous for a group of figures called the Nudes (*Ignudi*) who frame the scenes at each of the corners. The Nude from the corner above the altar, near the *Separation of Light from Darkness*, appears to have flesh that is real. The medallion is “bronze,” suspended by cloth bands over “marble” architecture, including the seat provided for the Nude and the “frame” of the painting with the *Separation of Light from Darkness*. This detail also shows the beginning of the second scene—the *Creation of the Sun and the Moon*—in which we see the knees of God. There is no general agreement on whether the Nudes carry specific meaning. They have been called “Christian athletes,” yet they are so striking that one hesitates to deny them meaning. The Nudes derive from the *Belvedere Torso*, a Hellenistic sculpture from 50 B.C. in the Vatican collection. This served Michelangelo as a theme, and all the Nudes are variations of that theme. The ancient sculpture group of the *Laocoön* was also an influence.

Figures of the prophets and sibyls flank the main scenes from Genesis. These figures are much larger than the Nudes, but they are also painted as if they were real figures, with natural flesh colors and modeled in three dimensions. They are figures of great significance, hence, the increase in size over the decorative Nudes.

The *Libyan Sibyl* represents the pagan women gifted with prophetic powers, whose writings were thought to have foretold the coming of Christ. Her body spirals as she turns, pirouetting on her toes so that her legs and hips are parallel to the picture plane, while her torso and arms continue the rotation into the space behind her. She deposits the book of her writings, while her head remains in profile. Her gaze is toward the papal altar on the floor below. Note the width, like a wingspread, of her book. The figure rises from a narrow base to a broad cap, and this shape, combined with her spiral, results in an inversion of the Renaissance pyramid.

Jeremiah is a significant figure among the prophets and sibyls. He wrote that oppression and suffering must precede salvation. His body droops under the weight of his sorrow, the destruction of Jerusalem. Michelangelo depicts one side of Jeremiah's body in shadow, while the other side is darkly outlined. The bulk of his body and the fall of his beard pull him downward, while his legs, crossed at the ankles, deprive him of support. This scene is placed directly above the papal throne. Jeremiah's sorrow is the pope's sorrow, and viewed against the contemporary background of the continuing attempt to drive the French from Italy, it had special relevance.

Michelangelo drew on the book of Genesis to portray the *Creation of Adam*. God, surrounded by angels and a great cloak, enters from the right. The force of the wind is seen in the drapery and his hair. He extends his right arm, and his forefinger approaches another. Adam lies on a barren Earth, his body completely within the contour of the sloping ground except for his left forearm with its drooping hand and forefinger. There is no energy in Adam. The line of his leg and torso is still bound to Earth, his torso hardly supported by his right arm. His head does have a spark of life; his gaze is locked with God's, and that force pulls his head forward from his torpid body. The distance between God's fingertip and Adam's is very short yet

visible from the floor of the chapel. It is possible to follow the life force as it moves from the fingertip through the arm to Adam's head.

Michelangelo worked from the entrance of the chapel toward the altar, so the last of the Genesis scenes that he painted was the *Separation from Light from Darkness*. In the void, the partial figure of God is seen revolving in space. The painted area is one of the small ones; God is cropped at the knees, but Michelangelo makes a virtue of this limitation by emphasizing the maker's hands physically pushing matter, that is, "light" and "dark," apart. Consider that this initial act of creation is directly above the altar, and on the altar wall just below the *Separation of Light and Darkness* is *Jonah*. This prophet's experience of three days in the belly of a whale before he was cast out was understood as an Old Testament parallel to the entombment and resurrection of Christ.

Creation, death, resurrection, and salvation through the sacrifice of Christ—these themes have never been more powerfully combined in the history of Christian art. ■

Works Discussed

Michelangelo:

David, 1501–04, marble, 13' 5" H (480 cm H), Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy.

Ignudo, *Libyan Sibyl*, *Prophet Jeremiah*, *Creation of Adam*, *Separation of Light from Darkness*, *Jonah*, 1508–11, fresco, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Vatican Palace, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Pietà, 1498–99, marble, 5' 8 ½" H (173.9 cm H), Basilica of St. Peter's, Rome, Italy.

Suggested Reading

King, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*.

Wallace, *Michelangelo*.

Questions to Consider

1. How is Michelangelo's *Pietà* different from other works of the same subject?
2. How does the double sequence of scenes in the Sistine Chapel affect the viewer? Think about the perspective that Michelangelo offered with this arrangement.

Albrecht Dürer and German Renaissance Art

Lecture 23

Following our concentration on three of the great masters of the Italian High Renaissance, we are going to turn our attention once again to northern Europe. It is almost a relief to do so, to turn from the formal idealism of the High Renaissance back to a culture that was rooted in particularity, in descriptive naturalism.

In this lecture, we will study several German artists, particularly Albrecht Dürer, a High Renaissance artist who absorbed Italian Renaissance art and fused it with northern forms in an original manner. First, we will look briefly at an engraving by Martin Schongauer before focusing on Albrecht Dürer's art. In particular, we will look at Dürer's influences and his original blend of Renaissance and northern European artistic characteristics. Throughout the lecture, we will discuss the development, process, and artistic results of printmaking, principally woodcuts and engravings. *Incunabula*, Latin for "cradle," refers to the earliest prints made. This medium, whose origins are closely associated with northern European art near the end of the 14th century, also has a history in the East. Centuries earlier, the Chinese invented paper and, later, began to print books and pictures from carved wood blocks. When the techniques were introduced into the West, printing technology in 15th-century Europe developed rapidly.

The earliest prints were often single images, such as playing cards or representations of saints. When movable type was invented, woodblock illustrations were incorporated into books. As printing methods were improved and multiplied, the potential for the production and sale of artist-designed prints became clear.

An older contemporary of Dürer, Martin Schongauer (1450–1491) worked in Colmar in Germany. His paintings are rare, but he left 115 engravings that influenced the development of northern printmaking. Schongauer started his career as a goldsmith, and the engraving technique evolved from goldsmiths. In engraving, a design is created in V-shaped grooves cut into a soft metal plate, usually copper, with a steel tool called a *burin*. Ink was then spread over

the surface of the copper plate and wiped off, leaving ink only in the grooves. A sheet of moistened paper was placed on the plate and run through a press, forcing the paper into the grooves, drawing out the ink, and reproducing the design on the paper in reverse. The advantage of printmaking is that multiple images can be produced from a single plate or block. As long as the printing is done or supervised by the artist to control the quality of each print, the prints are considered to be multiple originals.

Our example is Schongauer's *Temptation of St. Anthony* (c. 1480s). This subject is taken from the *Golden Legend*, the story of St. Anthony besieged by monsters and seductive women. After surviving one attack of demons, he "challenged the demons to renew the combat. They appeared in the forms of various wild beasts and tore at his flesh cruelly with their teeth, horns, and claws." In the engraving, nine creatures assail the saint. Schongauer's most original idea was to place the scene in mid-air, with St. Anthony in the middle of a violent fray of demons. The *Golden Legend* speaks of wild beasts, but Schongauer also uses insect forms, often with human arms and legs terminating in claws. The figures are simultaneously violent and decorative, and the whole design is a sort of hieroglyph of patient suffering. Schongauer's technique is detailed and varied. In addition to parallel lines, he introduces cross-hatching in his modeling, which produces richer shadows. The engraving was said to have been so admired by Michelangelo that he made a copy of it.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) was born in Nuremberg, the son of a goldsmith, from whom he received his earliest training. Later, he studied with Michael Wolgemut, a painter who ran a large workshop that produced woodcut book illustrations. At 18, Dürer traveled throughout Germany with the ultimate goal of working with Schongauer, but he arrived a month after the master's death. Dürer stayed in Germany for two years, returned to Nuremberg in 1494, and married. Later that year, he traveled to Venice, the first of his two visits to Italy. As a printmaker, Dürer began his career as a designer of woodcuts. Many scholars believe that Dürer cut some of the early blocks for his prints, although the actual cutting of blocks was usually done by specialized craftsmen working from the artist's design.

Woodcuts preceded engravings as a print medium. The technique is laborious because the design is first drawn and then must be cut away wherever no line has been made. The design is on the raised surface left after the woodcutter has cut away everything else. The wood block had to be soft enough to cut but hard enough that the ridges would not break in printing; thus, a solid wood plank was used for strength.

Our example shows Dürer's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (c. 1498). This woodcut reveals hundreds of fine lines—far more lines than open white spaces. Note the thinness of the lines from the raised ridges of wood. The subject came from the Book of Revelation. From the right, the apocalyptic horsemen are Invasion with his bow, Civil Strife with the sword, Famine with the scales, and Death on the Pale Horse. The passage in Revelation concludes, “And power was given unto them...to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” This passage, from the last and one of the most powerful books of the New Testament, received its most famous visualization in Dürer's woodcut. Note his monogram at the bottom center. The expressive characteristics of woodcuts appealed to Dürer, but he also produced some supreme examples in engraving.

Our next image shows an engraving, *Adam and Eve (Fall of Man)* (c. 1504, signed and dated in full on plaque). The nude figures are evidence of Dürer's interest in Italian art, but they are placed in front of dense woods studied with the probing eye of a northern Naturalist. Note the animals at the feet of the first couple. The compelling rendition of surface textures and the poses of these animals are delightful.

Adam grasps the tree of life, and Eve takes the fruit from the serpent, but already she holds a fruit in her other hand from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Looking for an ideal type of beauty, Dürer studied drawings or prints of famous Classical sculpture. He found a model for Adam in the *Apollo Belvedere*. Adam's pose is the reverse of the *Apollo* because of the reverse nature of printmaking.

The engraving *St. Jerome in His Study* (c. 1514) is one of the most admired prints ever produced, for the expressive power of the saint engaged in his work and for Dürer's creation of an interior space glowing with direct and

reflected light. Jerome is writing, and his halo glows as a natural part of him, radiating sanctity and intellect. Symbols abound among the household objects: the skull, which represents the brevity and vanity of human life; the lion, from whose paw Jerome removed a thorn; a crucifix on the desk; an hourglass in the corner; and Jerome's papers and scissors in their wall rack near the rosary. This space was created with Renaissance perspective and control of light, which allowed Dürer to subsume the details into a comprehensive whole.

Dürer was a Christian Humanist, like his great Italian contemporaries, but he was also a German affected by the Protestant Reformation.

Our next work is one of Dürer's paintings, *Self-Portrait* (c. 1500). The date marks the half-millennium. In this holy year, Dürer painted himself in a frontal and symmetrical pose, the vertical of the center line emphasized by the balanced fall of his

long hair and fixed gaze. The pose is in the attitude of Jesus Christ, inspired by the devotional ideal of *Imitatio Christi* ("Imitation of Christ") from a book attributed to the 15th-century German monk Thomas á Kempis. Dürer's imitation extends to idealizing his own features and the placement of his right hand in the position of the *Salvator Mundi* ("Savior of the World"). Because this imitation of Christ was understood to mean more than simple imitation of the good works and example of Christ's life, it could be illustrated literally without blasphemy. The Latin inscription at right is translated "Thus I painted myself, Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg, using lasting colors, at the age of 28." He signed it with his monogram and the date at left.

Another painting is the *All Saints Altarpiece (Adoration of the Holy Trinity)* (c. 1511), which was acquired by Rudolf II in Prague in 1585. The Trinity is at the top, with the dove of the Holy Spirit above the crowned head of God. God's arms are outstretched in a gesture that supports the cross from which Christ's body hangs. Christ is adored on the left by the Virgin Mary and other female saints and, on the right, by St. John the Baptist, who is accompanied by Old Testament figures, including Moses and David.

The lower-tier figures, despite being in the clouds, are not saints. Some are contemporaries, including members of the Landauer family, who

commissioned the painting. The altarpiece was intended for a chapel in a Nuremberg home for elderly and poor men called the Twelve Brothers' House, a name referring to the apostles. Other figures in the lower tier include two popes, two emperors, and the elderly Matthäus Landauer at the left. A landscape with a central lake and shores is below. In the right corner, Dürer holds a tablet with his signature and the date. This painting combines northern and Italian aspects. It is a devotional altarpiece with detail and portraits in the style of northern Realism, and it appears above a German landscape, but it is Italian High Renaissance in its composition.

Dürer was a Christian Humanist, like his great Italian contemporaries, but he was also a German affected by the Protestant Reformation. A steadfast follower of Martin Luther, he nonetheless had absorbed the Catholicism of his birth and the Italian Renaissance language in which some of its greatest art had been expressed. Thus, the paintings of the *Four Apostles* owe their physical power and palpable intelligence to Italy. The *Four Apostles* (c. 1526) depicts St. John, with a red robe, and St. Paul announcing their lineage. Paul belongs to a long line of Italian Renaissance figures, from Giotto to Masaccio to Piero to Michelangelo, whether or not he is directly indebted to any of them. The title is not accurate because one of the four, St. Mark, was not an apostle but an evangelist. The paintings were known as the *Four Apostles* beginning shortly after Dürer's death.

The figures, painted on two panels, are larger than life-size. Each panel contains two figures, but in each, one of the pair greatly dominates the other. On the left panel, St. John the Evangelist mostly fills the composition, reading the opening words from his own Gospel. St. Peter stands behind him, holding the key, his attribute. This attitude seems out of character for the short-tempered Peter and may be intended to emphasize the role denoted by his name, the rock of the Church. On the right panel, St. Paul, identified by his sword, dominates the scene. He alone among the apostles looks at the viewer. Behind him is St. Mark, identified by a scroll in his hand.

This is Dürer's last great achievement in painting. He considered the paintings to be his artistic testament, and he gave them to Nuremberg, which had become a Reformation city in 1525. Dürer presented them in remembrance of himself. They should not be considered Reformation paintings or anti-

Catholic paintings. The inscriptions at the bottom of the pictures are directed against false prophets and deniers of Christ. These apparently included the extreme forces of the Reformation who, in Dürer's view, threatened the success of the Reformation and the foundations of Christian belief. Dürer was a conservative Reformer, and he seems to have intended these four "apostles" as a warning, as witnesses of the true word of the Bible. ■

Works Discussed

Albrecht Dürer:

Adam and Eve (Fall of Man), 1504, engraving, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (22.86 x 17.78 cm), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Great Britain.

All Saints Altarpiece (Adoration of the Holy Trinity), 1511, oil on panel, 53 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (135 x 123.4 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Four Apostles, 1526, oil on panel, 7' 1" x 2' 6" (2.16 x .76 m), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1498, woodcut, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11" (38.1 x 27.94 cm), British Museum, London, Great Britain.

Self-Portrait, 1500, oil on panel, 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (67 x 49 cm), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

St. Jerome in His Study, 1514, engraving, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (22.86 x 17.78 cm), Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany.

Martin Schongauer:

Temptation of St. Anthony, 1480s, engraving, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm), Fondazione Magnani-Rocca, Parma, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Bartrum, Grass (contributor), Koerner (contributor), and Kuhlemann (contributor), *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Daniel De Simone, ed., *A Heavenly Craft*.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some of the inherent advantages of woodcuts and engravings as media? What originality is possible through these media?
2. Differentiate between Renaissance and northern elements in Dürer's work.

Riemenschneider and Grünewald

Lecture 24

As in the last lecture, I want to deal with two German masters of the late 15th and early 16th centuries in this lecture as well. One is a sculptor; the other is a painter associated with a sculptor—Tilman Riemenschneider and Matthias Grünewald.

Contemplating altarpieces by these artists, we will discover their different styles and depictions of sacred subjects. We will look at Riemenschneider's *Altarpiece of the Holy Blood* and Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*. The two artists seem retrogressive because the style of their work is not like that of the Renaissance-oriented Dürer. They both have strong ties to the late-medieval traditions of northern Europe. However, Riemenschneider displayed a compelling Humanism and emotional directness in his work, while Grünewald, a contemporary of Dürer's and an artist aware of Renaissance ideals, chose another path.

Tilman Riemenschneider (1460–1531) worked principally in Würzburg as a sculptor in wood and stone. He never traveled widely, although his work occasionally seems to reveal the influence of the south. Our first example shows Riemenschneider's *Altarpiece of the Holy Blood* (c. 1501–1505, Church of St. Jacob's, Rothenburg). The shrine stands about 29 ½ feet high in Rothenburg, an imperial city near the Rhine ("imperial" here refers to the Roman Empire). There was a long tradition of wood carving in the north, and Riemenschneider was one of the last great sculptors in wood. He did not gild or paint his work, which may have been a response to the growing resistance in Germanic countries to what was regarded as idolatry, especially in religious sculpture.

The relic of Christ's blood, which gives this altarpiece its name, is contained in a vial or crystal embedded in a cross that is supported by two angels in the section of the altar just above the main scene of the *Last Supper*. This group of angels is flanked by larger figures of the *Annunciation*. This scene is unusual because Mary is on the left and the Archangel Gabriel is on the right, a reversal of the traditional placement.

The altarpiece consists of a centerpiece and two wings. The wings have scenes carved in relief. On the left wing is the *Entry into Jerusalem*, with a crowd of heads represented while Christ rides into the city. Christ is passing closely through the narrow city gate; a portcullis at the top of the gate with pointed stakes threatens Christ's head. The right wing shows the scene on Gethsemane, the *Agony in the Garden*. The rocky landscape is suggested, and the sleeping apostles are clearly distinguished. St. Peter's right hand rests on the hilt of his knife, with which he will attack the servant of the high priest. In the right background, Judas leads a group of soldiers through another gate.

These two scenes flank the *Last Supper*. This scene is placed on a shallow stage, the figures underneath a canopy of elaborate late-Gothic carvings of vines and leaves—an example of the high estimation the northern European artist placed on the natural world. The upper room of the *Last Supper* has miniature windows in the background. These mullioned windows are glazed with bull's-eye leaded glass, which allows light from the chapel window to illuminate the space from behind, while light from the church illuminates the front of the figures. In a particularly original interpretation, Judas is in the center of the group, standing and confronting Christ. This confrontation, according to the Gospel of St. John, ended when Jesus said to Judas, "That which thou doest, do quickly," and Judas "went immediately out; and it was night." The wooden sculpture of Judas can be physically removed, which shifts the scene to the next moment when Jesus says, "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

We are uncertain about the proper name of Matthias Grünewald and almost everything else connected with him. Grünewald (also known as Neithart or Master Mathis) may have been born about the same time as Dürer, and they both died in 1528. His greatest achievement—the altar from Isenheim—is one of the masterpieces of German art. It is also in complete contrast with the art of Dürer. The *Isenheim Altarpiece* is located in Colmar, France, in the Unterlinden Museum, which is housed in a 13th-century former Dominican convent. The altarpiece was made for a religious settlement and hospital at Isenheim devoted to St. Anthony. It consists of paintings by Grünewald and

a group of sculptures by Niklaus Hagenauer done in 1490, 20 years before Grünewald assumed completion of the altarpiece.

In the early 20th century, Joris-Karl Huysmans, author of *Au rebours* (“*Against the Grain*”) and art critic, wrote of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, “it looms up the moment you venture in, stunning you with its horrific nightmare of Calvary. It is as if a whirlwind of art has been let loose, and you need a few minutes to recover, to get over the impression of pitiful horror evoked by that huge crucified Christ.”

In the Colmar museum, the altarpiece has never been displayed as it must have been at Isenheim. When it was taken from Isenheim in the late 18th century, the panels and sculptures were removed, leaving behind the heavier structural parts of the altarpiece, including its superstructure. The 1860 museum catalogue notes, “two wagonloads of painted and gilded sculptures had already been taken off many years before to some neighboring area to be sold.” A new framework was made in 1930. The panels were mounted separately with all paintings permanently visible. The *Crucifixion*, two saints, and the *Lamentation* are still seen first.

Our example shows the closed view of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* with the *Crucifixion* in the center, flanked by saints on either side and the predella with the *Lamentation* (c. 1515). The hospital at Isenheim adjoined the convent church, and the altar in the choir could be seen through an opening from the hospital and from the nave through the opening in the rood screen, although only the *Crucifixion* would have been visible. In the museum today, St. Sebastian and St. Anthony are reversed, placed on the wrong sides. The example shows a photographically reconstructed view so that St. Anthony is on the left side and St. Sebastian is on the right side, as they originally were. Grünewald designed the saints to imitate painted sculpture, a conceit also found in earlier Netherlandish painting.

The central panel, the *Crucifixion*, shows St. John the Evangelist at left with the two Marys—the Madonna in the white robe and St. Mary Magdalene—at his feet. The white robe may allude to the Virgin’s purity, or it may be an artistic effort to unify the color scheme of the closed altarpiece, which is red, white, and black. The Madonna wrings her hands, and the Magdalene

stretches her hands up in grief and prayer. The painting is dated 1515 on the ointment jar near the Magdalene. Christ's head inclines toward the side of the scene with his mother. On the other side is St. John the Baptist and the Lamb. John the Baptist was not present at the Crucifixion; thus, this is not the historical narrative but a symbolic scene in which the forerunner points to Christ's body with a forefinger. With St. John the Baptist is the inscription from the Gospel of St. John (3:30), "He must increase, but I must decrease."

The Lamb is representative of John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." The Lamb holds the reed cross and bleeds into the chalice. The Lamb is a link between the Old Testament and the New Testament, not a historical narrative but a symbolic link.

Christ's body shows the disfiguring wounds and the flesh color. The hospital at Isenheim was for patients suffering from *ergotism*, a disease caused by ergot or rye fungus, which was a serious affliction in the Middle Ages. Symptoms included inflated bellies and gangrenous limbs. Christ's feet may be an illustration of the words of the contemporary mystic Bridget of Sweden, "His feet were curled round the nails as round door hinges toward the other side." Apropos of the gesture of the Baptist, Bridget wrote, "Thou art the Lamb that John pointed out with his finger." The predella shows St. Mary Magdalene at left, the Madonna, and St. John on the right supporting Christ's body.

Our next example shows a pictorial reconstruction of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* open to the first interior sequence. It depicts the *Annunciation* on the left, a *Concert of Angels* at center left, the *Nativity* at center right, and the *Resurrection* to the right. The left wing shows the *Annunciation*. Huysmans wrote that the Madonna appeared as "a good solid German woman fed on salted provisions and bloated with beer." In the *Concert of Angels*, there is an angel with a large viol, a smaller viol-playing angel under the canopy, a demonic figure at left, prophets at the tops of the colonnettes,

The central panel, the *Crucifixion*, shows St. John the Evangelist at left with the two Marys—the Madonna in the white robe and St. Mary Magdalene—at his feet.

and a woman bathed in an aureole of light. Bridging the space between the *Concert of Angels* and the *Nativity* are several still-life objects, including a crystal pitcher, a tub, and a ceramic pot. In the *Nativity*, the Madonna and Child are in the foreground, and in the background is the annunciation to the shepherds. Roses and architecture are behind the Madonna and Child, who are in a closed garden. About the *Resurrection* scene, Huysmans wrote, “Christ, completely transfigured, rises aloft in smiling majesty; and one is tempted to regard the enormous halo which encircles him, shining brilliantly in the starry night like that star of the Magi...the morning star returning... at night: as the Christmas star grown larger since its birth in the sky, like the Messiah’s body since his Nativity on earth.”

We now look at a pictorial reconstruction of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* open to the second interior sequence. There are two paintings flanking the preexisting sculpture by Hagenauer. At left is the *Meeting of Paul and Anthony in the Desert*, three sculptured saints are in the center, and the *Temptation of St. Anthony* is at the right. The *Meeting of Paul and Anthony in the Desert* is a story from the *Golden Legend*. Anthony, believing that he was the first hermit, traveled to the wilderness, but he found St. Paul already there. This passage depicts the two in a convincing wilderness as a raven brings them bread. Niklaus Hagenauer’s sculpture depicts Sts. Augustine, Anthony, and Jerome. St. Augustine is shown with the donor at left, St. Anthony is enthroned at center, and St. Jerome is pictured at right. The sculptured predella, by an unknown artist, shows Christ and the apostles.

The *Temptation of St. Anthony* shows a bloated man with boils, which may represent suffering from St. Anthony’s fire, the “burning sickness,” or *erysipelas*, a local febrile disease accompanied by inflammation of the skin, burning, and gangrene of the extremities. The violence of the demons makes Anthony’s fear and pain palpable. The paper at the lower right has Anthony’s plea for God’s help, “Where are you, good Jesus, why were you not here to heal my wounds?” This may have been a representation of the sufferers’ pleas in the hospital at Isenheim. The cool Alpine mountains in the background are barren yet a relief from the demons’ torment. ■

Works Discussed

Matthias Grünewald:

Isenheim Altarpiece, c. 1510–15, oil on panel, closed: 8 x 10' (2.43 x 3 m), Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

Niklaus Hagenauer:

Saints Augustine, Anthony, and Jerome from *Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1490, polychromed wood, Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

Tilman Riemenschneider:

Altarpiece of the Holy Blood and details: *Entry into Jerusalem*, *Agony in the Garden*, *Last Supper*, c. 1501–1505, lindenwood, 29' 6" H (9 m H), Church of St. Jacob, Rothenburg, Germany.

Suggested Reading

Julien Chapuis, *Tilman Riemenschneider, c. 1460–1531*.

Horst Ziermann, *Matthias Grünewald*.

Questions to Consider

1. Compare Tilman Riemenschneider's *Last Supper* on the *Altarpiece of the Holy Blood* with others we have examined in the course.
2. Name three ways in which the art of Grünewald and Dürer differ. Cite specific examples.

Netherlandish Art in the 16th Century

Lecture 25

We now turn our attention to art in the Netherlands in the 16th century, an astounding period in Western history and culture.

In this lecture, we'll look at four 16th-century artists from the Netherlands: Hieronymus Bosch, Joachim Patinir, Jan Gossaert, and Lucas van Leyden. We'll devote most of this lecture to Bosch's famous triptych, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Looking closely at both the subject matter and symbolism of these four artists, we will see how these works were related to and reflected their historical period, leading up to the Reformation.

Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516) was born and worked in 's-Hertogenbosch, a quiet city in Holland near the border of modern Belgium. At the time, the Netherlands was still a unified state, and 's-Hertogenbosch (meaning “the Duke's Woods” and the source of the artist's name) was one of the four largest cities in Brabant, an important duchy under Burgundian control. Religious life flourished in the city, and Bosch belonged to a group of lay and religious men and women called the Brotherhood of Our Lady. He fulfilled some artistic commissions for the group, which shared the ascetic, spiritual, and reforming ideas of the more important Brotherhood of the Common Life.

Bosch lived during the immediate pre-Reformation period, and numerous passages in his work make clear his criticisms of the Church. Although we know little about him, we know that his patrons were frequently from the nobility and his works were well known to important collectors in the later 16th century.

Our first example shows Bosch's multi-level *Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1505–1510) from the exterior. It is not known who commissioned this large triptych, but it is now certain that it was not intended for a church. Its format and size, so often associated with altarpieces, has misled writers and historians for generations. In 1517, a year after Bosch died, the painting was in the palace of Henry III of Nassau, who was regent of the Netherlands. It stayed in the possession of the Orange and Nassau family until the occupying

Spanish troops took it to Madrid in 1568. By 1593, it was in the Escorial, the royal monastery and palace outside Madrid. Given that King Philip II's passion for Bosch's paintings is well known, it was probably acquired by him.

It is rare to see the exterior of the triptych reproduced. The closed view shows *Creation, with the Earth Uninhabited*. This shows a panorama of the Earth, sky, and water enclosed in a transparent globe. The Earth seems to be surrounded by water. Nothing is living, but strange things are visible, such as horn shapes projecting from rocks and other fantastic forms. This is the third day of creation as described in Genesis: "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas." The Creator, holding a book, is seen in a break in the darkness of the upper left corner, and across the top of the two panels is a Latin quotation from Psalm 33:9, "For He spake and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast."

Our next image is an open view of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* showing *Eden*, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, and *Hell*. The panels are vertical, and there are three tiers in each panel. There is no linear perspective, but there is frequent use of circular compositional units.

On the left panel is *Eden* with the creation of man and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In the foreground, we see a cat carrying a mouse, a not-fully-evolved creature crawling out of a pool, and a flying fish. In the middle ground, we see animals that could have been observed in a zoo, such as a giraffe and elephant, and a unicorn that could not have. Eden was watered by four rivers, perhaps suggested by the four streams of water from the central fountain, but this could also be a reference to the Book of Revelation, in which the Fountain of Life is the source of the Rivers of Paradise. If this is the Fountain of Life, then the presence of an owl is strange, because the owl is most often a symbol of night and death. Note the birds flying out of the conical rock in a spiral formation.

Bosch and his contemporaries lived with the presumption of damnation, which must have been intense in s'-Hertogenbosch, where the number of religious institutions was notable. By 1526, it is estimated that 1 of every 19

persons in the city was associated with a religious order. Bosch's art has a unity and intensity of subject and style that supports that presumption.

The center panel shows the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. A fish was a phallic symbol; one lies on the ground at bottom center, while another flies through the air at top left. The fruits are principally cherries and berries, especially strawberries. A 16th-century Spanish commentator on this painting pointed out that strawberries, once eaten, leave little taste behind in the mouth—an allusion to the nature of physical pleasure. Note the giant strawberry at the bottom of the panel, on which a man gnaws. In the water at left, a couple floats in a shell-like vessel, reaching out to grasp the bunch of blackberries, which is surrounded by figures in the water already picking at it.

A group of riders circles the small pool in the center. They ride all sorts of animals—horses, camels, a mythical griffin (half eagle, half lion), and a unicorn, while in front, a bear, an ox, and a pig serve as mounts. This bestiary is full of sexual symbolism; indeed, the very act of riding was a colloquial synonym for sex. We see numerous egg and globular shapes and some transparent bubbles or domes. The couple at the left edge near the bottom is enclosed in a bubble that looks as if it has emerged from a plant, which in turn, issues from an egg-like shape. Through a hole in that egg, we see a man's face.

A transparent tube extends outward, and a mouse or rat is entering it. An intriguing motif is birds feeding humans. Right of center is a red conical tree on which a bird perches, berry in beak above the upturned heads of humans. In the top center is a blue sphere, reminiscent of the Sphere of Creation on the outside of the triptych. It is also a fountain, a variant of the one in *Eden*, but it serves as a swimming platform. Note the naïve, un-self-conscious indulgence in carnal pleasure that most of the persons in the garden exhibit. However, their facial expressions are often neutral, rather than smiling or leering. An owl is prominent in this scene, as in *Eden*. Here, this symbol of death is above two dancing nudes and below half a dozen figures in a small grove that seems suggestive of Eden and innocence.

The right wing represents *Hell*. In the lower left corner is gambling, vice, and violence. At lower right, a sow in the veil of a mother superior tries to

convince a man to sign a document, with an inkwell supplied by a demon, conveying his property to the monastery—a sharp criticism of the Church. Above them, the devil devours the damned and evacuates them into a pit below his throne. Next to the devil are musical instruments—a lute, harp, hurdy-gurdy, wind instrument, and drum. In the Renaissance and before, musical instruments often were associated with angels and harmony, but here, Bosch associates them with lust and turns them into instruments of torture. The middle section is dominated by a figure whose legs are tree trunks, whose torso is a broken egg, and who has a very human head with a hat decorated with bagpipes. It has been suggested that the face is a self-portrait but without any documentary evidence. The top level is crammed with individuals enduring the tortures of damnation, and a city blazes in the dark with hellfire.

This painting may have been commissioned for the private enjoyment of a nobleman. Its overall theme can be seen as a commentary on sexuality and the relations between the sexes, from creation to damnation, with a life of dubious pleasure in between. It even has been suggested that this might have been commissioned for a wedding.

Our next example shows Bosch's *Seven Deadly Sins* (c. 1490). This is a circular composition; Bosch was so fond of circular compositions that they must have had an emblematic significance for him, perhaps symbolizing the endless cycle of man's folly. In this example, the concentric rings of the large circle represent the eye of God, in the pupil of which we see Christ emerging from his tomb. The inscription reads, "Beware, beware, God sees." God sees the sins of men, and the circle around the center presents the sins. For example, avarice is shown by men bribing a judge, and gluttony is shown by two men devouring everything the housewife brings. The circle can be compared to a mirror, and the eye of God has been compared to a great mirror reflecting all creation. The corners of the tabletop have smaller circles that are the "Four Last Things"—death, last judgment, heaven, and hell.

Bosch and his contemporaries lived with the presumption of damnation, which must have been intense in s'-Hertogenbosch, where the number of religious institutions was notable.

The inscriptions on the scrolls at the top and bottom spell out the condition of those whose sins have been seen by the eye of God. The lower one reads, “I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be.” Despite its traditional title, it is not clear that the painting was used as an actual tabletop. This painting also came into the possession of Philip II of Spain, who kept it in his private apartments and probably treated it with care. Philip II turned into a man so pious that he crippled himself through hours of prayerful kneeling; the moral meaning of Bosch was probably foremost in his mind.

We next turn to a work by Joachim Patinir (1480–1524) called *The Penitence of St. Jerome* (c. 1518). This large, beautiful painting by Patinir has wonderful details and contains one of the largest, most extensive landscapes painted up to this time. The title of this altarpiece comes from St. Jerome in the center panel. The left wing shows the *Baptism of Christ*, and the right wing shows the *Temptation of St. Anthony*. Though the figures are large and, of course, essential to the function of the painting as an altarpiece, it is the landscape that is the star. The painting shows an immense panorama from mountain to plain, spreading over all three panels, with a vista that attests to Patinir’s memory of the Alps.

Jan Gossaert (1478–1532) was called Mabuse. Our example shows a diptych, *Jean Carondelet with Madonna and Child* (c. 1517). This work is small—less than 20 inches high. The two panels faced each other when displayed. Jean Carondelet was dean of the church at Besancon, a councilor to Charles V, and a friend of Erasmus; thus, he was very involved in the religious turbulence of the day. On the exterior, Carondelet’s coat of arms is on the right side in an illusionistic niche, and a skull is on the left side. Above the skull is a strip of paper with the words of St. Jerome inviting meditation on death.

Our next work is a triptych called the *Last Judgment* (c. 1526–1527) by Lucas van Leyden (1494–1538). Christ is depicted in judgment in the center, with the resurrection taking place below him. Most people are waiting for disposition; some are driven into hell, while others are led into paradise with angels. This was the high altar of the Peterkerk (“Peter’s Church”) in Leiden and one of the few survivors of the Protestant iconoclastic rage of August 28, 1566, which resulted in the destruction of most altarpieces in Leiden.

We have noted the advance of the Protestant Reformation and the reaction of the Counter-Reformation, that is, the forceful counterattack of the Roman Catholic Church in the face of the reformist threat. That counterattack was most violently expressed in the Netherlands, which had come under Habsburg control in 1477 and was occupied by Spanish garrisons. Under the direction of Philip II, Spain tried to suppress the religious and civil revolt that occurred in the Netherlands in the mid-16th century. In the next lecture, we will look at the greatest art produced in the Netherlands during those critical years, the paintings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. ■

Works Discussed

Hieronymus Bosch:

Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1505–10, oil on panel, open: 7 x 13' (2.1 x 3.9 m), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Seven Deadly Sins, c. 1490, oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Jan Gossaert (called Mabuse):

Carondelet Diptych: Jean Carondelet and Virgin Mary, 1517, oil on panel, open: 16 ³/₄ x 21 ¹/₄" (42.5 x 54 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Joachim Patinir:

The Penitence of Saint Jerome, c. 1518, oil on wood, central panel: 46 ¹/₄ x 32" (117.5 x 81.3 cm), each wing: 47 ¹/₂ x 14" (120.7 x 35.6 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Lucas van Leyden:

Last Judgment Triptych, 1526–27, oil on panel, 9' 10 ¹/₄" x 14' 3" (300.5 x 434.5 cm), Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Suggested Reading

Belting, *Hieronymus Bosch*.

Koldeweij and Vandenbroeck, *Hieronymus Bosch*.

Questions to Consider

1. What symbolism do you notice in Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*?
2. Compare Joachim Patinir to other landscape artists we have studied.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Lecture 26

Pieter Bruegel, which is what we are going to do this afternoon. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, to distinguish him from his many progeny who were also painters, was born about 1528 to 1530 (as close as we can determine) and died in 1569.

In this lecture, we look at the art of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and examine aspects of his art that set him apart from his contemporaries. In addition, we will focus on the great variety of Bruegel's art, from his imaginative depiction of the *Fall of Icarus*, to his vast, detailed landscape of *Hunters in the Snow*, to the political implications of *The Blind Leading the Blind*.

The birthplace of Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1528/30–1569) is uncertain, but it may have been 's-Hertogenbosch or Breda. Although he probably apprenticed in Antwerp, we also don't know much about his teachers. Bruegel is recorded as a master in the Antwerp guild in 1551, but he probably left to visit Italy just after that. He traveled to Sicily by 1552 and was in Rome in 1553. During his return north, he lingered for some time in the Alps but was back in Antwerp by 1554. After his marriage in 1563, he moved to Brussels, his wife's home. For the first six years of his career, Bruegel designed drawings to be made into prints. His engravings spread throughout Europe during his lifetime, and he was known primarily as a printmaker, although today, he is regarded mostly as a painter.

Our first example is Bruegel's drawing *Artist and Connoisseur* (c. 1565). This is not a literal self-portrait, because Bruegel never attained the apparent age of the painter here, but it may be considered a spiritual self-portrait. This is a very subtle satire of the "connoisseur" looking over the artist's shoulder, not a barbed caricature, because the poor man cannot be blamed for what he does not know. He is ignorant in matters of art; he literally does not know what he sees. The viewer cannot see the painting in front of the artist. It is typical of Bruegel to avoid the literal, the obvious statement, leaving our imagination free to work things out.

The *Fall of Icarus* (c. 1558) is from a well-known story related by Ovid. Icarus and his father, Daedalus, are flying with wings, designed by Daedalus, to escape from their exile on Crete. Despite being warned by his father, when Icarus flew too close to the Sun, the wax that held the wings in place melted and he fell to Earth. This is an original depiction of the final moment of the drama, with Icarus disappearing into the sea unnoticed by the others in the scene. There is a ploughman in the foreground, a shepherd who stares upward at something. The sea extends from the bottom of the hill to the horizon, with a few ships and a mountainous shoreline and a large ship with billowing sails. This wide worldview is characteristic of northern painting. At the stern of the ship, near the shore, Icarus's tiny legs stick out above the water. W. H. Auden describes this picture in his poem "Musée des Beaux Arts":

About suffering they were never wrong,
 The Old Masters: how well they understood
 Its human position...
 In Bruegel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
 Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
 But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
 As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
 Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
 Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
 Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Our next painting shows *Mad Meg (Dulle Griet)* (c. 1562–1564). *Griet* is diminutive for Margaret and is also a traditional Netherlandish folk name for shrewish or quarrelsome women. *Dulle* means angry or wrathful in this context, not crazy. We see many Bosch-like details—fish, egg shapes, hybrid demonic creatures, transparent bubbles, and a hellish conflagration in the background. At right, women on a bridge vie for coins that are produced for them from the behind of a large figure in green and pink seated on a roof.

The whole scene is hell, but Satan is apparently the whale-like monster at the left with a gaping mouth and staring eye. The huge figure of Mad Meg strides across the landscape with a bundle of booty. She wears a helmet, breastplate,

and sword. The meaning is unclear, but Meg has “the wild stare of the true fanatic, armed for combat,” as one art historian noted.

Hunters in the Snow (1565) is from a series devoted to the months. Only six seem to have survived, but there must have been the full complement of 12. This winter scene could have been January.

Our next example is the *Conversion of St. Paul* (c. 1567). This is correctly called the conversion of *Saul*, his name before the conversion. This was a popular subject in the 16th century, when conversions to Protestant sects or re-conversions to Roman Catholicism were the centerpiece of theological concern. Saul, on the road to Damascus, where he was going to obtain permission from the synagogue to arrest Christians, was suddenly struck to the ground by a light from heaven that blinded him. He heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Paul is difficult to locate, because Bruegel treats the scene like the *Fall of Icarus*. Paul is just one of many figures; he is on the ground in front of the foreshortened horse. This painting is about sight, seeing, understanding, and conversion. It is also about pride. Saul was proud—remember Conques, the knight falling into hell—and pride goeth before a fall. Note the detailed alpine landscape, recreated from Bruegel’s imagination and his drawings.

The Land of Cockaigne (1567) has a folk theme from a Flemish poem of 1546, describing a land abounding in food and drink. Pigs and geese run about already roasted, pancakes and tarts grow on rooftops, and fences are made of sausages. A knight is below a hut waiting for food to drop into his mouth; another knight, a peasant, and a clerk sit around a table.

Our next example is the *Peasant Wedding Feast* (c. 1567–1568). The bride wears a peasant crown, and her parents sit near her. It’s possible that the groom is not pictured, or he may be the boy with the red hat who takes dishes from the door plank being carried past in the foreground—the groom was obliged to serve the

In 1560, Antwerp was at the height of prosperity, with about 1,000 foreign merchants in residence and some 500 ships entering the harbor every day.

bride and her family. The strong diagonal line anchors the composition. Note the bagpipes, commonly understood as a phallic symbol in this era. The triangular group at lower left alludes to the Wedding at Cana in a satirical way, because gluttony seems the sole point here. The artist suggests the sobriety of the bearded man and the Franciscan friar talking at the right edge, who are not eating and drinking like the others.

In 1560, Antwerp was at the height of prosperity, with about 1,000 foreign merchants in residence and some 500 ships entering the harbor every day. Acquiescing to a demand from the States-General, Spain withdrew its troops from the Netherlands in 1561. This tactical error led to the rapid spread of the Protestant Reformation. In 1567, Philip II sent 20,000 troops to the Netherlands to take back Antwerp and impose the Inquisition. The Flemish leaders of the opposition, including the duke of Egmont, were beheaded in 1568. This marked the beginning of the Eighty Years' War.

At this time, Bruegel painted *The Blind Leading the Blind* (c. 1568). A line of six blind men in blue and blue-gray robes and cowls follows a downward diagonal across a long, low canvas. One has already fallen into a ditch; the next in line proceeds and pulls the staff of the next, although he does not know where he is headed. The rest follow, hands on shoulders or poles. Although there is much in Bruegel that alludes to the troubles in the Netherlands during this period, his own political philosophy seemed to be in accord with the worldview that his great landscape of the *Hunters* suggests. In this physical world in which man exists as one of many creations, the cause of his recurrent distress is his own folly. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ remarks, in speaking of the Pharisees, "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." ■

Works Discussed

Pieter Bruegel the Elder:

Artist and Connoisseur, c. 1565, pen and ink drawing, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (22.86 x 20.32 cm), Albertina, Vienna, Austria.

Blind Leading the Blind, 1568, tempera on canvas, 2' 9 ³/₄" x 5' 3 ³/₄" (86 x 154 cm), Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.

Conversion of St. Paul, 1567, oil on panel, 26 ¹/₂ x 38 ¹/₂" (66 x 96.5 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Fall of Icarus, c. 1558, oil on panel transferred to canvas, 29 x 44 ¹/₈" (73.6 x 112 cm), Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium.

Hunters in the Snow, 1565, oil on panel, 3' 10" x 5' 3 ³/₄" (117 x 162 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Land of Cockaigne, 1567, oil on panel, 20 ¹/₂ x 30 ³/₄" (52 x 78 cm), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

Mad Meg (Dulle Griet), c. 1562–64, oil on panel, 3' 9 ¹/₄" x 5' 3 ¹/₂" (115 x 161 cm), Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, Belgium.

Peasant Wedding Feast, c. 1567–68, oil on panel, 3' 9" x 5' 4 ¹/₂" (114 x 164 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Suggested Reading

Hagen and Hagen, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder, c. 1525–1569*.

Stechow, *Masters of Bruegel*.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways did Bruegel combine his native landscape with images from his travel to create original landscape forms?
2. How do you interpret Bruegel's so-called "worldview"? Think about the attention given to Icarus in the *Fall of Icarus* and Saul in the *Conversion of Saul*.

Mannerism and the Late Work of Michelangelo

Lecture 27

We are turning our attention back from northern Europe, where we have been for several lectures, back to Italy. We are going to discuss the movement, or style, called Mannerism, which is principally a style associated with the 16th century.

We will learn the characteristics of Mannerism and study various artists who used this style, including Jacopo Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, Parmigianino, and Agnolo Bronzino. We will also discuss the later work of Michelangelo. The style called *Mannerism* is derived from the Italian phrase *maniera della antica*, meaning “manner of the antique.” This term can be used to justify almost any aspect of style, because just about every style can be found in the ancient art of Greece and Rome and used as a model by living artists.

Mannerism arose in Italy for both psychological and stylistic reasons; that is, it was not simply a development from the shadows in Leonardo’s paintings or the later work of Raphael in the Vatican or the complexity of Michelangelo’s poses for the human body. These were among the stylistic sources of Mannerism, but the distortions of space, form, and color that characterize the style were given a jolt forward by the Sack of Rome in 1527. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of France were enemies who chose Italy as their battlefield. The election of Pope Clement VII in 1523 had been controlled by Catholic princes—Henry VIII of England, Francis I, and Charles V. The new pope, a Medici, was a compromise candidate and a politically indecisive man in an untenable position. He had antagonized the emperor; when Rome became vulnerable, the emperor’s troops swarmed in, and violence erupted.

Though the emperor was Catholic, many of his mercenary soldiers were German Lutherans who began the Sack of Rome and clamored for the deposition of the pope, a move that did not have the emperor’s support. The troops pillaged the holy city and terrorized its inhabitants. Artists fled Rome, and the city lost the artistic vitality that it had developed under the patronage of Pope Julius II and Leo X.

The characteristics of Mannerism can be seen in several significant artists, including Jacopo Pontormo (1494–1557). By the age of 20, Pontormo was a gifted painter with a thorough grasp of the High Renaissance style. We begin with Pontormo's fresco of the *Visitation* (c. 1514–1516). This fresco depicts the pregnant Mary meeting with her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant (with John the Baptist). Elizabeth kneels on the stairs. The symmetry is compromised in some places, and the palette has a range of hues that tends to shift away from the pure triad toward intermediate hues; the hues are also combined in unharmonious or unusual ways.

Our next work is the *Entombment* (or *Deposition*) (c. 1528). Note how the pinks in this painting are emphasized, for example, on the boy kneeling to support Christ and on one woman's headdress. Other prominent colors are red, orange, white, and pale blue. The space in the composition is irrational; the painting looks unnatural. It is unclear if this is the entombment or deposition of Christ. There is no cross or tomb, but Christ's body is being carried.

Another practitioner of the Mannerist style was Giovanni Battista Rosso, called Rosso Fiorentino (1494–1540). We see his *Deposition* (c. 1521), originally created for the Cathedral of Volterra. This tall altarpiece with large figures depicts Christ being taken down from the cross. This painting is strongly vertical, with the long beam of the cross a dominant element. The ladders reinforce the strong vertical of the cross. The tall figure of St. John the Evangelist and the angular figures on the ladders similarly emphasize the verticality. The center of the painting is vacated, with only Christ's feet in the exact center. This painting predates the Sack of Rome by six years and, thus, attests to the stylistic shift already under way as a result of the emotional religious climate precipitated by the Reformation. Luther's 95 Theses were posted in Wittenberg in 1517, followed by his trial and excommunication in 1521.

Rosso left Rome after the Sack and wandered around Italy for several years until he left for France. Francis I invited him, along with another Italian, Primaticcio, to Fontainebleau to decorate a gallery in the royal chateau. While in France, Rosso also painted a *Pietà* (c. 1530–1535) for the constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, who owned the great chateau at Chantilly. The composition is so crowded that there is no room for movement, but

the figures are agitated and angular, creating a sense of stifled movement. The Madonna's arms span the top, and the huge body of Christ creates an angle across the composition. Note that Christ has a red beard; Rosso was redheaded. This may be his way of identifying with Christ's suffering. This painting influenced the 19th-century French painter Delacroix.

Parmigianino (1503–1540) was from Parma, but at 21, he went to Rome. Our image is the *Madonna of the Long Neck* (c. 1536–1540). Parmigianino died before he could complete the painting. The Madonna and angel in the painting are very tall. There is no spatial logic in this painting, similar to Pontormo's *Entombment* (or *Deposition*).

Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572) was an important artist who worked for the Medici. Our example is his fresco *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* (c. 1565–1569). St. Lawrence was the patron saint of this church. The space is collapsed, with the figures pressed toward the surface of the painting. Several poses are borrowed from Michelangelo; for example, the figure of St. Lawrence is taken from Michelangelo's Adam in the *Creation of Adam* in the Sistine Chapel.

This is profound Christian art at the center of Roman Catholic Christianity, but it should not be thought of as inaccessible to the non-Christian or nonbeliever.

We now turn to some of the later work of Michelangelo (1475–1564). Michelangelo's later *Pietà* (c. 1547–1555) was intended for his own tomb, which he wanted to be in the Medici Chapel of the Florentine Cathedral. Then, while still working on it, he tried to destroy it. He succeeded in smashing the left arm and left leg of Christ before abandoning the work. His pupils restored the arm, but the leg is gone. Instead of the stable pyramid used in the early *Pietà* in St. Peter's, here Michelangelo employed a tall, attenuated group of four figures. The composition is controlled by the broken zigzag line of Christ's body. The cowed man at the apex, the principal support of Christ, has been identified either as Joseph of Arimithaea, who gave his own tomb to Christ, or as Nicodemus, who assisted in the deposition from the cross. It is probably Nicodemus, not only because Condivi, Michelangelo's

contemporary biographer, said so, but because Nicodemus was thought to have been a sculptor and could, therefore, serve as a patron of sculptors. Moreover, the man has been carved with the features of Michelangelo.

Shortly before his death, Pope Clement VII ordered Michelangelo to paint a Last Judgment on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel. It was not a welcome commission, and when the pope died unexpectedly, Michelangelo tried to escape from the agreement. But the new pope, Paul III Farnese, was eager to have Michelangelo complete the commission. Let's look at this *Last Judgment* (c. 1535–1541, Sistine Chapel, Vatican). The tempo of the composition is slow and measured, partially because of the weight apparent in the painting. The blessed must be hauled up physically into heaven, while the damned sink under the weight of their sins or are pulled down. In the upper center is Christ, but with the appearance of a Classical Apollo, a common Renaissance equation. There were originally many nude figures in this work, but later in the 16th century, another painter was ordered to paint drapery on some of them. The detail of the damned soul shows “terror in the face of annihilation.” This phrase applies to his stricken face, but it has been applied to nearly the whole of this painting.

Michelangelo's features are seen on the flayed skin of St. Bartholomew. Michelangelo may have equated himself with Bartholomew because the saint's motto in art was *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum* (“I believe in the Holy Spirit”). This motto is compatible with Neo-Platonic thought, which was widespread at that time and may have formed an important part of Michelangelo's theology and philosophy. Sloughing off the outer skin of mortality to free the inner core of the spirit is a Neo-Platonic concept. The pessimism of the aged Michelangelo is clear in a poem he wrote:

What avails it to try to create so many childish things
If they've but brought me to this end, like one
Who crosses o'er the sea and then drowns on the strand.
Precious art, in which for a while I enjoyed such renown,
Has left me in this state:
Poor, old, and a slave in others' power.
I am undone if I do not die soon.

With this closing act in the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo gave the conclusion to the theological sequence he had begun. The papal altar with its daily symbolic enactment of sacrifice and salvation at the Mass is at the foot of the wall on which this *Last Judgment* is painted. At the top, above Christ on the same central axis, is the prophet Jonah, symbol of the Resurrection, who looks up at God, initiating the creation of the world. This is profound Christian art at the center of Roman Catholic Christianity, but it should not be thought of as inaccessible to the non-Christian or nonbeliever. Faith is for the faithful, but the immense achievement of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel is accessible to everyone—it is an intellectual, emotional, and psychological construct of unsurpassed power. ■

Works Discussed

Agnolo Bronzino:

Martyrdom of St. Lawrence, c. 1565–69, fresco, Church of S. Lorenzo, Florence, Italy.

Rosso Fiorentino:

Deposition, 1521, oil on panel, 11' 2" H (3.41 x 2.01 m), Pinacoteca Comunale, Volterra, Italy.

Pietà, c. 1530–35, oil on panel transferred to canvas, 4' 2" x 5' 4 1/4" (1.27 x 1.63 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Michelangelo:

Last Judgment, c. 1535–41, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican Palace, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Pietà, c. 1547–55, marble, 7' 5" H (2.3 m H), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Parmigianino:

Madonna of the Long Neck, c. 1536–40, oil on panel, 7' 2 1/4" x 4' 5 1/4" (219 x 135 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Jacopo Pontormo:

Entombment (or *Deposition*), 1528, fresco, 10' 3" H (3.1 m H), Church of Sta. Felicità, Florence, Italy.

Visitation, 1514–16, fresco, 12' 10" H (3.19 m H), Atrium, Church of Ss. Annunziata, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Gruber, ed., *The History of Decorative Arts*.

Kliemann and Roh, *Italian Frescoes*.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the major stylistic elements of Mannerism and how are they used?
2. Compare and contrast Michelangelo's earlier *Pietà* in St. Peter's with his later *Pietà* in the Opera del Duomo.

Annibale Carracci and the Reform of Art

Lecture 28

Historically, the anti-Mannerist reform was mainly associated with the Carracci family of Bologna, but there were precursors to the Carracci reform.

In this lecture, we will discuss a reform in art that was a reaction against the style of Mannerism, as well as artists who anticipated this reform, including Antonio Correggio. Looking at Correggio's illusionistic paintings, we will see his influence on subsequent eras. We will then explore the Carracci family of Bologna, who founded a teaching academy that influenced many artists. We will take a close look at Annibale Carracci's works, including his decorations in the Farnese Palace in Rome.

The 16th century in northern Italy saw a reaction to the excesses of Mannerism, a longing to return to more realistic art. The anti-Mannerist reform was mainly associated with the Carracci family of Bologna, but there were precursors to the Carracci reform, such as the art of Antonio Correggio (1489–1534). Correggio came from a small town in northern Italy, but he became associated with the city of Parma, then in the midst of a cultural revival. He saw Mantegna's frescoes at Mantua and was exposed to Venetian painting and Leonardo's art. He evolved an inventive and original art that anticipated much in the 16th-century reform of style in art.

Correggio developed a proto-Rococo eroticism, as seen in *Venus, Satyr and Cupid*, also known as *Jupiter and Antiope* (c. 1524–1525). This painting depicts a sleeping Venus with Cupid beside her, as a satyr discovers the goddess of love. For his nudes, Correggio borrowed Leonardo's manipulation of light and shadow to create a fleshy quality. In their modeling and eroticism, his nudes anticipate 18th-century French painters, such as François Boucher. Correggio's importance in illusionistic painting is illustrated in his *Assumption of the Virgin* (c. 1526–1530). This dome fresco in the cathedral was not quite complete at the time of Correggio's death in 1534.

Note the concentric circles of the blessed, arranged in rings of clouds, who witness and accompany the Virgin in her Assumption. The most important source for this work was Mantegna's ceiling at Mantua, the oculus in the Camera degli Sposi. This *Assumption* is the principal model for all the illusionistic dome paintings of the Baroque and subsequent eras.

Correggio developed a gentleness and poetic realism, as seen in the *Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* (c. 1523–1525), which contrasts with the nervy line and neurotic temperament common among Mannerist painters. This painting joined Leonardo's smoky modeling with Raphael's intimacy. Note the circularity of the composition—the Madonna's body, St. Catherine's arm, and the Christ Child. The subject is a mystical experience, in which the Christ Child places a ring on St. Catherine's finger. This metaphor of spiritual betrothal to God was popular, and among female saints, only St. Mary Magdalene surpassed St. Catherine in popularity.

Another precursor to Annibale Carracci was Federico Barocci (1535–1612). He was a generation older than Annibale and was born about the time that Correggio died. Our example is Barocci's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (c. 1573). This simple composition is designed in an X shape, with clear gestures and contrasts of motion. Barocci learned color from the work of Titian and other masterpieces in the ducal collection at Urbino. Barocci's simplicity was an important alternative to Mannerist complexity. He worked almost his entire life in his native Urbino, but he was famous enough to export paintings throughout Italy.

Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) was from Bologna. He was a pupil of his older cousin Ludovico (1555–1619) and, together with Ludovico and Annibale's older brother, Agostino (1557–1602), founded a teaching academy that became celebrated even outside Italy. Most of the important Bolognese painters of the next generation came from this academy. The academy's central principle was the importance of Naturalism, a reaction against the artificiality of Mannerism. Life drawing was emphasized, and virtually all the painters from Bologna at this time were marvelous draftsmen. The Carracci reacted against such Mannerist stylistic principles as artifice, tension of poses, conflicted compositions, emotional exaggeration, suppression or contradiction of Renaissance spatial coherence, and

non-canonical proportions, such as elongations. Annibale was the finest artist among the three Carracci, although Ludovico's painting had a personal, mystical slant of considerable power.

Annibale's *Butcher's Shop* (c. 1582–1583) was highly esteemed by aristocratic collectors despite its lowly subject. It belonged to the Gonzaga collection in Mantua, then Charles I of England, then the countess of Bristol, and then General John Guise, who gave it to Christ Church, Oxford University, in 1765. It was not unusual in Italy at this time to use subjects from everyday life rather than the Bible, mythology, or history. Annibale Carracci and his relatives stressed this kind of theme at their academy. This painting is about 9 feet wide. There are six figures, a lamb, a dog, and animal carcasses in a frieze-like composition. In the shallow space of the painting, a soldier is at left, a butcher in a white gown weighing meat, an elderly woman behind him, and another butcher leaning forward from behind a counter. Hanging carcasses appear, and another butcher lifts one of them on to or off of a hook. A butcher with a knife, holding down a bound lamb, kneels in the center foreground. The lamb, scales, and carcass being “deposed” might suggest a Christian allegory, but for most viewers, the exaggerated burlesque elements of the painting—especially the soldier—do not permit such an interpretation. Despite the Bolognese Academy reforms and the return to Renaissance proportion and Naturalism, the Carracci did not abandon Classical or biblical subject matter but continued these themes with a renewed sense of reality.

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In 1595, Annibale traveled to Rome to decorate rooms in the Farnese Palace, designed by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger. The palace was begun in 1514 for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who later became Pope Paul III. When Sangallo died in 1546, the work was continued by Michelangelo and completed by Giacomo della Porta. Between 1595 and 1601, Cardinal Odoardo Farnese commissioned Annibale Carracci and his assistants to decorate two rooms in the great palace, a small one, called the Camerino, and the large gallery.

The Camerino was the cardinal's study. The centerpiece of this room's decoration is the *Choice of Hercules* (c. 1595–1597). *Hercules at the Crossroad* is another title for this theme. Hercules is shown between allegorical figures of Virtue and Vice. Vice, at right, is provocatively dressed, and she gestures toward the nearby woods, a place for rest and dalliance. Near her are musical instruments and the theatrical mask of comedy. Note that she stands on Hercules's left, his sinister side, which is shadowed and vulnerable to vice. Virtue is more fully robed, with a robust figure, and she points toward a steep path up a mountain, indicating that the attainment of virtue is never easy. She stands close to Hercules, lending her strength to his right side. At the top of the mountain is the winged horse Pegasus, a symbol connected to virtue and fame. The male figure in the corner with the book and laurel wreath seems ready to record Hercules's choice. This was not mere decoration but a program designed by one of the cardinal's associates to celebrate the cardinal's virtues while illustrating the victory of virtue over temptation. The mythological subject was given a moral gloss. The rest of the room was frescoed, but because this centerpiece was rendered in oil on canvas, the Farnese family took it with them when they later moved to Naples. The *Farnese Hercules* (3rd century A.D.) is an ancient sculpture then in the palace. Annibale used this as a source for his Hercules. The Carracci also revitalized the Italian tradition of fresco painting, which explains the exalted reputation that the Farnese Gallery had for centuries.

Our example shows a long view of the Farnese Gallery, which was frescoed from 1597 to 1600. There is real sculpture on the left wall up to the cornice line, and the paintings begin at the end above the door. Above the main cornice, where the coved ceiling rises, everything is illusionistic painting. The coved vault was designed to look as if easel paintings were mounted on it. The subject of this cycle was the loves of mythological gods and goddesses.

Another view of the Farnese Gallery looking up into the vault shows a fresco with what appear to be 11 framed paintings interspersed with large marble statues and bronze medallions, but all of it is painted. The long scene in the center is the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, with *Polyphemus and Acis* at the far end.

Another view shows a corner of the Farnese Gallery. This is painted to show male nudes, bronze medallions, an opening to the sky between the painted architecture, and “framed” paintings. Note that Annibale’s nudes differ from Michelangelo’s in the lack of tension in their poses.

Another panel in the Farnese Gallery depicts *Polyphemus and Galatea*. Polyphemus, the one-eyed giant, plays the pan pipes that symbolize lust and sings to Galatea in the nearby sea. She is supported by two nymphs and a dolphin. Soon after this, she flees with her lover, Acis.

At the other end of the gallery is *Polyphemus and Acis*. Polyphemus lifts a huge rock to throw at the fleeing couple. The *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* (c. 1597–1600) is a fresco representing the two characters as a married couple. This subject was often found on Roman sarcophagi, and it is clear that Annibale closely studied them. We see a relief-like composition, which is appropriate for Annibale’s concept of these scenes as easel paintings mounted on the ceiling. The Bacchic procession is divided into two groups, with the center left open. The group at right shows Silenus being carried, while Bacchus and Ariadne are at left. In the middle, a satyr and maenad face each other. Bacchus faces out and holds grapes in his left hand. Ariadne, in her own chariot, is about to receive the crown of stars. For this commission for a cardinal’s palace, the subjects of the gallery and Camerino were dictated to Annibale by one of the cardinal’s advisors. There was a Christian or moral meaning that overlaid the mythological scenes.

Domine Quo Vadis? (Lord, Where Are You Going?) (c. 1602) is one of the first great paintings to which the term *Counter-Reformation* can be applied. As St. Peter was leaving Rome, fearing capture and torture, he met Christ coming back in with his cross. Peter asks Christ where he is going, to which Christ replies that he is going to his second crucifixion. Peter then returns to Rome.

Our last work is Annibale’s *Pietà* (c. 1599–1600), probably painted for Cardinal Odoardo Farnese. This painting combines the formal grandeur of Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, the spirit of Giovanni Bellini’s *Lamentation*, and an echo of the expressive distortions of Mannerism. Note the resonant blue of the Virgin’s robe and the curving body of Christ tilted toward us. Soon

after this, Annibale, who had worked himself nearly to death on the Farnese Gallery, suffered a physical and mental collapse. After 1603, he painted little and, toward the end, “neither spoke nor remembered.” ■

Works Discussed

Federico Barocci:

Rest on the Flight into Egypt, 1573, oil on canvas, 4' x 7' 6" (1.2 x 2.2 m), Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Annibale Carracci:

Butcher's Shop, c. 1582–83, oil on canvas, 6' 2" x 9' (1.9 x 2.7 m), Christ Church, Oxford University, Oxford, Great Britain.

Choice of Hercules, c. 1595–96, oil on canvas, Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.

Domine Quo Vadis? (Lord, Where Are You Going?), c. 1602, oil on panel, 30 ½ x 22 ¼" (77.4 x 56.3 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Farnese Gallery, 1597–1600, fresco, 66 x 22' (20 x 6.7 m), Palazzo Farnese, Rome, Italy.

Pietà, c. 1599–1600, oil on canvas, 5' 1 ½" x 4' 10 ½" (1.5 x 1.4 m), Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.

Polyphemus and Galatea, Polyphemus and Acis, Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, c. 1597–1600, fresco, Farnese Gallery, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, Italy.

Correggio:

Assumption of the Virgin, c. 1526–30, ceiling fresco, Parma Cathedral, Parma, Italy.

Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine, c. 1523–25, 42 x 40 ¼" (1.05 x 1.02 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Venus, Satyr and Cupid, c. 1524–25, oil on canvas, 6' 2" x 4' 1 ¼" (1.88 x 1.25 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci*.

Friedlaender, *Mannerism and Anti-Mannerism in Italian Painting*.

Questions to Consider

1. What makes Correggio's art original?
2. Compare Annibale Carracci's *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* to Titian's depiction of Bacchus and Ariadne.

Caravaggio

Lecture 29

We have spoken of the artistic reform initiated by the Carracci Academy in Bologna, a reaction against Mannerist artifice and a return to realism. We have spoken also about one of the most significant social reforms of the 16th century—the Protestant Reformation. We have not had occasion to do more than mention the Catholic Counter-Reformation that followed the Protestant revolt.

In this lecture, we focus on a single artist of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, Caravaggio. Briefly outlining his scandalous life, we will see why critics are confounded by his sexual undertones as well as his profound reverence for sacred subjects. In addition, we will look at the treatment of light and dark in many of his paintings. We will explore some of Caravaggio's individual works, as well as his commissions for two chapels.

We have discussed the artistic reform initiated by the Carracci Academy, a reaction against Mannerist artifice and a return to greater realism. We have also discussed a significant religious and social reform of the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation. Now, we must mention the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

The Catholic Counter-Reformation, following the Protestant revolt, began with the Council of Trent that convened in 1545 and continued to meet sporadically over a 20-year period. The council was concerned with liturgical and bureaucratic reform and stemming the flood of converts to Lutheran, Calvinist, and other Protestant sects. Often the council turned its attention to the role of art and architecture in an attempt to recover the Church's power and wealth. Many historians prefer to speak of Counter-Reformation art only when speaking of post-Trentine art of the last third of the 16th century. I apply it also to much art of the 17th century. The art, however, is more important than the label itself.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610) was probably born in Milan, but he grew up in Caravaggio, near Milan. He is known by the

name of his town probably because he shared his first name with the famous Michelangelo, and contemporaries needed to avoid confusion. Between 1584 and 1588, Caravaggio apprenticed with Simone Peterzano in Milan, an artist who shared the Naturalistic ideals of the Carracci. This was unusual because Mannerist art had flourished around Milan. The new realistic style found many adherents in the Milan area, and they influenced Caravaggio.

Caravaggio arrived in Rome in late 1592 or early 1593. Those who would judge artists by the morality of their lives have always disliked Caravaggio, much of whose life is to be read in the police records of the day. He found some early patrons—a Vatican lawyer, a monsignor who was a high-ranking Vatican official, and later, the Cardinal Francesco del Monte. Del Monte lived at the Palazzo Madama and surrounded himself with young musicians, writers, and painters. He eventually owned at least eight paintings by Caravaggio, who remained in his service and patronage until at least 1600. Many paintings from the beginning of Caravaggio's residence in Rome have homoerotic overtones, and there is little doubt that the artist was homosexual. The secular subjects that he painted attest to the cardinal's tastes. Around 1600, Caravaggio's police record was a matter of brawls and assaults and later escalated to carrying a sword without a license and using a sword in a dispute over a woman. Imprisoned several times, he had to leave Rome at least once. In 1606, he killed a man in a duel and fled again. He had often been rescued from his difficulties by members of the Roman nobility and was given sanctuary in a country estate of the Colonna family.

Our first example shows Caravaggio's *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (c. 1594). This still life embraces a homoerotic sensuality, but most historians believe that it was painted before the artist went to live with Cardinal Del Monte.

At the time of Del Monte's patronage, Caravaggio began to paint the religious masterpieces that would define his career and fame, one of them the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (c. 1596–1597). It is not known who commissioned this painting, although it was owned by Prince Pamphilj by 1672. There is a more extensive landscape here than in any other painting by Caravaggio. The subject demanded it, but Caravaggio utilized it in an unorthodox way, for a mood rather than a locale. The Holy Family is seated in the foreground, flanking a partially nude angel playing the violin. A contemporary

theologian insisted that the nudity of angels signified their freedom from earthly contamination. The angel has his back to us; his left wing divides the composition vertically. The left side of the painting is dense and physical. Joseph and the ass are compact, the materials of robes and baggage are thick, and the space is compressed. This is the earthly side, which is balanced by the fluid, spiritual zone on the right. The angel's right wing leads to the Madonna and child. Mary sits sleeping, holding the child, illuminated by the evening sky.

The landscape consists of a field, trees, and a tangle of leaves and grass; it seems to be an expression of Mary's dreaming, representing a safe haven from danger. In other representations of this subject, angels often accompany the family and sometimes offer food. Only in Caravaggio's do they offer music. Contemporary music lovers would have known that the score that the angel plays is a motet in honor of the Virgin Mary, composed by a Franco-Flemish composer named Noël Bauldewijn and published in 1519.

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An early commission that distinguished Caravaggio was the Contarelli Chapel (c. 1599–1602) in the church of S. Luigi dei Francesi. This is the church of the French nation in Rome and the chapel of the Contarelli family. Its decoration was commissioned by Matteo Contarelli (Matteu Cointrel), a French cardinal, who died in 1585 before any work had been done. In 1591, his heirs commissioned an artist to fresco the chapel, but only the vault was completed. In 1599, Caravaggio was commissioned to paint the side pictures in oil.

Caravaggio painted *alla prima*, directly on the canvas, without the use of preparatory drawings transferred to the canvas for painting. He made changes, as he worked, and some of those are visible through the thin paint surface today. Reappearances of a first design are known as *pentimenti*, Italian for “repentances.” *St. Matthew and the Angel* was a painting done for the altarpiece, which was commissioned last. The artist's first rendition was rejected, passed on to a collector, and eventually destroyed in Berlin

during World War II. This rendition was rejected because of St. Matthew's plebeian characteristics and the physical closeness between the angel and Matthew. The replacement shows Matthew elegantly dressed, with the angel not directly in contact with him.

Caravaggio painted larger lateral narrative scenes from the life of St. Matthew for the chapel, including the *Calling of St. Matthew*, which shows Matthew, the tax collector, being called by Jesus to be one of his disciples. The tax office has light falling through an unseen window at right, while the window with the swinging shutter is covered with what may be oilskin. Matthew is at the center of the table, and there is an elderly accountant, a boy counting coins, and two young dandies. Christ and St. Peter enter from the right; note their positions, their hands, and the accompanying light. Caravaggio used light and dark to dramatize the story. Note Christ's hand. Caravaggio probably borrowed this from Michelangelo because it echoes the hand of God in the *Creation of Adam*, but it doesn't have the same tension. Instead, it has the lassitude of Adam's hand in the *Creation*. God's hand is firm, his forefinger straight, where Jesus' hand, like Adam's, is relaxed. This borrowing seems intentional, because Jesus can be seen as the second Adam, come to redeem the Fall from grace. Caravaggio has referred to the Sistine *Creation of Man* with the thoughtfulness of a Counter-Reformation artist who knew theological concepts well.

Let's look closer at the *Martyrdom of St. Matthew*, a complex painting. The figures rush away from the center scene, where Matthew is about to be martyred, while an angel appears. In the left background, we see a self-portrait of the artist. The Counter-Reformation stressed witnessing, attesting one's faith, and there are many examples of artists including themselves as witnesses to sacred events.

Caravaggio received a commission for two paintings in the Cerasi Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* and the *Conversion of St. Paul*. The *Crucifixion of St. Peter* emphasizes the upward push of the cross, while the figures remain anonymous. In the *Conversion of St. Paul*, the subject is expressed through the drama of light and shadow. The placement of these paintings in the chapel is important and affects the way they are viewed.

Caravaggio left Rome in May 1606, after he had killed a man in a duel, and never returned. He traveled to Naples, then to Malta, where he found employment with the Knights of Malta. There, he quarreled with a knight and was imprisoned, but he escaped prison and fled to Sicily, first to Syracuse, then Messina and Palermo, before returning to Naples. Wherever he went, he left rapidly executed masterpieces behind him. In 1609 in Naples, he was overtaken by agents from Malta and severely wounded in a knife attack.

During Caravaggio's last years, his paintings were religiously resonant and deeply personal, as we see in *David with the Head of Goliath* (c. 1609–1610). This depicts the young David contemplating the decapitated head of Goliath. The head has the features of Caravaggio. Just as Michelangelo endowed the head of the flayed skin of Bartholomew with his features, so Caravaggio put himself into the picture. This painting could have sexual implications or hint at defeat.

Caravaggio received a significant commission in Rome for a chapel in Santa Maria in Vallicella, called the Chiesa Nuova (the New Church). The church was identified with the priest and soon-to-be saint Filippo Neri, whose devotion to the Counter-Reformation was profound. We see *The Entombment* (c. 1602) from this chapel. In 1797, Napoleon took the painting from the church and transported it to the Louvre (then the Musée Napoleon). When it was repatriated after Waterloo, it was placed in the Vatican rather than in its original location.

We see an echo of Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498–1499); Christ's torso and arm are similar, as is the hand supporting the shoulder. But the *Pietà* is a pyramid in which Christ is embedded, and this Christ is at the bottom of a falling diagonal. The diagonal begins with St. Mary Magdalene, standing at right, both arms raised and looking upward. While one arm is vertical, the other starts the slow fall of the composition. Another female saint presses a cloth to her eyes, and beside her head is the Madonna's blue-cowled head. Directly below the Madonna's head is Nicodemus who, we have seen, supported the dead Christ in Michelangelo's later *Pietà* (c. 1547–1555). Here he grasps Christ's legs with both hands; to the left of his head is St. John the Evangelist, who supports the torso.

John's hand supports Christ's shoulder but also touches the lance wound in his side. The Madonna's arms are spread wide, but because they are obscured by John and Nicodemus, we see only the hands—one in shadow and the other in light—above Christ's head. This seemingly disembodied hand is given movement by light, and its gesture becomes one of benediction. This fan of hands and heads comes to a rest in the brightly illuminated body of Christ, only to be continued by the downward curve of his arm and the accompanying winding sheet. Christ's hand touches the stone slab, which is the lid of the tomb. The stone would have been just above the altar. Christ's hand leads to the tombstone, to the altar, and his body seems about to be deposited upon the altar; this alludes directly to the rite of the Mass. In addition, it is the visualization of the metaphor of Christ as the cornerstone of the Church.

In the summer of 1610, believing that a pardon was imminent that would allow him to return to Rome, Caravaggio sailed north. When he debarked temporarily, he was jailed in a case of mistaken identity, and the ship sailed with all of his possessions but without him. Apparently, he set out on foot and fell ill, perhaps with malaria. He died on July 18, 1610, at age 38. ■

Works Discussed

Caravaggio:

Boy with a Basket of Fruit, c. 1594, oil on canvas, 27 ½ x 26 ½” (70 x 67 cm), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

Calling of St. Matthew, 1599–1600, oil on canvas, 10' 6 ¾” x 11' 2” (3.22 x 3.40 m), Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

Conversion of St. Paul, 1601–03, oil on canvas, 7' 6 ½” x 5' 9” (2.3 x 1.7 m), Cerasi Chapel, Church of Sta. Maria del Popolo, Rome, Italy.

Crucifixion of St. Peter, 1601–03, oil on canvas, 7' 6 ½” x 5' 9” (2.3 x 1.7 m), Cerasi Chapel, Church of Sta. Maria del Popolo, Rome, Italy.

David with the Head of Goliath, c. 1609–10, oil on canvas, 4' 1 ¼" x 3' 3 ¾" (1.25 x 1.01 m), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

The Entombment, c. 1602, oil on canvas, 9' 10" x 6' 8" (3 x 2 m), Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Martyrdom of St. Matthew, 1599–1600, oil on canvas, 10' 7 ¼" x 11' 3" (3.23 x 3.43 m), Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

Rest on the Flight into Egypt, 1596–97, oil on canvas, 4' 5" x 5' 5 ¼" (1.35 x 1.66 m), Doria-Pamphilji Gallery, Rome, Italy.

St. Matthew and the Angel, c. 1602, oil on canvas, 9' 8 ¾" x 6' 2 ½" (295 x 195 cm), Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

St. Matthew and the Angel (destroyed), c. 1600–01, oil on canvas, 7' 7 ¼" x 6' (2.31 x 1.82 m), for the Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Hibbard, *Caravaggio*.

Puglisi, *Caravaggio*.

Questions to Consider

1. Compare Caravaggio's use of light and dark in the *Calling of St. Matthew* and *The Entombment*.
2. Do you think Caravaggio's morality affected his painting? Why or why not?

Italian Baroque Painting in Rome

Lecture 30

Carracci and his followers, and then at the art of Caravaggio; two contrasting artists who not only formed a bridge from the 16th century into the 17th century, but were really the founders of 17th-century art—art that is commonly called Baroque ...

The Sack of Rome in 1527 resulted in physical and psychological catastrophe for the city. The climate was similar to the period following the Black Death in the 14th century—austere, anti-Humanist, even anti-artistic. Recovery began in 1585 with the papacy of Sixtus V, who began to transform Rome. The repair of aqueducts allowed access to water for parts of Rome that had largely been abandoned. In turn, these sections of the city became accessible to pilgrims who traveled to Rome to visit St. Peter's and other pilgrimage churches, such as Santa Maria Maggiore or St. Paul's Outside the Walls. Broad avenues were constructed to connect these basilicas, and the northern gateway to Rome was dramatized with a restructured piazza, the Piazza del Popolo, with three avenues fanning into the city. The period saw rapid canonization of Counter-Reformation men and women who had demonstrated their commitment to the ideals of the early Christian era, as well as to the needs of the poor and suffering. These new saints had sometimes lived within memory and, therefore, were especially meaningful.

The Church was ready to demonstrate the grandeur of the revitalized capital of Western Christianity by building and decorating new churches and palaces, and the patronage of popes and their aristocratic families flowed freely. In the service of these objectives, a new stylistic language developed that came to be known as *Baroque*.

Baroque is a style ornamented in a curvilinear and highly decorative way; its name derives from the French and Portuguese word *barocco*, meaning an irregularly shaped pearl. Some art historians refuse to call the French classical artist Poussin a Baroque artist, though he worked in Rome at the height of the style. Some would rather not call Caravaggio a Baroque artist, and there have been many other exclusions. Others want to move the beginning of the

style to around 1550 or extend the style to the middle of the 18th century to the death of Tiepolo, the great Venetian painter. Although one historian has written that a “dangerous use [of the term *Baroque*] is as a synonym for 17th century,” that is how we will use it here. The art is more important than the terminology because the stylistic variants in the period are much more numerous than those in Mannerism, and the distinctions become distracting. In addition, many people still use the word *Baroque* to mean “excessive” or “fantastically over decorated,” descriptions which we would prefer to avoid.

Guido Reni (1575–1642) was a Bolognese artist who was influenced by and worked in the Carracci Academy. He first went to Rome in 1595, returned to Bologna around 1600–1603, then returned to Rome and remained there until 1614. He was trained in the Carracci Academy, absorbing both Naturalism and Classicism. Our example is Reni’s *Crucifixion of St. Peter* (c. 1601–1603), which can be compared to Caravaggio’s depiction of the same subject. Despite their differences, Reni used Caravaggio’s technique of strong contrast between light and dark. Reni also combined an emphasis on light with *decorum*, creating forms with a decorative idealism that tempers stark realism. Instead of emphasizing the weight of raising the cross evident in Caravaggio’s painting, Reni’s uses decorative figures that create a more “attractive” picture.

Our next example is *Massacre of the Innocents* (c. 1611–1612). Reni’s depiction of this subject influenced many subsequent artists. When compared to Giotto’s depiction, Reni’s painting is “edited”; that is, there are fewer people in the scene. Note the fleeing women, pictured at right and at left, that create a dynamic balance. Reni returned to Bologna in 1614, and his style changed back to Bolognese Classicism. Reni became the leading painter in Bologna for more than 20 years with this style, which diverged from the main style of the Roman Baroque.

Domenichino (1581–1641) was one of the most important Carracci pupils. He worked first with Ludovico, then joined Annibale in Rome to work on the Farnese Gallery, where he had a major hand in the wall decorations. After a brief visit to Bologna in 1619, he returned to Rome when a Bolognese pope, Gregory XV, bestowed liberal patronage on all Bolognese artists. Unfortunately, the pope died after only two years in office. Bitter rivalry with

Giovanni Lanfranco for major commissions led to Domenichino's departure for Naples, where he lived the last 10 years of his life. Annibale Carracci was important in developing landscape as a subject in Italian painting—a serene, classical style of landscape painting. Domenichino followed him in this vein as well as others. Domenichino's *Landscape with St. George Killing the Dragon* (c. 1610–1615) is shown here. Note the clear figures and the sweep of landscape with diffused light.

The *Last Communion of St. Jerome* (c. 1614) is a scene of dignity and nobility. The elderly St. Jerome kneels on the steps, where a priest offers him communion. St. Jerome is accompanied by his faithful lion. The elaborate painted architecture in this altarpiece reflected current architectural style. *St. Cecilia Distributing Clothes to the Poor* (c. 1615–1617) is a fresco in the same church as Caravaggio's Contarelli Chapel. The painting uses a pyramidal shape that leads up to the principal figure.

The artist Guercino (1591–1666) was known by his nickname, meaning “squint-eye,” although his real name was Francesco Barbieri. He was born in Cento, near Bologna, and was first influenced by Ludovico Carracci, then Caravaggio. Despite these powerful influences, he was an original painter. When the Bolognese pope died, Guercino returned to Cento, but when Guido Reni died in 1642, Guercino moved to Bologna and took over Reni's practice. Our example shows *Shepherds in Arcady* (c. 1618). Two shepherds are presented at half-length, which was typical of Guercino. They contemplate a skull representing death. The skull is understood to speak the words inscribed below it: “*Et in Arcadia Ego*,” meaning “Even in Arcady there am I [death].”

Returning briefly to Guido Reni, we see his *Aurora* (c. 1612–1614), a ceiling fresco. This is a Classical work, in which dawn (Aurora) precedes Apollo in his chariot. He is accompanied by dancing female figures. Note the landscape at lower right.

Our next example shows Guercino's fresco of the same subject, *Aurora* (c. 1621–1623). One must stand in the center of the room below the painting to observe it correctly. From the cornice on, everything is painted in strict perspective which demands a single viewpoint. Here Aurora is pictured in

the chariot, not Apollo. The career of Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669) was centered in Rome. As Italy’s greatest Baroque painter, his importance is enormous both as an easel painter and a fresco decorator, but his popular reputation outside of Italy has never equaled his importance. He was also a significant architect.

Our example is a famous ceiling fresco for the Palazzo Barberini, *Divine Providence* (c. 1633–1639). In the 1620s, the rebuilding of an earlier palace was commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Barberini while his uncle, Urban VIII, was pope. By the 1630s, the new palace was ready for its principal decoration, the ceiling of the grand salon. The subject for the ceiling is built around the papacy of the Barberini family. A detail shows the papal coat of arms, the papal tiara, and three bees in formation—the Barberini emblem.

Giovanni Lanfranco (1582–1647) was born in Parma. He was a pupil of Agostino Carracci, but he was also deeply influenced by Correggio. Our example shows an apse fresco, *St. Charles Borromeo Ascending to Heaven* (c. 1646–1647). The architecture and figures are clear; this is a splendid example of Baroque illusionism. Lanfranco painted the first fully illusionistic church dome of the Baroque in Sant’ Andrea della Valle in Rome 20 years earlier.

Giovanni Battista Gaulli was known by his nickname, Baciccio (1639–1709). He was born in Genoa, where the most important influence on his development was the art of Rubens and van Dyck, who had worked there early in the century. In Rome, Baciccio fell under the influence of Bernini, who is believed by some to have designed the ceiling decoration of the Church of il Gesu that Baciccio painted. Our example is Baciccio’s *Adoration of the Holy Name of Jesus* (c. 1674–1679). The monogram for Jesus was IHS, a Greek abbreviation of Jesus. Here the monogram virtually disappears in the brilliance of the painted light.

With this last work, we have reached a high watermark of the Roman Baroque and the Counter-Reformation. This represents the nearly complete rebound of the Roman Catholic Church from its threatened state after the Protestant Reformation. The Church was richer and more universal than it had ever been. ■

Works Discussed

Baciccio (Giovanni Battista Gaulli):

Adoration of the Holy Name of Jesus, 1674–79, apse fresco, Church of Il Gesu, Rome, Italy.

Pietro da Cortona:

Divine Providence, 1633–39, fresco, Palazzo Barberini, Rome, Italy.

Domenichino:

Last Communion of St. Jerome, 1614, oil on canvas, 13' 9" x 8' 4 3/4" (4.1 x 2.6 m), Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

St. Cecilia Distributing Clothes to the Poor, 1615–17, fresco, St. Cecilia Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

St. George Killing the Dragon, c. 1610–15, oil on panel, 20 3/4 x 24 1/4" (52.7 x 61.8 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Guercino:

Aurora, 1621–23, fresco, Villa Ludovisi, Rome, Italy.

Shepherds in Arcady (Et in Arcadia Ego), c. 1618, oil on canvas, 32 1/4 x 35 3/4" (82 x 91 cm), Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome, Italy.

Giovanni Lanfranco:

St. Charles Borromeo Ascending to Heaven, c. 1646–47, ceiling fresco, Church of S. Carlo ai Catinari, Rome, Italy.

Guido Reni:

Aurora, 1612–14, ceiling fresco, Casino Rospigliosi, Palazzo Pallavicini, Rome, Italy.

Crucifixion of St. Peter, 1601–03, oil on panel, 10' x 5' 7 1/4" (3 x 1.7 m), Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Massacre of the Innocents, 1611–12, oil on canvas, 8' 9 1/2" x 5' 7" (2.7 x 1.7 m), Pinacoteca, Bologna, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Wittkower, Montagu, and Connors, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600–1750*, Vol. 1: *Early Baroque*.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the Carracci influence the art of Guido Reni?
2. How did the Church in Rome affect 17th-century art?

Gian Lorenzo Bernini

Lecture 31

Gian Lorenzo Bernini was born in 1598 in Naples, where his father Pietro, also a sculptor, had moved from Florence to find work. Pietro was his son's teacher in the techniques of sculpture but, as has sometimes happened with the sons of other artists (Picasso comes to mind), the son quickly outpaced the father.

In this lecture, we will look at Bernini, the single greatest artist in Rome during the Baroque period. Bernini was a painter, architect, and above all, a sculptor. We will focus on his sculpture, including his virtuosic *Apollo and Daphne*, and marvel at his sweeping piazza in front of the Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome. We will explore a half dozen of his works to try to grasp the depth and breadth of his abilities.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) was born in Naples, where his father, Pietro, had moved from Florence seeking work. Pietro taught his son sculptural techniques, but the son quickly outpaced the father. The innate talent of Bernini has never been surpassed by any sculptor whose work survives in sufficient numbers to properly judge it. Among Italian artists, Bernini is the universal genius of the 17th century—its greatest sculptor, one of its premier architects, and a gifted painter who put that medium aside in favor of sculpture. In 1605 or 1606, Pietro Bernini returned to Rome, probably to work on a sculptural project for Pope Paul V of the Borghese family. Gian Lorenzo grew up and began his career in Rome at a moment of intense artistic activity under Paul V.

The Galleria Borghese is the former Villa Borghese, the 17th-century home of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, the most significant patron of the young Bernini and of the early Italian Baroque. One important commission Bernini had from Scipione Borghese was *Pluto and Proserpine* (in Greek, *Persephone*) (c. 1621–1622). The front view shows Pluto abducting Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, goddess of cultivation, to carry her off to the underworld. In the diagonal view, note the carving of the hand pressing into the flesh. The serpentine pose of the figures was borrowed from the Flemish-born 16th-

century sculptor Giovanni da Bologna. Compare Bernini's statue to Giovanni da Bologna's *Rape of a Sabine Woman* (c. 1579–1583), in which he created this serpentine pose.

Another important commission from Scipione Borghese was *Apollo and Daphne* (c. 1622–1625). In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid relates, “as soon as [Apollo] saw Daphne, he fell in love with her, and wanted to marry her,” but at her pleading, Daphne's father transformed her into a tree as she fled from Apollo. The tree was a laurel, and Apollo made it his symbol—thus, the laurel wreath of victory. Bernini modeled Apollo partially after the *Apollo Belvedere*.

Bernini received a commission for the Cornaro Chapel (c. 1645–1652) from Cardinal Federigo Cornaro, a member of the Cornaro family from Venice. The cardinal settled in Rome in 1644 and wanted a funerary chapel built for him in the Carmelite church of Santa Maria della Vittoria. The chapel might never have been designed by Bernini, except that he had fallen from favor when there was a change in popes. During the 1640s, Bernini took on more private commissions, including the Cornaro Chapel. We look at an 18th-century painting showing this chapel, of which the principal subject is the ecstasy of St. Teresa. St. Teresa of Avila was a 16th-century Spanish monastic reformer and mystic, an important Counter-Reformation figure and founder of the Discalced Carmelite Order. After her canonization in 1622, representations of her vision began to appear in churches of this order.

To create the chapel, the outer wall of the church was extended, since the transept was so shallow. Part of the chapel lies outside the church's exterior wall, which allowed Bernini to introduce a separate light source from a lantern, a covered opening on the projecting section outside. A projection above the altar, similar to a stage, contains a marble group of St. Teresa and an angel. It is lit from above with the natural light from the lantern, and light spreads on the gilded “rays” above the group. The very top of this chapel has a painted glory of angels adoring the Holy Spirit, designed but not painted by Bernini.

In the lower level, below the cornices, is the *Ecstasy of St. Teresa* in the middle and two side boxes. On the flanking walls of the chapel are two balconies

that look like theater boxes, loges. They are populated by the seven cardinals of the Cornaro family, although but six of the seven lived in the 16th century, and the other was Federigo whose burial place is here in the chapel. The eighth figure was Federigo's father. On the left side, some of these cardinals are discussing the vision, not looking at it, since they did not see it. It is the interaction among the cardinals that is original here. On the right side,

The largest element of the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* is a Roman obelisk with the dove of the Holy Spirit on top, also symbolizing the Pamphilj family.

we see the rest of them. Bernini's assistants carved these sculptural groups, and one of his painters did the vault above the chapel, but Bernini made the overall design and carved the central group, which shows the *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*. Teresa was a mystic who was also a reformer, organizer, and administrator. Bernini was guided in his creation by her own words describing her vision of an angel plunging a spear into her heart.

Next, we will look at the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* (c. 1648–1651). Bernini came back into papal favor and was commissioned by the pope for this fountain. An aerial view of the Piazza Navona reveals the original shape of the Roman arena which became the piazza, the Palace Pamphilj, the Church of Sant'Agnese, the *Fountain of the Four Rivers*, and two other fountains.

The largest element of the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* is a Roman obelisk with the dove of the Holy Spirit on top, also symbolizing the Pamphilj family. The fountain represents the four great rivers of the world—Danube, Nile, Rio de la Plata, and Ganges—and the symbolic rivers of Paradise. The last bay of the Pamphilj Palace has a window where the pope appeared when he was home; another window was the pope's bedroom. Consider the symbolic impact of this piazza in Counter-Reformation Rome: an ancient Roman arena, the papal palace, an adjoining church with early Christian relics, the Fountain of the Four Rivers of the world and of Paradise.

Bernini's work at St. Peter's began long before his triumph in Piazza Navona under the patronage of Pope Urban VIII Barberini (1623–1644), and it continued until his death. The crossing or transept of St. Peter's had evolved to become an impressive ceremonial space when Bramante and, later, Michelangelo were refining the design of the new St. Peter's. They intended it, as did Pope Julius II, to be a Greek cross in shape, without the long nave of the old basilica, and thus, a centrally planned church.

Eventually, the conservative ideology of the Counter-Reformation, which stressed ritual processions, forced the nave to be built in the traditional Latin cross design. Our example is Bernini's *Baldacchino*, which is over the papal altar; the tomb of St. Peter is below in the crypt. Note the twisted columns, called Solomonic columns, of Baldacchino. They originated in columns from the old St. Peter's Basilica. Bernini retained the columns and put them in the upper balconies of the piers of the crossing. These columns flank reliquaries. The four main relics of the Church are protected there, and below them, in each niche, is a statue of the saint associated with each relic. For example, the statue of *St. Helen with the True Cross* goes with the relic that is a piece of the True Cross. On another pier is the statue of *St. Longinus*. The relic associated with this is a piece of Longinus's spear, which he used to lance Christ's side before his conversion. Note that the composition of the figure is an inverted triangle.

Another view of the *Baldacchino* shows the *Cathedra Petri* (Throne of St. Peter) in the apse of the church. This is a huge structural group with the figures of four Fathers of the Church holding a sculptural structure that supposedly contains the papal throne of St. Peter, the first pope. Bernini also designed the Piazza of St. Peter's, with its elliptical shape symbolizing the arms of the church embracing those in the piazza. Originally the piazza was partially closed with a "hyphen," which was later removed by Mussolini to create a long triumphal avenue. Another view shows the piazza during the funeral of John Paul II, filled with people, as Bernini intended it to be. Bernini died in 1680, not long after a stroke had cost him the use of his right arm. He remarked that it had earned the right to early rest. ■

Works Discussed

Gian Lorenzo Bernini:

Apollo and Daphne, 1622–25, marble, 8' H (2.4 m H), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

Baldacchino, 1624–33, gilt bronze, 85' H (26 m H), Basilica of St. Peter's, Rome, Italy.

Ecstasy of St. Teresa and Family Cardinals, 1645–52, marble, Cornaro Chapel, Church of Sta. Maria della Vittoria, Rome, Italy.

Fountain of the Four Rivers, 1648–51, travertine and marble, Piazza Navona, Rome, Italy.

Piazza before St. Peter's, 1656–67, Rome, Italy.

Pluto and Persephone, 1621–22, marble, 7' 4 ½" H (2.23 m H), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

St. Longinus, 1629–38, marble, 14' 9" H (4.5 m H), Basilica of St. Peter's, Rome, Italy.

Giovanni da Bologna:

Rape of a Sabine Woman, 1579–83, marble, 13' 5 ½" H (4.1 m H), Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence, Italy.

Suggested Reading

Avery, *Bernini*.

Scribner, *Masters of Art*.

Questions to Consider

1. We have studied several paintings depicting mythological subjects. How does Bernini's sculptural medium change the presentation of the subject?
2. How does Bernini unify the elements of the Baldacchino in his design?

Peter Paul Rubens

Lecture 32

Peter Paul Rubens was born in 1577 in Siegen, Germany, where his father (a lawyer from Antwerp) was living in a sort of exile after imprisonment for adultery.

A world-famous artist during his lifetime and after, Peter Paul Rubens received innumerable commissions throughout his career. In this lecture, we will look at some of these works, including three altarpieces, his Marie de' Medici cycle, and self-portraits and landscapes.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577– 1640) was born in Siegen, Germany, where his father, Jan, a lawyer from Antwerp, was living in a sort of exile after imprisonment for adultery. He was pardoned, and the family moved to Cologne. When Jan died in 1587, the mother and sons returned to Antwerp. Rubens began to study painting at about 15, apprenticing with artists working in the Mannerist style. He became a master in the Antwerp painters' guild in 1598. In 1600, he left for Italy, and in Venice, he met the current duke of Mantua, Vincenzo de Gonzaga. He entered the service of the duke, the most important step in his career as a painter. In the court of Mantua he saw Mantegna's great frescoed chamber, as well as a large collection of masterpieces of painting. Rubens would contribute greatly to this collection during his eight years of service. Rubens traveled widely for the duke and on his own account, visiting Florence, Rome, Genoa, and Spain, among other places. He produced paintings in Rome and Genoa that clinched his reputation.

In 1608, he returned to Antwerp after hearing of his mother's illness. He never resumed his service in Mantua because he was appointed court painter to the Archdukes Albert and Isabella of the southern Netherlands. Philip II of Spain had invaded the Netherlands because he was intent on crushing the Protestant rebellion. The invasion of 1567 was unyielding in its attempt to impose orthodoxy. The northern Netherlands organized in armed opposition in 1568, beginning the Eighty Years' War. Although it was 80 years before a final peace treaty was reached, a de facto peace arrived much earlier,

and the northern Netherlands flourished, while the south, which remained under Spanish Habsburg rule, languished. One reason was the blockade of the Scheldt River, which almost totally closed Antwerp to trade. Isabella, co-regent of the southern Netherlands, was the daughter of Philip II; thus, the territory was supported by Spain's wealth. Aristocratic and Catholic patronage was abundant, and the opportunities for Rubens were limitless.

Our first example is the wedding portrait of Rubens and his first wife, Isabella Brandt (c. 1609). This work is Mannerist in composition and sheen, but it is Rubensian in robustness and optimism. There are echoes of Italy in Rubens's first great work, a triptych, *Raising of the Cross* (c. 1609–1610). This altarpiece was not painted for the Antwerp Cathedral although it is now housed there. The three panels are linked in a united composition in which the space is continuous between the wings and centerpiece. The left side shows St. John and the Virgin Mary and another group of people looking at the cross. Note the mother and child who seem to pull us into the painting.

The center panel shows the cross being raised, and the composition uses a diagonal from the upper left to the lower right. Figures with musculature reminiscent of Michelangelo pull at the cross to raise it. The two thieves to be crucified with Christ are in the background of the right panel. The composition of the three panels together appears to form a W shape, with a triangle in the center panel. The source of the center figure is probably the *Laocoön*, an ancient Hellenistic sculpture. Anton Ghering's painting of the interior of the Church of St. Walburga in Antwerp (c. 1661) shows the original location of this painting.

Our next example shows the *Deposition Altarpiece*, which was painted for the Antwerp Cathedral (c. 1612–1614). The center panel contains the deposition of Christ from the cross. The winding sheet acts as a backdrop for the figure. St. John, St. Mary Magdalene, the Madonna, and St. Joseph of Arimathea are pictured. The illuminated figures against darkness are reminiscent of Caravaggio. The left wing illustrates the *Visitation*, where Mary and St. Elizabeth meet. The right wing portrays the *Presentation in the Temple*, where the Christ Child is brought by his parents to Simeon.

The exterior of both wings closed depicts *St. Christopher and the Hermit*. The hermit guides St. Christopher with a lantern. (Compare Rubens's *St. Christopher to the Farnese Hercules*.) The theme of the triptych is "Christ-bearing."

Landscape with a Thunderstorm (c. 1620) is an altarpiece painted on a large panel formed from many separate pieces of wood. It is properly called *Landscape with Philemon and Baucis*. This story is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Two travelers seeking shelter for the night were turned away from many well-to-do houses. Arriving at the cottage of the elderly and poor couple Philemon and Baucis, they were admitted and offered food and wine; the travelers then revealed themselves to be Jupiter and Mercury.

The painting tells the story from a later point, when the gods take the couple up the mountain, where they can see the devastating flood that was summoned to punish the inhospitable inhabitants of the region. They also see that their cottage has been transformed into a temple. Asked what wish the gods might grant them, the couple asked that they might serve as guardians of the temple. We see a great landscape with the torrent still flowing, although the storm is abating. Men and animals are pictured dead or trying to escape, and the temple glows in the distance.

The Marie de' Medici cycle (c. 1622–1625) was commissioned by Marie, the queen of France, for the Luxembourg Palace. There were to be two cycles—one gallery for Marie and the other for her deceased husband, Henry IV. The latter cycle was scarcely begun before Marie was forced into exile by Cardinal Richelieu. Twenty-four huge paintings were done in three years. Rubens wrote, "I am, by natural instinct, better fitted to execute very large works than small curiosities..." Rubens had a large studio of assistants, but he conceived of, designed, and completed his own work unless specifically stated otherwise in a contract. The subject for this cycle is Marie's life, marriage, and reign. The subject matter is much ado about very little, but

The Education of Marie de' Medici depicts Marie being educated by the gods, with the Three Graces in attendance.

Rubens admired Marie and welcomed her to Antwerp during her exile. Like Bernini, Rubens completely accepted the two great institutions of his time and place, the absolute monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church.

The *Education of Marie de'Medici* depicts Marie being educated by the gods, with the Three Graces in attendance. *Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de'Medici* shows the king receiving Marie's portrait from an angel; during this time of arranged dynastic marriages, aristocratic grooms often received paintings of their betrothed before the wedding. *Marie de'Medici Landing in Marseilles* presents Marie being welcomed by a personification of France (with *fleur de lis*), while the sea deities serve as her sailors as she arrives in France.

We now look at the *St. Ildefonso Altarpiece* (c. 1630–1632). The center panel is the *Virgin Appearing to St. Ildefonso*, in which the Virgin, accompanied by other female saints, appears to Ildefonso, a 7th-century Spanish abbot and archbishop. In the vision, she presents him with a divine chasuble, the priest's outer garment. The left panel is *Archduke Albert and His Patron Saint*. The right panel is *Archduchess Isabella and Her Patron Saint*. Rubens depicts her as much younger, dressed in the archducal robes she had not worn since donning a nun's habit after her husband's death. To commemorate her husband's life, Isabella commissioned this altarpiece for the Confraternity of St. Ildefonso, founded by Albert in Lisbon when he was governor of Portugal. He then moved to Brussels when he became co-regent of the Netherlands.

After his first wife's death, Rubens was remarried in 1631 to Helene Fourment, who was 16 years old when he was 53. *Garden of Love* (c. 1632–1634) depicts him dancing with Helene in the garden of his Antwerp home, which he designed in the 16th-century Genoese style. This subject anticipates the pleasure scenes of 18th-century French painting but with the fullness of form of the 17th century. Our next painting is *Landscape with the Chateau of Steen* (c. 1636). The chateau was Rubens's own home that he bought in later years.

As a diplomat in the service of Isabella, Rubens negotiated a peace treaty between England and Spain and was knighted by both countries for his efforts. The peace was short-lived though, and his beloved wife, Isabella Brandt,

from whom he was separated for long periods during the negotiations, died in 1626. The landscape stretches to the Earth's end, as it does in Bruegel's landscape painting. As Rubens's health deteriorated in 1640, all the courts of Europe asked to be kept informed of his condition. He died in Antwerp in May 1640.

Rubens had a large workshop for the production of commissions, and many of his assistants began as pupils or apprentices. None was more famous than Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), who as a teenager, painted independent works and was often requested by patrons when Rubens delegated work. Van Dyck's *Charles I of England* (c. 1635) is one of his most elegant and admired royal portraits. He was an excellent painter of mythologies and religious themes, and in later centuries, his portraits ranked among the most influential and sought-after among his works. Charles I was the greatest collector among English monarchs, and he made van Dyck his court painter for a decade.

The approach of the Cromwellian revolution coincided with the death of Rubens, and van Dyck returned to Antwerp to take over the master's studio. But his health failed, and he returned again to London, where despite treatment by the king's personal physician, he died at age 42. The king's portrait, with the rest of his collection, was sold by Cromwell; it became part of the French royal collection and is now in the Louvre. ■

Works Discussed

Peter Paul Rubens:

Deposition Altarpiece, 1612–14, oil on panel, central panel: 13' 9 ¼" x 10' 2" (4.19 x 3.1 m), Antwerp Cathedral, Antwerp, Belgium.

Education of Marie de' Medici, 1622–25, oil on canvas, 12' 11" x 9' 8" (3.94 x 2.95 m), from the Medici Cycle, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Garden of Love, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas, 6' 6 ¾" x 9' 2 ¼" (2 x 2.8 m), Museo del Prado, Prado, Spain.

Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de'Medici, 1622–25, oil on canvas, 12' 11" x 9' 8" (3.94 x 2.95 m), from the Medici Cycle, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Landscape with Chateau of Steen, 1636, oil on panel, 4' 3 ½" x 7' 6 ¼" (131.2 x 229.2 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Landscape with Philemon and Baucis (Landscape with Thunderstorm), c. 1620, oil on canvas, 6' 10 ¼" x 4' 10" (146 x 208.5 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Marie de'Medici Landing in Marseilles, 1622–25, oil on canvas, 12' 11" x 9' 8" (3.94 x 2.95 m), from the Medici Cycle, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Raising of the Cross, 1609–10, oil on canvas, 15' 1" x 11' 2" (4.6 x 3.4 m), Antwerp Cathedral, Antwerp, Belgium.

Rubens with His First Wife, Isabella Brandt, c. 1609, oil on canvas, 5' 10" x 4' 5 ¾" (178 x 136.5 cm), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

St. Ildefonso Altarpiece, 1630–32, oil on panel, center panel: 11' 6 ½" x 7' 9" (352 x 236 cm), each wing: 11' 6 ½" x 3' 7" (352 x 109 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Anthony van Dyck:

Charles I of England, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 8' 8 ¾" x 6' 9 ½" (2.66 x 2.07 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Belkin, *Rubens*.

de Lavergne, *Rubens*.

Questions to Consider

1. Compare one of Rubens's landscapes with one of Bruegel's.
2. Explain the unifying elements of Rubens's triptych of the *Raising of the Cross*.

Dutch Painting in the 17th Century

Lecture 33

With Rubens, in the last lecture, as with the great Bernini before that, we have studied artists who enjoyed the aristocratic patronage of kings and popes, and rarely had to wonder where their next paycheck was coming from. In Holland, the northern Netherlands, in the same century, things were very different.

In this lecture, we look at the very different artistic world of the northern Netherlands, or Holland, as it is commonly called today. Because of political circumstances, government and religious commissions were far less common here than in other countries. As a result, painting flourished in the open marketplace, where artists survived by specializing in various genres. We will look at these specific genres and representative artists for each.

We have studied artists, such as Rubens and Bernini, who enjoyed the aristocratic patronage of kings and popes and rarely had to wonder where their next paycheck was coming from. However, the situation was different in the northern Netherlands. After the split between the northern and southern Netherlands, all the traditional sources of artistic patronage disappeared in the north, in what is today called Holland. Holland was a republic; therefore, there was little aristocratic patronage beyond the House of Orange, of which William the Silent was a member. Holland was predominantly Protestant, and artists received no patronage from Calvinist churches, only limited private patronage in Protestant strongholds, and some church commissions from Catholic centers, such as Utrecht. There were also some larger commissions for city halls.

Wealthy private patrons, others of limited means, and civic groups created a demand for portraiture. People bought other paintings on the open market for their homes, such as landscapes, still lifes, and genre subjects. Despite the altered market—or perhaps because of it—there was a great demand for paintings. This demand was met by an outpouring of artists. There were literally thousands of painters—at mid-century, the Amsterdam census

reported more than twice as many painters as bakers and four times as many as butchers—but few of them earned their living solely as painters. Moreover, to paint for the marketplace an artist had to be recognized; the style and subject had to appeal to prospective buyers.

Although some artists were adventurous in their range of subjects, the majority felt obliged to specialize. There were landscape painters, and within that genre, there were specialists in dunes, coastlines, winter landscapes, night scenes, rivers and canals, panoramas, woods, the sea, towns and cities, foreign lands, and some imaginary scenes. Among still-life painters were those who painted flowers, banquets, breakfast tables, moralizing still lifes, musical instruments, and scientific instruments. Other artists specialized in birds, cows, or other animals—either as separate subjects or in partnership with other painters who supplied the landscape. Genre artists specialized in taverns; middle-class homes; peasant huts; music making and dancing; bakers, butchers, and other tradesmen; and hunting, fishing, and riding. Churches were a subject, especially church interiors, while portraiture was needed for individual, family, and civic-group portrayals. There were religious and mythological paintings and some still overtly Catholic paintings, especially in Utrecht and other Catholic centers. There were also disguised religious paintings.

We will look first at portraiture as a category and consider some examples. Frans Hals (1581/85–1666) was born in Antwerp and moved to Haarlem as a child with his Protestant family. He did some early genre paintings or portraits disguised as genre, but otherwise, he painted portraits for 50 years without obvious repetition. In his later work, he and Rembrandt sometimes resemble each other, and they must have known each other's work, but they apparently never met. Our example shows Hals's *The Merry Drinker* (c. 1628–1630). This is probably a portrait, but it has been called an allegory of the sense of taste. One expert speculated that this could be a portrait of an innkeeper named den Abt, who owned four Hals paintings in 1631.

An example of a group portrait is *The Governors of St. Elizabeth's Hospital* (c. 1641). Hals did many portraits of militia companies in Haarlem. In addition, the painting of regents of charitable institutions was a Dutch tradition since the 16th century.

His earlier group portraits were often set at banquets, with the militiamen seated around tables in a merrymaking mood. That has been replaced here by sobriety and dignity—the governors meet about a matter of importance to the charitable hospital. Pictured are an inkwell, a quill with a knife to sharpen it, an account book, and some coins. The group of five men includes a variety of poses with an overall pattern of hands.

For genre painting, we will consider Jan Steen (1626–1679), who lived in The Hague, Delft, Haarlem, and Leiden. Our example shows *As the Old Ones Sing, so the Young Ones Pipe* (or *Merry Company*) (c. 1665). The title is taken from a folk motto meaning that youth will follow the example set by their elders. In contrast, let's look at Pieter de Hooch (1629–after 1684). His work, *The Courtyard of a House in Delft* (c. 1658) shows a picture of harmony, quietude, and cleanliness—all Calvinist sentiments.

To call Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) a genre painter, a landscape painter, or a painter of mythological or religious subjects would miss the point.

For the landscape genre, we will look at two artists. The first artist was the father-in-law of Jan Steen, Jan van Goyen (1596–1656). Van Goyen was the first great Dutch landscape painter in the 17th century. Our example shows his *View of Leiden from the Northeast* (undated). The second artist is Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682), who was probably the greatest Dutch landscape painter, partly because of his range. Our example shows *The Jewish Cemetery near Ouderkerk* (c. 1654–1655).

We now turn to still lifes with a work by Willem Claesz Heda (1594–1682), *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* (c. 1640). We see leftover banquet items gathered together as a reminder that however sumptuous the banquet may be, it will be left behind at death. The mince pie has been left almost untouched, and the clock has been left unwound because time has stopped for its owner. The silver-mounted Nautilus cup has been knocked over, while two other glasses are still full. The subtlety of the color palette and the shadows on the wall and tablecloth give unity to the objects. The objects are composed with the

skill of a master. Note the repetition of oval shapes and the contrast between the fall of the watch key chain and the curve of the lemon peel.

Church interiors were also a common subject. Our example shows the work of Emmanuel de Witte (1616/18–1692), a painting of *The Interior of the New Church at Delft, with Tomb of William the Silent* (c. 1656). We see an oblique view from the ambulatory through the columns to the tomb in the choir. This monument was the most important shrine in the Netherlands, dedicated to William I, Prince of Orange, who led the rebellion against Spain and was assassinated. The end of the Eighty Years' War that ratified independence was just past.

William the Silent's grandson, who died in 1650 after an unpopular reign, was buried beneath this tomb as well. Many paintings of the tomb were done during the 1650s, and they may have been painted for pro-Orange clients trying to rehabilitate the dynasty name by association with its founder.

To call Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) a genre painter, a landscape painter, or a painter of mythological or religious subjects would miss the point. Although he painted all these subjects, he left fewer than three dozen paintings behind. Most of them have a quality difficult to describe but easy to recognize, yet for two centuries after his death, he was largely forgotten.

Our example shows Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* (c. 1662–1665). The tapestry is pulled back to open up the space, where the artist is pictured in an old-fashioned costume. The map behind him shows a unified Netherlands before the separation of north and south. The model, Clio, wears a laurel wreath and holds the trumpet of fame and a history book. Because this painting was not commissioned, it has been suggested that it was intended for the painters' guild in Delft. This painting was in the artist's possession at his death, and his widow claimed that it "depicted the art of painting." Through historical circumstances, the painting became the property of Adolf Hitler. After the war, it was repatriated to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

View of Delft (c. 1660–1661) is a cityscape that was done in the early years of Vermeer's career. When the Netherlands purchased this painting at

auction in 1822, it was aptly described in the sales catalogue: “[It] shows the town of Delft, on the Schie River; one sees the whole town with its gates, towers, bridges...The way of painting is of the most audacious, powerful and masterly that one can imagine; everything is illuminated agreeably by the sun; the tone of light and water, the nature of the brickwork and the people make an excellent ensemble, and this painting is absolutely unique of its kind.”

The twin-towered Rotterdam shipping gate is pictured at right, another gate at center, and a pair of dark towers at left. Emphasized by the sunlight striking it, the tower of the New Church (Nieuw Kerk) is right of center. The New Church was the burial place of William the Silent and is symbolically associated with Delft. This painting is less a topographic study than a symbolic one of the peace and prosperity that followed independence. ■

Works Discussed

Pieter de Hooch:

The Courtyard of a House in Delft, 1658, oil on canvas, 29 x 23 ½” (73.5 x 60 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Emanuel de Witte:

The Interior of the New Church at Delft, with Tomb of William the Silent, 1656, oil on canvas, 38 x 32 ½” (96.5 x 82.5 cm), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille, France.

Frans Hals:

The Governors of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, 1641, oil on canvas, 5’ ¼” x 8’ 3 ¼” (153 x 252 cm), Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, The Netherlands.

The Merry Drinker, c. 1628–30, oil on canvas, 32 x 26 ¼” (81 x 66.5 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Willem Claesz Heda:

Still Life with Nautilus Cup, 1640, oil on panel, 23 ½ x 31” (59.5 x 78.5 cm), Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen, Germany.

Jan Steen:

As the Old Ones Sing, so the Young Ones Pipe (Merry Company), 1665, oil on canvas, 4' 4 ³/₄" x 5' 4 ¹/₄" (134 x 163 cm), Mauritshuis, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Jan van Goyen:

View of Leiden from the Northeast, private collection.

Jacob van Ruisdael:

The Jewish Cemetery near Ouderkerk, 1653–55, oil on canvas, 33 x 37 ¹/₂" (84 x 95.2 cm), Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Germany.

Johannes Vermeer:

The Art of Painting, c. 1662–65, oil on canvas, 47 ¹/₄ x 39 ¹/₂" (120 x 100 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

View of Delft, c. 1660–61, oil on canvas, 38 x 45" (96.5 x 115.7 cm), Mauritshuis, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Suggested Reading

Seymour Slive, *Dutch Painting, 1600–1800*.

Peter S. Sutton, *Love Letters*.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the lack of commissions in the northern Netherlands?
2. Compare Dutch portraiture with other portraits we have seen in past lectures.

Rembrandt

Lecture 34

Rembrandt is among the most famous names in the history of world art. His art touched upon every aspect of human life and left its mark on our art history. An unsurpassed painter, he was also a superb printmaker—an etcher whose subtlety, spontaneity, and technical prowess established the canon for the art of etching.

In this lecture, we look at the art of Rembrandt, a superb printmaker and portraitist and the only great Protestant religious painter. We'll look first at his explorations of the then-relatively-new technique, followed by a discussion of his religious painting and his famous portraits and self-portraits. As we'll see, he possessed great powers of empathy for his subjects—an understanding of the range of human experience and a tolerance for human foibles and sins.

The art of Rembrandt (Rembrandt van Rijn, 1606–1669) touched on every aspect of human life and left its mark on art history. An unsurpassed painter, he was also a superb printmaker, an etcher whose subtlety, spontaneity, and technical prowess established the canon for the art of etching. He painted and drew and etched nearly every subject that his world offered to artists: landscape and still life; scenes from mythology, the Bible, and Dutch history; and during the period of his greatest public fame and success, in the 1630s, he was in continuous demand as a portrait painter. His portraits convince us equally of their exterior appearance and their interior life—the thoughts and emotions that animate the faces and bodies of his subjects.

Although the Eighty Years' War did not officially end until the Treaty of Munster in 1648, there was relative peace and stability following the truce of 1609. Thus, Rembrandt's childhood—indeed, most of his life—was spent in the first period of extended peace in Holland following 40 years of war. He was born in Leyden, a miller's son. He attended Latin school there and, at 15, studied for a year at Leyden University before he was apprenticed to a painter. His artistic training continued in Amsterdam with Pieter Lastman. He returned to Leyden in 1625, where he lived and worked with the painter Jan Lievens.

By 1631, he was back in Amsterdam and his career began in earnest, especially as an increasingly in-demand portrait painter. The romanticized retellings of Rembrandt's life are still the stuff of popular legend, but in truth, his life was like many others, encompassing triumphs and reversals, both personal and artistic. He achieved great wealth in his 30s and suffered financial collapse in his 50s. The early death of his first wife, Saskia, and the later deaths of his companion, Hendrickje, and his son, Titus, were dreadful blows. We see his *Self-Portrait with Mouth Open* (1628–1629), a drawing that shows the artist studying himself rather than a model. Countless artists have done the same thing, but self-portraiture would become a habit with Rembrandt.

We begin with Rembrandt's etching, which Filippo Baldinucci described in 1686 as done "in a certain most bizarre manner." Rembrandt's "manner" was in contrast with the clean, linear style of Italian, particularly Bolognese, etching of Baldinucci's experience. In etching, a copper plate is coated with a ground, usually made of beeswax and rosin. The etcher draws a design with a steel needle, removing the ground and exposing the plate. The plate is immersed in an acid bath; the acid eats into the plate where the metal has been exposed. After it is cleaned, the plate is inked, and a print is made in much the same process as engraving. Drypoint uses a different kind of steel tool, with which the artist carves directly into the copper plate. The resulting raised metal burrs are left on the surface. When the plate is inked, the burrs collect ink, which can be seen as very dark areas in the print.

We see Rembrandt's *Angel Appearing to the Shepherds* (1634). The etching shows the apparition of the angels to the shepherds, telling them of the birth of the Christ Child. Perhaps no other artist has ever imagined this particular interpretation of the subject. The scene takes place at night, but we see an explosion of light where the host of angels appears. The earthly result is chaos; the sense of drama cannot be overstated.

Next, we turn to the *Blinding of Samson* (1636). The history of this painting is not clear. Extroverted drama was Rembrandt's mode in the mid-1630s, but this subject is both unusual and unusually shocking. We see the entrance of the tent, through which the Philistine soldiers have come to seize Samson, his strength gone with his shorn hair. There are five soldiers: One threatens with shield and saber at the upper right; one is chaining Samson's hand; one has

pulled Samson down and locked his arms around his quarry. The soldier on top grasps Samson's beard with his left mailed hand, while his right plunges a dagger into Samson's eye.

The light that floods into the tent spotlights that eye, and several strong diagonal lines lead directly to it. One diagonal is the halberd held at the ready by the fifth captor; another is the fleeing Delilah, with shears in her right hand and the mane of Samson's hair in her left; and a third is Samson's right leg, toes curled in agony. We are spared nothing in this scene: Samson's eye gushes blood; the halberdier at the left has a horrified expression; Delilah

In etching, a copper plate is coated with a ground, usually made of beeswax and rosin. The etcher draws a design with a steel needle, removing the ground and exposing the plate.

looks back with staring eyes, as if fearful that Samson will still break free of the soldiers. The flood of light that focuses on Samson is also a visual release, a trumpet that is a metaphor for a scream. In addition to the diagonals and counter-diagonals, we see the compositional circle that surrounds Samson's head and another larger one with his foot at its center; the repetitive arcs of the armored arms make us feel the horrible thrust twice.

Raising of the Cross (c. 1633) is one of five Passion scenes commissioned for the Prince of Orange at the court of The Hague. The compass effect of the cross is fascinating; the diagonal body of Christ on the cross seems to

describe the arc of the painting's top. The supernatural light focuses on Christ and the back of the soldier who pulls the cross up. At the center, we find Rembrandt himself, placed there as a witness. An important concept during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation—deep empathy—is found here.

Night Watch (c. 1640–1642) is one of the most famous and original group portraits ever painted. Instead of a posed group of people at a banquet or a meeting, Rembrandt took the opportunity to show this militia company in action, not marching to some particular event but demonstrating the value of arms and preparedness, the viability of the militia company in the defense of freedom. The painting is properly titled the *Militia Company of Captain*

Frans Banning Coq. The popular title is misleading; the scene does not take place at night. The name was given to the painting at the end of the 18th century, when the only duties that militias had were night patrols. By that time, the picture was also obscured under layers of grime and discolored varnish; it appeared much darker than it is today.

But it is also true that there is a marked darkness in much of this painting. It is the darkness that is one-half of Rembrandt's *chiaroscuro*—his “light-dark” manner of painting—which was not only a development from Caravaggio's innovations at the beginning of the century but fully understood by contemporaries as Rembrandt's usual style. The militiamen may not be emerging from beneath the great arch, though it is easy to imagine that they are. None are beyond it, though some may be under it. The arch is a symbol of the city that had to be guarded; the gates were the crucial points for defense. But this gate did not exist; it is Rembrandt's invention, which must have surprised and thrilled both the militia company and other citizens who saw the completed painting. Note the captain and his lieutenant; their gestures give the painting life and animation.

The viewer cannot always determine who is and who is not a member of the company. The members would have paid for the portrait equally, but who are the other people shown, and who decided how and where the members were portrayed? The little girl with the fowl, for example, seems to have the features of Rembrandt's wife. There is no record of any member of the company complaining that he was slighted by his placement in the painting, although a few critics complained that Rembrandt was more interested in *his* idea, *his* painting, than in the portraits for which he was commissioned.

Our next painting is *Bathsheba* (1654). According to the Old Testament, from the roof of his palace, King David saw the beautiful Bathsheba bathing and desired her. Her husband, Uriah, was away, serving in David's army; thus, the king summoned Bathsheba to his palace and made love to her. Later, when she became pregnant, he ordered that Uriah be stationed on the front line, where he was killed. David then married Bathsheba. Rembrandt shows Bathsheba with her maid, who attends to her feet. She holds a letter, which is probably the summons sent to her by David. Her face seems to contain a foreknowledge of everything that will follow from this command.

At one time, much was made about the un-idealized body of Bathsheba, but the *natural* beauty of this life-size figure is clear enough, and her character is even clearer. Her sadness seems almost radiant.

We return to etching with *The Three Trees* (1643). There is a great deal of *surface tone* here; for instance, ink was left on the surface of the plate in the clouds at the left center, which then printed with drypoint burr, creating a wonderful atmospheric effect. A *burin* was used for cutting the deep diagonals on the left; these are almost abstract. Rembrandt used drypoint in the deep, dark trees to the right. The etching shows a couple fishing, an artist sketching, and lovers in the bushes. The three trees symbolize the three crosses of the crucifixion, and the turbulence of the sky at left is in response to this event.

There is no iconographic precedent for Rembrandt's etching of *Christ Preaching* (c. 1652). Christ stands on a platform and is lit by a beam of divine light. The figures hear Christ's words in different ways. This work is exquisitely delicate and sensitive.

One of Rembrandt's later works is *The Syndics of the Cloth Guild* (1662). These were the officials in charge of maintaining the standards of the cloth drapers' guild. Remember that this is a group portrait, not a town meeting. That is, it must not be imagined that the Syndics are on a sort of dais above an audience. For that matter, they were surely not all seated together for the portrait. The composition is Rembrandt's invention; the sitters sat individually for their portraits. Given that there is no "occasion" that explains their actions, then those, too, are Rembrandt's inventions. Their poses are not typical of group portraits, in that they all look intently at us; we seem to have interrupted them by our entrance.

There are five of the Syndics and one secretary or aide who is hatless. The second man from the left rises in response to our presence. I can think of no other group portrait in which the poses, the action, are impelled by the viewer of the painting. Note the table corner and its glorious color, the low viewpoint, and the gloves and cloth purse at right. The light falls from two sources: high on the back of the left wall and more frontally on the faces. Note also the melodic line of the heads, the rhythmic grouping of the men. The portrait has an immediacy that is startling.

The *Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul* (1661) is a splendid late self-portrait, by an artist famous for his self-portraits. Why did Rembrandt paint himself as Paul? St. Paul, the skeptic, the convert from Judaism to Christianity, was torn between the spiritual and the temporal. Rembrandt felt a strong kinship with Paul; in addition to this *Self-Portrait as St. Paul*, he painted four or five other images of the apostle.

We turn to our last two paintings, produced at the very end of the artist's life, *The Jewish Bride* (1668–1669) and the *Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1668–1669). Many suggestions have been made about the probable biblical subject of *The Jewish Bride*. It has long been suggested that the couple is the biblical Isaac and Rebecca. A drawing by Rembrandt seems to confirm this. It specifically links this painting to a moment in Genesis 26. Isaac and Rebecca are pretending, for *his* safety, to be brother and sister but are discovered in an embrace by Abimelech, the king of the Philistines. The drawing shows a larger composition, which means that this painting has been cut down. The painting may be both a contemporary portrait and a depiction of the Old Testament couple. We see in a detail of the couple that the work is about the power of a human embrace.

The *Return of the Prodigal Son* illustrates a scene from Luke 15:11–32, the parable of Christ that is most frequently depicted in art. ■

Works Discussed

Rembrandt van Rijn:

Angel Appearing to the Shepherds, 1634, etching, drypoint, engraving, 10 ¼ x 8 ½" (26.2 x 21.8 cm).

Bathsheba, 1654, oil on canvas, 4' 8" square (142 cm square), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Blinding of Samson, 1636, oil on canvas, 6' 7" x 8' 9" (2 x 2.6 m), Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, Germany.

Christ Preaching, c. 1652, etching and drypoint, 11 x 15 ¼" (28 x 40 cm), The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City, New York, USA.

The Jewish Bride, 1668–69, oil on canvas, 4' x 5' 5 ½" (121.5 x 166.5 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Night Watch, c. 1640–42, oil on canvas, 12' 2" x 14' 7" (363 x 437 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Raising of the Cross, c. 1633, oil on canvas, 38 x 28 ½" (97 x 72 cm), Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

Return of the Prodigal Son, c. 1668–69, oil on canvas, 8' 8" x 6' 7 ¾" (2.6 x 2.1 m), The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul, 1661, oil on canvas, 35 ¾ x 30 ¼" (91 x 77 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Self-Portrait with Mouth Open, 1628–29, pen and ink with charcoal drawing, 4 ¾ x 3 ¾" (122 x 95 mm), The British Museum, London, Great Britain.

The Syndics (Board) of the Cloth Guild, 1662, oil on canvas, 6' 3 ½" x 9' 2" (191.5 x 279 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Three Trees, 1643, etching and drypoint, 8 ½ x 11 ¼" (22 x 40 cm), The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City, New York, USA.

Suggested Reading

Ackley with Baer, Rassier, and Robinson (contributors), *Rembrandt's Journey*.
Simon Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*.

Questions to Consider

1. How did Rembrandt use different techniques in etching to achieve atmospheric or emotional effects in his prints?
2. Discuss Rembrandt's gift for empathy using his paintings as evidence.

Poussin and Claude—The Allure of Rome

Lecture 35

From the middle of the 15th century Italy, and especially Rome, had increasingly drawn artists from other countries to visit, study, and work.

This interest was the result of the flourishing of Rome during the High Renaissance (the first two decades of the century), when Raphael, Michelangelo, and the architect Bramante were transforming St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican, and other Roman sites. The monuments of antiquity were a constant draw, but so were the works of the great Renaissance masters, and the style of Michelangelo, in particular, was exported to Holland and the southern Netherlands.

In the 17th century, one finds an entire sub-category of Dutch landscape painters, known to us as the Dutch-Italianate artists, who went to Rome and other Italian localities, made drawings and paintings of the Roman *campagna*, and recorded the Alps as they journeyed to and from the north. All these motifs delighted the art patrons of the Netherlands. The city and the art of antique and Renaissance Rome were irresistible references for artists from the 15th century into the 19th century, and this allure has never been surpassed in European art history.

We begin with a *Self-Portrait* (1640) by Rembrandt, who never traveled to Italy. Although Rembrandt did not travel to Italy, he had a deep admiration for Italian art. In fact, he did not have to travel abroad, because the Amsterdam art market was the busiest and most important in Europe, and Italian paintings constantly came through Amsterdam.

In this self-portrait, Rembrandt shows himself as a gentleman. He sits behind a sill that is illuminated slightly; the background is neutral but has a shifting glow of light. His face is serious, intelligent, and focused. In creating this pose, Rembrandt used two works that he had recently seen. One of these was Raphael's *Baldassare Castiglione* (c. 1514–1515). Castiglione faces the opposite direction from Rembrandt in his portrait, but the similarities

are quite strong between the two paintings, especially in the dignity of the subjects. The other painting is Titian's *Man with a Blue Sleeve (Ariosto)* (c. 1512). The gentleman's right arm is also on the sill—his sleeve seems to blossom forth—but he has a certain mysterious look. Rembrandt had seen both of these paintings at auction and, indeed, sketched *Baldassare Castiglione* in his catalogue. The sketch was made in 1639 and is in the Albertina in Vienna. Note that in his sketch, Rembrandt has already changed the figure's hat.

At the beginning of the 17th century, word of new art stars rising in Rome reached the north, attracting other artists and patrons. One French artist who moved to Rome and spent his career there was Nicholas Poussin (1593/94–1665). Poussin was born in Normandy in a town near the Seine. He studied painting in Rouen and Paris and traveled to Rome in 1624. Soon after his arrival, he worked in the studio of Domenichino, whose art had an important influence on Poussin. Poussin was introduced to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, just at the time that the cardinal was having the family palace rebuilt and decorated. Poussin received one commission for a large altarpiece for the new St. Peter's, the only monumental altarpiece of his career, because he soon developed a loyal clientele among the French community in Rome.

We see Poussin's *Realm [or Kingdom] of Flora* (1631), a graceful ballet of a picture, choreographed with precision and a joyous spirit. Remember Botticelli's *Primavera* from Lecture Seventeen, in which Flora scatters flowers. Poussin has taken the measured, mostly static composition of Botticelli and set it into motion. Poussin has also, like Botticelli, taken his scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the Botticelli, the nymph Chloris was literally metamorphosing into Flora, the personification of Spring. In Poussin's painting, Flora dances in the center; all the characters who complete the cast are drawn from Ovid and all will metamorphose into flowers. We see Ajax at left, denied the weapons of the dead Achilles, which were given instead to Ulysses. Ajax went insane and committed suicide by falling on his sword; here his blood is transformed into a carnation. We also see Narcissus and Echo; Narcissus spurned Echo's love and was condemned to gaze at his own reflection in the water eternally. He fell in love with his reflection, pined away until he died, and was transformed into the flower of his name.

In the right corner are Crocus and Smilax. For his impatience, Crocus was turned into the flower that bears his name, while she was transformed into a yew tree. Behind them is the wounded Adonis with a spear. As he pulls back his cloak, he reveals the wound in his thigh, bleeding anemones. Also present is Hyacinthus, who was accidentally struck in the head and killed by a discus thrown by his lover, Apollo. Hyacinths fall from his head. Apollo is in his Sun chariot above, and there is a thematic triangulation here. While Apollo

According to an early biographer, Claude was trained as a pastry chef, but by about age 13, he was in Italy working as a general studio assistant for painters.

mourns Hyacinth, he is observed by Clytie below; in her unrequited love for Apollo, she turned her head always toward him until she became a sunflower that always turns toward the Sun. This scene is completely artificial; in lesser hands, the painting could be quite dull, but in Poussin's hands, it is poetry cast as a dance. Even his color, influenced by Titian, is poetic.

Our next example is the *Massacre of the Innocents* (1632–1635), painted for the Marchese Giustiniani, who had been a patron of Caravaggio. The *Massacre* has some echoes of Caravaggio but more of Guido Reni; in Poussin's painting, we see an even greater reduction of figures than in Guido's *Massacre*, a more rigorous editing.

In 1640, Poussin yielded to pressure from King Louis XIII of France and Cardinal Richelieu to return to his native country to paint decorations in the Palace of the Louvre. For Poussin, both the type of painting and the intrigues of other court artists were intolerable. After 18 months, he returned to Rome, ostensibly to bring his wife to Paris but with no intent of ever going north again.

Our next example is *Eliezar and Rebecca at the Well* (1648). The story is from Genesis 24. Seeking a bride for his son Isaac, Abraham sends his servant Eliezar to look for a suitable woman among his own kinsmen in Mesopotamia. Reaching Chaldea, Eliezar selected the first woman who offered him and his camels water at the well. This hospitality was extended by Rebecca, who proved to be a daughter of Abraham's brother Nahor.

The subject was sometimes considered an Old Testament anticipation or prototype of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, but Poussin's emphasis is on narrating the story in clear visual terms. The dignity of the many persons shown and the careful characterization of their actions are impressive. Poussin suppressed the camels, probably because their exotic picturesqueness was at odds with his desire for sobriety and measured rhythm.

The palette is striking for the intensity of colors, the unusual range from primaries to intermediate hues, and their compositional function. The work includes many Classical quotations, such as the woman leaning on an urn and the Greek (rather than Roman) vertical fall of many of the robes. The abstract forms are clear and geometric. The marble sphere atop the pillar at the right is echoed by various urns and pitchers but also by Eliezar's turban.

The Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia Ego) (c. 1650) shows a subject we saw in Guercino's poetic painting in Lecture Thirty, although Poussin's is the most famous painting on the theme and is rendered in a more didactic or philosophic way. Instead of the unmistakable meaning of the large skull over the engraved words—"Even in Arcady there am I"—the shepherds parse the letters with some difficulty. One of the shepherds looks at the statuesque, broadly draped woman as if for an explanation. The figures are even more strictly classical than those in *Eliezar and Rebecca*. We sense no movement; all are absorbed in thought; indeed, they are *disturbed* by thought. The color range in this painting is more limited, and the landscape is pulled up close as a backdrop to the figures.

From a series of the four seasons painted for the duc de Richelieu, we see *Winter (The Deluge)* (1660–1664). Poussin chose the biblical flood to stand for winter—a final winter for most. The scene is powerful, at least within the Classical restraint of Poussin's world. Most originally, it is a night scene. We see figures in the water in the foreground. One clings to a horse, another to a piece of wood. A serpent slithers on the rocks behind. Figures are dead or dying in a boat; others are trying to hand a child down into the boat. In the left center is a man whose boat is upended and whose hands are raised in prayer. The painting may have a sacramental meaning; the flood, through the destruction of evil and the salvation of good through water, could be a symbol of baptism.

Another French artist who spent his career in Rome was Claude Lorrain (1600–1682). He was born Claude Gellée, near Nancy in Lorraine, in France. His family name is rarely used in English, and he is never called Lorrain; the artist is referred to as Claude Lorrain or, simply, Claude. According to an early biographer, Claude was trained as a pastry chef, but by about age 13, he was in Italy working as a general studio assistant for painters. He settled in Rome for good around 1627 and, within 10 years, had a secure reputation as a landscape painter. Indeed, Claude virtually reinvented landscape painting, giving it a formula, varied with growing subtlety and imagination, that was to become the principal pictorial approach to painting landscape for the next two centuries.

Our first example of Claude's work is the *Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca (The Mill)* (1648). Note the framing of the landscape by two groups of trees. One group obscures the Sun, the source of light, which glides across the landscape. In the distance, the hills are blue. Claude's subtle device of the framing became the standard for 200 years. In the same year that Poussin painted *Eliezer and Rebecca*, Claude painted this *Rebecca*. Were it not for an inscription on the painting, however, we would be unlikely to know the subject of the Claude; indeed, it was long known under the title *The Mill*. There is no literary or artistic tradition of a dance being held to celebrate the marriage of Rebecca and Isaac, but biblical commentators always stressed its joyousness. This depiction has a serene beauty, especially the verdure of the foreground and the trees. Our eyes are gently guided into this nuanced landscape.

Late in life, Claude painted *Landscape with Aeneas at Delos* (1672). This is a noble picture, one of six paintings showing stories of Aeneas, the founder of Rome. The work was inspired by Virgil's epic but also probably by Ovid, who recounts some of the story in descriptive terms more clearly echoed by Claude in this work. The group of paintings is unusual in that the subjects Claude chose from the *Aeneid* had never before been illustrated. This scene was the first of those Claude painted. Aeneas, in red; his father, Anchises, in blue; and the younger son, Ascanius, have arrived at Delos, the city of Apollo, having fled Troy, taking with them the sacred images of the gods,. They are received by the priest/king Anius, in white, who showed them the city, the new shrines, and the sacred trees under which Apollo and Diana

had been born. The domed temple of Apollo predicts the Roman Pantheon, referring to the prophecy by the oracle at Delos of the future grandeur of Rome.

This is a meditative painting about history and time. Claude's perfectly balanced composition of gentle diagonals, horizontals, and verticals, softened by the arcs of the treetops and dome, is enveloped by a fluid atmosphere of silvery-blues and blue-greens. The painting is at once majestic and deeply personal. The careers of these two great French painters living in Rome form a fascinating chapter in the history of art. Poussin had a much greater influence on the development of art in France than in Italy; Claude was to influence the subsequent development of landscape painting in Europe, and later, in America, more widely than any painter before him. ■

Works Discussed

Claude Lorrain:

Landscape with Aeneas at Delos, 1672, oil on canvas, 3' 3 ¼" x 4' 5" (99.6 x 134.3 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca (The Mill), 1648, oil on canvas, 5' x 6' 7" (152.3 x 200.6 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Nicolas Poussin:

The Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia Ego), c. 1650, oil on canvas, 6' 1" x 3' 11 ½" (185 x 121 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Eliezer and Rebecca at the Well, 1648, oil on canvas, 3' 10½" x 5' 7 ¼" (118 x 199 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Massacre of the Innocents, 1632–35, oil on canvas, 4' 10" x 5' 7 ¼" (147 x 171 cm), Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

Realm (Kingdom) of Flora, 1631, oil on canvas, 4' 3 ½" x 6' (131 x 182 cm), Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Germany.

Sketch of Baldassare Castiglione, 1639, pen and ink drawing, Albertina, Vienna, Austria.

Winter (The Deluge), 1660–64, oil on canvas, 3' 10 ½" x 5' 3"
(118 x 160 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Raphael:

Baldassare Castiglione, c. 1514–15, oil on canvas, 32 ¼ x 26 ¼"
(82 x 67 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Titian:

Man with a Blue Sleeve (Ariosto), c. 1512, oil on canvas, 32 x 26"
(81.2 x 66.3 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Rembrandt van Rijn:

Self-Portrait, 1640, oil on canvas, 40 ¼ x 30 ½" (102 x 80 cm), National
Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Suggested Reading

Cropper and Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin*.

Russell, *Claude Lorraine, 1600–1682*.

Questions to Consider

1. Discuss the types of subjects northern artists borrowed from their Italian counterparts.
2. Choose Poussin or Claude and discuss the similarities and differences in the artist's work from his Italian inspirations.

Baroque Painting in Spain

Lecture 36

The 17th century in Spain was one of weakened power and political influence, including the loss of the northern Netherlands, but it also witnessed Spain's Golden Age of Art, culminating in one of the greatest painters in a European century full of them: Diego Velázquez.

In this lecture, we examine the unique distortions of form of El Greco, the light-dark contrasts of Francisco de Zurbarán, the affecting painting of Murillo, and the brilliant illusionism and unique interpretations of Velázquez. We move from Rome to Spain. Isabel of Castile and Fernando of Aragon had succeeded in conquering the Moorish presence in Spain in 1492 and, after the first voyages of Columbus under their patronage, had opened the new world to both wealth and potential converts. These monarchs established the Spanish Inquisition, which together with the much older papal inquisition, would become the enforcement arm of the Counter-Reformation. Spain became an intensely pious Catholic country, as well as the wealthiest nation in Europe. The 17th century saw Spanish power and political influence weakened, but it also witnessed Spain's golden age of art, culminating in one of the greatest painters of the century, Diego Velázquez.

We will begin at the end of the 16th century with El Greco (1541–1614), a foreign-born, foreign-trained master, who forged his idiosyncratic style from the dominant European currents. El Greco was born Domenico Theotocopoulos in Crete; although he has become known as “the Greek,” he always signed himself by his full Greek name, a fact that attests to his cosmopolitanism. Crete was then under Venetian domination. Thus, although El Greco was probably trained in the Byzantine stylistic tradition, he went to Venice for further training. There, he was influenced by Titian and Tintoretto; he traveled to Rome in 1570 and to Spain in 1577. El Greco settled in Toledo, where both church commissions and the private patronage of the intellectuals who were a prominent feature of the city satisfied his needs for the rest of his life. The artist was not astigmatic. We have seen enough Italian Mannerism to understand that El Greco's distortions of form were part of his style, although given his own particular emphasis and exaggeration.

Our first example is *The Burial of Count Orgaz* (1586). It is apparent in this famous painting that El Greco used two different styles: one for the men on Earth and an exaggerated one for the heavenly vision. This spectacular painting was commissioned by the parish priest of Santo Tomé in Toledo. It commemorates a local miracle of 1323, when the lord of Orgaz, Don Gonzales Ruiz, was about to be interred. Two saints descended from heaven to personally lay the pious knight to rest.

St. Stephen and St. Augustine support the armored body of Orgaz at the front edge of the painted space, presenting him to the viewer. The circle formed by their bodies is marked at its center by one of the hands of the mourner standing behind them. A Franciscan friar and an Augustinian monk are at left, while the officiating clergy at right traditionally includes the parish priest, whose transparent white surplice is a marvel of painting. A row of somber portraits of black-clad mourners is the backdrop of this event. The heavenly apparition, which is painted like a swirling vision and has echoes of both Byzantine and Gothic art, shows Christ at the top and the larger figures of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist just below him. A host of saints accompanies them. An angel connects the two levels, the Earth with the heavens, carrying the soul of the dead count into paradise; the soul appears like a gray, diaphanous infant. Take particular note of the wonderfully painted armor of the count with its many reflections, the scene of St. Stephen's martyrdom embroidered on his massive robe, and the small boy beside Stephen, who must be El Greco's son, Jorge Manuel, because the handkerchief in his pocket bears the date 1578, the year of the boy's birth.

We next turn to *The Agony in the Garden* (c. 1590–1595). In this survey, we have seen at least three representations of the Agony in the Garden or Christ at Gethsemane: paintings by Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini and a sculpture by Tilman Riemenschneider. None of these works could prepare one for El Greco's visionary painting. On a high place, in front of a large but curiously insubstantial rock, Christ kneels in supplication, in prayer that the cup of death will pass from him. But his gesture, the down-turned palms of both hands, already indicates submission to divine will. The angel holds the chalice and kneels on a cloud that is also a sort of bubble that encapsulates the sleeping apostles. On the far right, the small figures of Judas and the soldiers are approaching under a cloud-swept, moonlit sky. Everything

seems insubstantial, except the strong colors of Christ's robes of rose and blue and the angel's yellow-gold cloak; together, those create a strong downward and inward diagonal push. Otherwise, the space in the painting is discontinuous, visionary.

Our next artist from this period in Spain is Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664); we see his *St. Serapion* (1628). Born in the rugged territory of Extramadura, Zurbarán's training and much of his career took place in Seville, but his commissions came largely from monasteries and churches in southwestern Spain. These frequently isolated communities reinforced his taste for strongly conceived single figures of saints and equally direct narrative scenes. His concentration became a visual synonym for meditation. The subject of this painting, Serapion, was born in Scotland in 1178 and

accompanied his father on the Third Crusade. He joined the Mercedarian order, and around 1240, he was martyred in Algiers for preaching and converting Muslims to Christianity.

Today, we are fascinated by the reflection in the mirror and by the philosophical implications of different levels of reality.

Serapion was over 60 when he was martyred, and his death was violent and cruel. Zurbarán imagines him as a much younger man and presents him quietly tied to a tree. The painting was made for

a Mercedarian monastery in Seville, and it hung in the *sala de profundis*, a room used to hold the bodies of deceased monks before burial. The intent and effect of this starkly immediate image in such a setting is easy to comprehend. The quiet acceptance of death in Zurbarán's picture recalls the words of St. Theresa, "All things pass, God never changes." Zurbarán's knowledge of Caravaggio's style is obvious, and the intensity of light-dark contrast, together with the solid volume of the saint's body, makes the scene illusionistically compelling.

Another artist living and working in Seville was Esteban Murillo (1617–1682); we see his *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1667–1670). In this depiction, we see the prodigal son after his dissolute wanderings; he kneels in front of his father in repentance. This painting is like Rembrandt's depiction

of the same scene in that the father welcomes his son with an embrace. To the left, we see a child and a man bringing in the calf to be killed for the feast. On the right are members of the family, including the brother who stayed home, who is bringing out clothes for his sibling.

Finally, we turn to Diego de Silva Velázquez (1599–1660), who was born in Seville but of Portuguese origin. Velázquez studied with Francisco Pacheco in Seville from 1613 until he became an independent master in 1617. He married Pacheco’s daughter the next year and painted in Seville until 1622.

Our first example is his *The Water Seller of Seville* (c. 1620). Note the brilliant illusionism and the deep tones and strong light-shadow contrasts of Caravaggio and his followers in Naples and Spain. Note also the contained emotion and quietude—a somberness beyond the subject that suggests the sacramental.

In 1623, Velázquez moved to Madrid and became court painter. We see *Los Borrachos (The Drinkers)* (c. 1628) from this early period. Velázquez has painted Bacchus in the center; the god has come down to Earth to join his devotees. We see one man delighted to have a “photo op” with the god. Another is obviously inebriated, and a third kneels seriously before Bacchus. Yet another man is being crowned with vine leaves. The figure in shadow at the left serves the purpose of moving our eyes along a diagonal into the space. This was not the only work in which Velázquez treated mythology, and when he did, he treated it in a way that was unlike anyone else.

From 1629–1631, Velázquez made his first trip to Rome with the support of Rubens. On his return, he painted *The Surrender at Breda (Las Lanzas, “The Lances”)* (c. 1634–1635). This painting is justly famous for its composition. The viewer is on a high foreground, looking out over the battlefield. We see two central figures, Justin of Nassau handing over the keys to the city to Ambrogio Spinola. The painting illustrates the conquest of a Dutch fortress in 1625, but Justin of Nassau is shown being greeted by Spinola. This is not a typical surrender. Velázquez inserted his self-portrait on the far right, to the right of the horse’s neck. This painting is not simply a trophy of military victory but a metaphor of moral quality in the magnanimous treatment of the

victor to the vanquished. Spinola would normally be mounted; instead, the men are on equal footing.

In 1648–1651, Velázquez made his second trip to Rome, and while there, he painted the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (c. 1649). A stroke of historical serendipity gave Velázquez the opportunity to paint this portrait. In late 1648, the artist was sent on a second trip to Italy to acquire paintings and sculpture for the Spanish royal collection. In late 1649, he presented a letter of introduction to the pope, who holds it in his left hand in the painting.

Innocent X was an austere pope who saw himself as a reformer after the excesses of the Barberini papacy. His severity and impatience are apparent in this portrait. Velázquez may have had no more than a quarter of an hour to make a quick oil sketch from which to develop this masterpiece, but he made the most of it in capturing the wary, distrustful, harsh, and vindictive character of the pope. The symphonic variations on red here are legendary and indescribable. The cape is a saturated crimson with flaring highlights of pink and cerise, but those are just a few of the variations. The white garment covering the legs is the foil to the crimson electricity, and here the paint is dense, clotted, and weighty, as well as luminous.

Our last example is *The Maids of Honor* (*Las Meniñas*) (c. 1656). One of the most discussed paintings in European art, *The Maids of Honor* is probably the first painting in which a living king and a painter at work are seen together in a studio. The painter cannot be missed; he stands just to the side of his easel, palette and brush in hand, and seems to look in our direction. But surely he is not looking at us.

Is he looking at the subject of his large painting? If so, that would mean that he is painting a portrait, and it would have to be a portrait of the king and queen, because we see King Philip IV and Queen Mariana reflected in a mirror at the back of this large, dark studio. At first, it may not seem probable that such a tall canvas would be necessary for a double portrait of two full-length figures, but why not? A full-length portrait of one of the king's daughters was close to 9 feet tall, and the canvas in this painting must not be much taller.

It is also possible that Velázquez is painting something else, a subject that didn't require the presence of models, and the king and queen have come to pay a visit. Is that likely? The king valued Velázquez as a highly ranked courtier, as a close friend, and as a great painter. Did the king and queen visit because they knew the princess was there? That would explain why her attention seems suddenly to be divided between her companions and her parents.

Today, we are fascinated by the reflection in the mirror and by the philosophical implications of different levels of reality. In the reality of 17th-century Spain, it would have been beyond the bounds of courtly propriety to show the royal couple in the same physical space as the artist, but in reflection, doing so was *just* permissible. What about the maids of the title? These are the two curtsying attendants of the young princess, Margarita Maria, who has been brought into the artist's studio, together with her entourage of the dwarfs, who were her playmates, and her chaperones.

Two things are certain: Velázquez did not paint this marvel for his own amusement, nor did he paint it to hang in a museum. The painting was installed in a part of the palace reserved for King Philip IV and his intimates; therefore, it was created primarily for an audience of one, and that one was a participant in the painting. Velázquez has the cross of the Order of Santiago on his doublet, but he was ennobled only after this picture was painted, and a contemporary historian writes that the cross was added by order of the king.

On the one hand, this painting succeeded in proclaiming that art was a noble profession, not a craft, but on the other, it proclaimed itself the signifier of artistic genius. When the once-famous painter Luca Giordano was shown this painting by King Charles II, Philip's son, he said, "Sire, this is the Theology of Painting," by which, the contemporary explained, "he meant to convey that just as theology is superior to all other branches of knowledge, so is this picture the greatest example of painting." ■

Works Discussed

Francisco de Zurbarán:

Saint Serapion, 1628, oil on canvas, 47 ¼ x 41” (1.2 x 1 m), Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

El Greco:

The Agony in the Garden, about 1590–1595, oil on canvas, 40 ¼ x 44 ¾” (102 x 114 cm), Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, USA.

The Burial of Count Orgaz, 1586, oil on canvas, 16’ x 11’ 10” (4.9 x 3.6 m), Church of S. Tomé, Toledo, Spain.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo:

The Return of the Prodigal Son, 1667/1670, oil on canvas, 7’ 9” x 8’ 6 ¾” (2.363 x 2.610 m), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Diego Velázquez:

Los Borrachos (The Drinkers), c. 1628, oil on canvas, 5’ 5” x 7’ 4 ½” (165 x 225 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

The Maids of Honor (Las Meniñas), 1656, oil on canvas, 10’ 5 ¼” x 9’ ¾” (318 x 276 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Portrait of Innocent X, c. 1649, oil on canvas, 55 x 45 ¼” (139.7 x 115 cm), Rome, Galleria Doria-Pamphili, Rome, Italy.

The Surrender at Breda (Las Lanzas), c. 1634–35, oil on canvas, 10’ 1” x 12’ ½” (307 x 367 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

The Water Seller of Seville, c. 1620, oil on canvas, 42 x 32” (106.7 x 81 cm), Wellington Museum, London, Great Britain.

Suggested Reading

Brown and Garrido, *Velázquez*.

Tomlinson, *From El Greco to Goya*.

Questions to Consider

1. Using the paintings discussed in this lecture, describe El Greco's highly individual manner of expression.
2. It has been said that the work of Velázquez prefigured Realism in art. Can you relate this statement to his *The Water Seller of Seville*?

Louis XIV and Versailles

Lecture 37

The birth of Versailles is what I want to talk to you about now and share with you, because it is the creation of Versailles that is such a fascinating story art-historically.

In this lecture, we look at the architecture and gardens of the Palace of Versailles and discuss how the palace reflected Louis XIV's notion of himself as the Sun King, the center of the universe and the source of absolute, divine power, and simultaneously impressed the rest of Europe. Louis died after reigning for nearly 75 years, and the mood in France shifted. We will look at the work of Watteau to illustrate the pervading sense of nostalgia seen for a brief time in the transition from the Baroque to the Rococo.

We begin this lecture with some background on the political situation in France leading up to the construction of the great palace of Versailles. Paris had been the seat of the French government since the 10th century. After the death of Louis XIII in 1643, his widow, Anne of Austria, became regent for her 4-year-old son, Louis XIV. In May 1648, in response to widespread anti-taxation riots, the parliament in Paris revolted and passed a law limiting the royal prerogatives. This parliament was known as the *Fronde Parliament* (*fronde* meaning "revolt"). The queen and her son fled Paris. The indignity of the restrictive law and the forced flight had a powerful influence on Louis' subsequent actions as king.

In 1651, when he was 13, Louis ascended the throne, concluding his mother's regency. Ten years later, not long after his marriage to a daughter of Philip IV of Spain, Louis' personal reign began in earnest. Louis XIII, who detested society, had built a small hunting lodge near the village of Versailles, 11 miles from Paris. He expanded the lodge into a more substantial chateau, completed by 1636. At least by the mid-1660s, Louis XIV had determined to move the seat of government from Paris to Versailles, to escape the inherent danger of urban mobs, but the court could not move until 1682. Most of the important nobles of France were compelled to move to Versailles by the

king. In their palatial imprisonment, their estates were left unattended and their power base was out of reach.

Louis' Superintendent of Finance—his tax collector—was Nicolas Fouquet, who in 1657, began to construct a grand and beautiful chateau, Vaux le Vicomte, designed by the architect Louis Le Vau, here seen from across the formal garden (1657–1661). The gardens were laid out by André Le Nôtre; the decoration inside was done by Charles Lebrun. When the chateau was completed in 1661, Fouquet, proudly and unwisely, invited the king and his entourage to a grand housewarming. The party impressed the king greatly—too greatly. Curious about the financing of such a structure, Louis investigated. Finding evidence that Fouquet had misappropriated tax monies, Louis ordered the arrest and exile of Fouquet. He also reassigned the team that had produced the chateau to Versailles, and in 1661, construction of the new palace was begun. We see a bust depicting *Louis XIV* (1665), sculptured by Bernini. Louis is depicted as a powerful monarch. The king had invited Bernini to France to complete the design of the Louvre Palace in Paris. His Italian architectural style, in particular the flat roof so unsuited to the northern climate, was in striking contrast to the pavilion style and peaked roofs of French architecture. The idealized features of the bust were intended to emphasize Louis's grandeur and superiority.

We now turn to the layout and exterior views of Versailles. Our first example is an engraving of the layout of Versailles created by François Blondel in the 17th century. The orientation is completely axial, leading from the main approach road, through the Court of Honor, through the entrance and the king's bedroom (directly behind the Hall of Mirrors), and on into the garden to the *Fountain of Latona*, the *Fountain of Apollo*, through a canal to the very end of the park.

Our next example shows a perspective view of the garden and chateau of Versailles in a painting by Pierre Patel (1605–1676). The emphasis, again, is on the unyielding center axis; the viewer gets the sense of looking at an entire world. The king's bedroom, as mentioned, was on the center of the axis, since the Sun was believed to be the center of the universe. Rooms were lined up, one after another, in each of the wings, and all the doors were

aligned. This arrangement is called *enfilade* and, in the winter, resulted in cold winds blowing through the corridors.

We see a modern aerial view of the central section of the garden façade, designed by Le Vau, who adopted Bernini's suggestion that the sloping roofs be hidden behind the cornice. The palace was finished by Jules Hardouin Mansart, who also enlarged it by extending the wings. Note the long horizontal line broken by the projecting central section, which contains the Throne Room (the Hall of Mirrors), the Salon of War, and the Salon of Peace. The proportions dictated by the Classical order are stretched to the limit by the length of this enormous façade. The traditional French pavilion composition—tall pavilions alternating with segments of wall—had been abandoned.

**The Hall of Mirrors
was begun in 1678;
it was designed
by J. H. Mansart
and decorated by
Charles Lebrun.**

The *Fountain of Latona* is not far from the garden façade. A myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* relates that Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana, became thirsty while wandering with her children to avoid Juno's wrath and stopped at a lake in Lycia to drink. She was prevented from drinking by peasants who were collecting reeds there. Angered, she turned them into frogs. This unpleasant story was not casually chosen simply because it involved a lake and was suitable for a fountain sculpture. The subject, with Louis as Apollo and his mother, Anne, as Latona, was dictated by the king as a reminder of the ultimate failure of the Fronde. The nobles who were now in enforced residence at Versailles could contemplate this mythological warning every day. Finally on the exterior, we see also the *Apollo Fountain*, by François Girardon (1628–1715), situated on the central axis of the park as seen from the palace. Apollo (the sun god) in his chariot, accompanied by tritons, is rising from the water.

Our next examples are from the interior of the palace. Approaching the king, as every foreign ambassador must, was a considerable effort, involving a long march through the aligned doors of innumerable rooms toward the Throne Room. Before arrival at the Hall of Mirrors, ambassadors would find themselves in the Salon of War. Here they would see a relief of *Louis XIV*

on Horseback by Antoine Coysevox (1640–1720). This relief depicts Louis XIV as himself, not in the guise of Alexander the Great, for example. We see another view of the relief looking toward the doorway to the Throne Room and the Hall of Mirrors.

The Hall of Mirrors was begun in 1678; it was designed by J. H. Mansart and decorated by Charles Lebrun. Foreign delegations to the king were recorded in paintings, such as *Reparations Made by the Doge of Genoa to Louis XIV in 1685* (by Claude-Guy Halle, c. 1710), which suggests the abasement to which they were subjected. Looking up they would have seen *Louis XIV Governing Alone* by Charles Lebrun (1619–1690), a ceiling painting above the throne. This subject commemorates the coming-of-age of Louis and the defeat of those who would have limited royal power. Like the relief of Louis trampling his enemies beneath his horse's hooves, this painting shows Louis *as* Louis, not represented by a symbol.

One must understand Versailles—the palace and the rigid court etiquette—as a willed achievement by the king, one that came at great personal cost. In pursuit of absolute control, Louis enforced equally strict discipline upon himself. His private life was under the constant scrutiny of the “privileged” courtiers who were chosen to share it. Louis himself tired of all this attention and built two pavilions in the park as retreats from the crowd in the main palace, but he was followed even there. When he died in 1715, he had been king for nearly 75 years. Louis' grandson succeeded him as Louis XV. Because the new king was only 5 years old, the nation was under the guidance of a regent, the boy's uncle, Philip of Orleans. The regency continued until the majority of Louis XV in 1723. This brief period was marked by an aura—at least in hindsight—of melancholy and uncertainty.

Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) briefly emerged to record the twilight mood of the time, the nostalgia, the shift from absolute power to a time of less strictness and greater indulgence in hedonism. Watteau was born in Valenciennes, a Flemish town that had recently become French. The main influence on his style was Rubens, but modulated into the pictorial language of the 18th century. Our first example from Watteau shows *Pierrot (Gilles)* (c. 1718–1719). The commedia dell'arte had been imported into France from Italy in the 16th century and was immensely popular. The figure of Gilles

seems vulnerable and inert in this painting; the other actors in the troop are below and behind him. He seems isolated and rather sad; the emotional pull of this painting is quite strong.

Our next example is *Embarkation to the Island of Cythera* (1717). The title is almost certainly incorrect; this is a departure, not an arrival. The figures rise slowly, as though unwilling to leave. They form a serpentine line down to the remarkable pageant-like boat. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that Cythera is a non-place, and the painting is both allegorical and poetic. It can support both interpretations. Still, pleasure seems not to be anticipated here, but spent, as the “actors” reluctantly rise and leave. The mood of the painting is new, when it is compared to Rubens’s *Garden of Love* (c. 1632–1634). The full-bodied, full-blooded confidence of the Baroque in Rubens’s painting is left behind; a new style was being born that would become known as the *Rococo*. This is the Baroque with the wind taken out of its sails; saturated colors give way to pastels, and large forms and pronounced curves become small forms and gentle curves. The Rococo is a *diminuendo* of the Baroque.

Next we see Watteau’s *The Shopsign* (or *Gersaint’s Shopsign*) (1721). Gersaint’s gallery in the painting is lined with pictures that are inspired by Venetian paintings of the 16th century and Flemish paintings of the 17th century, but they are not copies. These paintings represent the schools most admired by Watteau. On the right, a shopgirl shows a mirror to two men and a woman, who admire themselves in it. Next to them, an elderly pair admires a large, oval mythological painting; the woman, who is standing, looks at the landscape, while the man, who is kneeling, looks just as intently at the nudes. Just left of center, a man offers his hand to a woman entering the shop. This woman glances down to her left, where a shop assistant is lowering a portrait of Louis XIV into a packing case, as we see in a detail of the painting. Gersaint had named his shop *Au Grand Monarche*—“at the Grand Monarch’s”—in homage to the late king, but it is also a farewell to the entire epoch that had finally closed with Louis’ death. Once more, and for the last time, nostalgia infuses Watteau’s work. On the 18th of July 1721, Watteau died of the tuberculosis from which he had suffered for more than 15 years; he was not yet 37 years old. The 18th century in French painting had begun—brilliantly but sadly. ■

Works Discussed

Chateau de Versailles, 1661–1710, Versailles, France.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini:

Louis XIV, 1665, marble, 31 ½” H (80 cm H), Musée National de Versailles, Versailles, France.

Louis Le Vau:

Chateau of Vaux-le-Vicomte, 1657–61, Maincy, France.

Jean-Antoine Watteau:

The Embarkation to the Island of Cythera, 1717, oil on canvas, 4’ 2 ¾” x 6’ 4 ½” (129 x 194 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Pierrot (Gilles), c. 1718–19, oil on canvas, 6’ ½” x 4’ 10 ½” (184 x 149 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

The Shopsign (Gersaint’s Shopsign), 1721, oil on canvas, 5’ 5” x 10’ (163 x 306 cm), Charlottenburg, Berlin, Germany.

Suggested Reading

Borsch-Supan, *Antoine Watteau, 1684–1721*.

Vivier, *Versailles*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the architecture of Versailles reinforce the political idea of the king as absolute monarch?
2. Compare and contrast the Baroque style of Rubens with the Rococo of Watteau.

French Art in the 18th Century

Lecture 38

After Watteau, French art developed in various ways, its styles reflecting the much-changed atmosphere of the court of Louis XV and the increasing importance of the middle class.

In this lecture, we look at variations to be found within the Rococo style, from the serious still lifes and genre pictures of Chardin to the frivolity of Boucher and Fragonard. We also touch briefly on Rococo architecture and the style as seen outside of France.

As we saw at the end of the last lecture, Antoine Watteau offered a melancholy prologue to the art of 18th-century France, one that reflected the profound sense of uncertainty that followed the death of the Sun King. After Watteau, French art developed in various ways, its styles reflecting both the much-changed atmosphere of the court of Louis XV and the increasing importance of the middle class. Although 18th-century French art is most often designated Rococo, a style that certainly springs in part from Watteau, many historians prefer not to apply the term to Watteau himself. His characteristic nostalgia seems too far removed from the thoughtless sensuality of François Boucher, for example, to be defined by the same term.

Another painter whose art is even less well served by the Rococo label is Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779). A superb painter of still life and genre pictures, Chardin has always been esteemed by connoisseurs, collectors, and artists. We see first his *Soap Bubbles* (1733–1734), one of several paintings on the same subject. A boy, nearly a young man, is shown blowing a large soap bubble through a straw while leaning on a stone windowsill. Behind the young man, a small child peers over the sill, rapt in the moment before the bubble bursts. This subject was not new, and its meaning was well known. The transitory nature of the soap bubble had long been regarded as a metaphor for the brevity of youth and the brevity of life itself. The bubble-blower already seems to be mature, and his demeanor is serious and concentrated; his pose is stable and tightly constructed.

The painting is created with a high degree of illusionism. The windowsill and the vine that partially frames it press against the front of the picture plane and almost into the viewer's space. Indeed, the bubble seems to hover in front of our eyes, so that we, like the small child, hold still in expectation. The physical immediacy of the image commands our attention, and its seriousness prompts our contemplation. The palette is restrained, dominated by browns, greys, and pale greens, setting off the warm flesh tones of the boy's head and hands, with just a touch of rose pink in his skin and on his coat. Chardin's world is an arrested one, where both people and objects take on the nature of still life.

In his genre pictures, Chardin returned to themes introduced by 17th-century Dutch and Flemish painters. One example is *The Kitchen Maid (Woman Scraping Vegetables)* (1738). This picture's many virtues require a patient eye and receptive mind to digest. It seems so simple: Stooping slightly, a tired kitchen maid has paused in her work of paring vegetables. A turnip dangles from one hand; the already scraped turnips are in the bowl of water at her feet, next to which a pan leans against a butcher block with a cleaver driven into it. More vegetables are in the lower left corner. The colors are warm and rich.

But look at the forms, shapes, volumes, and weight of all these components. One feels the weight of the cleaver, almost sensing the strength of the arm that wielded it. All the objects on the right side coalesce around the large wooden block. The vegetables are all large and solid and tactile. Most of all, the substantial block of the woman, with the thickly layered paint of her apron, conveys permanence, fixedness. It is Chardin's still life paintings that command the highest critical respect, as we see here with *Jar of Olives* (1760). Denis Diderot, the famous editor of the Enlightenment's *Encyclopedie*, wrote of this painting that its "magic defies understanding."

We see another Chardin still life, *Glass of Water and Coffee Pot* (c. 1761). Compared with the *Jar of Olives*, this still life is rigorously edited, reduced to a few perfectly selected and contrasted objects. The silvery glass of water is balanced with the brown coffee pot, and the two are joined by the white and green garlic heads, whose leaves and stems overhang the table's edge at the right. None of these objects can be moved without irreparably damaging

the composition, whose unity is finalized by the light that grazes the handle and rim of the pot and glows on the glass and garlic. Our point of view is close and immediate; the intimacy is palpable; the harmony of each piece to the whole is simply perfect.

Rococo derives from *rocaille*, a word referring to decorative rock work, as in ornamental grottoes in parks and gardens. We turn now to the most famous exponent of the high Rococo in painting, François Boucher (1703–1770), for the embodiment of the style. *The Setting of the Sun* (1753) is the epitome of the Rococo style and the epitome of Boucher’s art at its finest. This is one of a pair of paintings commissioned for Mme. de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV. The other was *The Rising of the Sun*. The paintings are more than 10 ½ feet high and are Boucher’s most ambitious works, which he reportedly considered his masterpieces. Pompadour was Boucher’s great patron, and her love of mythological reveries perfectly suited Boucher, for whom reality seems to have held little appeal. In *The Setting of the Sun*, it is possible to see the central nymph as Pompadour herself and Apollo as a symbol of Louis XV. The glowing pastel hues, the asymmetrical composition governed by a long diagonal, and the arabesque design of water and air, light and dark, are all typical of this high Rococo moment, more clearly seen in painting by Boucher than anyone else.

Architecture was strongly affected by the new style of the 18th century, especially in the design and decoration of interior spaces. Many buildings of the period give no hint on their exteriors of the surprises within. We see, for example, the Salon de la Princesse (1737–1740) by Germain Boffrand (1667–1754). This apartment was on the second floor of a two-story oval pavilion that Boffrand designed as an addition to the earlier hôtel. The oval ground plan of the salon was only the beginning of this charming, fanciful structure. The curved frames of the allegorical paintings between the windows and doors provide a continuously undulating cornice or, rather, no traditional cornice at all, because it does not demarcate walls

We associate the Rococo style with France, and the term is best applied there. But the stylistic features, with national modifications, are found in other countries—in architecture in Germany.

from ceiling but allows them to flow together. The windows push toward the ceiling; the structure is masked by the decoration. The salon is capped by an airy dome looking more like a garden pergola that finally contains the flowing interior.

Turning back to painting, we see works by Jean-Baptiste Greuze and Jean-Honoré Fragonard. We see first *The Village Bride* (1760–1761) by Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805). This is a narrative painting that represents a father giving his daughter and her dowry to a suitor, the serious young man who has just received the bag of coins. Greuze presents this family drama in a shallow stage space, arranging his figures in a frieze across the canvas. He concentrates on the emotions of the players, and to modern eyes, they frequently overact. Our next artist is Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), whose *Denis Diderot* (c. 1765) we see here. Diderot is holding the pages of what was undoubtedly a volume of his *Encyclopedia* and has had his attention momentarily distracted. Fragonard also painted *The Swing* (1766), depicting an elegantly dressed woman on a swing! Note the spotlight effect—on her, on the cupid statue, and on the young man in the bushes below. At right, an older man in the shadows pulls the rope to propel the swing.

The Meeting, from the *Progress of Love* (1771–1773), was commissioned by Mme. du Barry, who had succeeded Pompadour as Louis' mistress. Together with three other panels, it was intended as a decoration in a new dining pavilion in the garden of her chateau at Louveciennes. Like *The Swing*, this painting shows adults playing at love and has the passing charm that accompanies the refusal to grow up. The scene is a little ambiguous.

In a detail of the lovers, we see that the girl seems to have heard something but has mistaken the direction of the noise. While she looks toward her right, with her left arm extended in alarm, a young man is coming over the low wall. He seems to stop in mute admiration of the girl. Venus, with Cupid, in the form of a statue, looks down to observe the scene. A large fan-like tree rises behind the statue, its soft, billowing shape as unreal as the rest of this amorous pursuit.

We associate the Rococo style with France, and the term is best applied there. But the stylistic features, with national modifications, are found

in other countries—in architecture in Germany, for example, and in some paintings made in England. As an example, we see *Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (c. 1785) by Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788). The subject was born Elizabeth Linley, a beautiful woman and a leading soprano. In 1773, she had eloped with Sheridan, the dramatist perhaps best known for *The School for Scandal*. This magnificent portrait, brilliantly painted, is placed in a pastoral setting not unlike Fragonard’s parks but perhaps with a touch more reality. The asymmetrical design is ultimately derived from Van Dyck’s portraits. The trees—“all aflutter, like a lady’s fan,” as a contemporary wrote of another Gainsborough—are also comparable to Fragonard’s foliage.

In the next lecture, we will follow the course of art from the late 18th into the early 19th century by looking at three artists, two French and one Spanish. ■

Works Discussed

Germaine Boffrand:

Salon de la Princesse, 1737–40, Hôtel de Soubise, Paris, France.

François Boucher:

The Setting of the Sun and *The Rising of the Sun*, 1753, oil on canvas, 10’ 5” x 8’ 7” (318 x 261 cm), Wallace Collection, London, Great Britain.

Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin:

Glass of Water and Coffee Pot, c. 1761, oil on canvas, 12 ¾ x 16 ¼” (30.5 x 41 cm), Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

Jar of Olives, 1760, oil on canvas, 28 x 38 ½” (71 x 98 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

The Kitchen Maid, 1738, oil on canvas, 18 1/8 x 14 ¾” (46.2 x 37.5 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Soap Bubbles, probably 1733/1734, oil on canvas, 36 5/8 x 29 3/8” (93 x 74.6 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard:

Denis Diderot, c. 1765, oil on canvas, 32 ¼ x 25 ½” (82 x 65 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

The Meeting, from the *Progress of Love*, 1771–73, oil on canvas, 10’ 5” x 8’ (317.5 x 243.8 cm), The Frick Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

The Swing, 1766, oil on canvas, 32 x 25 ¼” (81 x 64.2 cm), Wallace Collection, London, Great Britain.

Thomas Gainsborough:

Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1785–87, oil on canvas, 86 5/8 x 60 5/8” (220 x 154 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze:

The Village Bride, 1760–61, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 46” (92 x 117 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Bailey, ed., *The Age of Watteau, Chardin, and Fragonard*.

Minor, *Baroque and Rococo*.

Prigent and Rosenberg, *Chardin*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Chardin differ from Boucher and other Rococo painters with whom he is often grouped?
2. Describe the lighthearted themes conveyed in the work of Boucher and Fragonard.

Neoclassicism and the Birth of Romanticism

Lecture 39

As the 18th century approached its last quarter, it evolved in ways that were unforeseen, though predictable enough in hindsight. Having begun with the fading glory of Versailles, it ripened into the insouciant, self-indulgent era of Louis XV and the Rococo. Acquiring a moralizing air in the 1760s, it suddenly veered into a severe mode in the 1770s and 1780s.

The style accompanying this shift was called *Neoclassicism* and is easy to characterize. There is an emphasis on line, especially contour, and strong design. Color is important but localized and contained. Beginning in 1748 with archeological discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum, there was a renewed emphasis on ancient art and Renaissance Classicism. This was furthered by the influence of the French Academy in Rome, where many of the leading artists studied. At just this juncture, the American Revolution burst onto the European consciousness, igniting long-suppressed anger over social and political injustices and propelling European liberal thought in the same direction. As America sought support in Europe, it sent one of its most famous citizens as minister to France, Benjamin Franklin.

We see a bust of Franklin (1779) by Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828). This splendid marble bust is the work of the greatest living sculptor of the day, whose own political persuasion made him the sculptor of a handful of American revolutionary leaders, as well as French heroes of their subsequent revolution. Houdon carved the bust apparently without even having the opportunity of a formal portrait sitting. There are replicas of the portrait, but this one is the most sensitive and the most nuanced in descriptive detail.

We now turn to Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), the greatest painter of the Neoclassical style. David's natural gifts and scrupulous rendering of reality would have been sufficient to secure his reputation, but he was also involved with important political events of his lifetime, and thus, his paintings are

a record of some of the key events of modern history, from the French Revolution through the coronation of Napoleon as emperor.

We see first *The Oath of the Horatii* (1785). The story of this painting is told in Livy's *History of Rome*. When a disagreement between the people of Rome and the people of Alba threatened war, it was decided to settle the dispute by combat among three representatives of each side: three men from the Horatii family of Rome and three from the Curiatii family of Alba. In this picture, the three Horatii are depicted taking the oath before their father, who holds up their swords. In contrast to their stern, angular attitudes, their sisters huddle in despair on the right side. We know that one of them was engaged to one of the Curiatii, which adds poignancy to the moment. The figures are rhythmically organized by the triple arcade behind them. Although the picture apparently had no immediate political intent, it certainly was in the moral spirit of the time, and it anticipates the revolutionary sacrifices soon to come.

Next we examine David's *Death of Socrates* (1787). It was Plato who described the death of Socrates, who was condemned to die for corrupting the young with his ideas. Socrates accepted the cup of hemlock and drank it; then, he rebuked his young students for their uncontrolled grief and lay down to die. David's decision was to combine the two sequential moments: Socrates is about to take the cup, but he is already remonstrating with his followers. David invents a variety of demonstrative poses and facial expressions for the men, but apart from Socrates himself, it is the figure of Plato that is most affecting. Again, the subject is about sacrifice—but this time, it is personal sacrifice in defense of truth and the sanctity of free thought, rather than in defense of the state.

The antecedents, progress, and aftermath of the French Revolution that began in 1789 are too overwhelming to summarize in these lectures. Thus, we skip over those years to the watershed year of 1793, which began with the execution of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in January and witnessed the murder of Marat in July. Our next image is *The Death of Marat* (1793) by David. Jean-Paul Marat was a doctor who had become a radical journalist. He was a powerful member of the Jacobin Club of Paris, which spawned Robespierre, who created the Committee of Public Safety, soon known as the

Terror. The committee condemned to the guillotine many people perceived as enemies of the revolution. Marat's newspapers were widely read and influential, and his writing was extreme and bloodthirsty.

Charlotte Corday, Marat's murderer, was a young woman from Caen who had been no admirer of the king but could not stomach the excesses of the Jacobin extremists. Marat suffered from a disfiguring skin disease all over his body. To ease the pain, he spent hours in a medicinal bath, with a board placed over it to serve as his desk. Corday went to his apartment and sent a note to Marat in his bath, saying that she had the names of traitors to reveal. Admitted, she drew out a large kitchen knife and severed his carotid artery with a single stroke. She was guillotined four days later. Now David had a contemporary hero and martyr to paint with the concision he had brought to Roman and Greek history.

The composition is a combination of realism and idealism; there is reference to Christian martyrdoms, and Marat's arm is comparable to Christ's arm in Michelangelo's *Pietà*. The immediacy of the body and the realism of the details shock viewers even today. The bathwater is red with blood: It stains the note that Corday had sent in and the sheet; it runs the length of Marat's arm, leading our eyes to the blood-stained knife, Marat's pen, and David's dedicatory signature, "To Marat, David." His face is turned toward us and, in its pathos, invites us to contemplate the betrayal. Ironically, only Marat's open sores have been suppressed. The funeral of Marat was also arranged by David. This painting, when completed, was carried in procession through the streets.

David's horrific image unintentionally announced that revolutionary principles had led to violence and that the revolution had failed to achieve its ideals. David seems to have become mentally unstable for a time, and when another hero emerged from the chaos, David devoted himself to him completely. He was, of course, Napoleon Bonaparte.

The revolutionary wars of liberation launched by the French armies had begun in 1792 with the invasion of Austria. General Bonaparte's string of victories in Europe and Egypt paved the way for the coup d'état of 1799 and his appointment as First Consul. We see here David's *Napoleon Crossing the*

Alps (1800). The Italian campaign had begun in 1796 and was successful, but in 1799, the French lost Italy. Even so, this painting by David is retroactive in its force. It proclaims the past victory as permanent, dismissing the inconvenient present reality. At the feet of Napoleon's horse, we see three names on a rock: Carolus Magnus (Charlemagne), Hannibal, and Bonaparte, all of whom crossed the Alps. In reality, the First Consul rode a mule.

Napoleon's armies spread their campaign of "liberation" across Europe—sometimes wildly welcomed by large sections of the populace, sometimes imposing themselves. Spain was an example of the latter. In late 1807, the French conquered Portugal, then moved into Spain in 1808. The occupation there lasted from 1808 to 1813. In April/May of 1808, Napoleon compelled King Charles IV of Spain to abdicate in favor of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, at that time king of Naples.

One of the greatest of all Spanish artists, Francisco Goya (1746–1828) lived through many political and artistic changes. Beginning as a court artist, he designed tapestries in a Spanish version of the Rococo style. Prospering as a portraitist, he combined Neoclassical and Rococo elements. Under the French occupation, he painted portraits of the occupiers, as well as his countrymen. After the expulsion of the French army, he unleashed his pent-up emotions in powerful paintings and etchings. In his old age, he painted haunting personal images that encompass the emotional and biographical immediacy of Romanticism but in a style that is solely his own. We see first *The Parasol* (1777–1778), a design for a tapestry meant to hang in the Prado Palace. The painting is candid and observant but with an air of naiveté, illustrating Goya's own take on the French Rococo.

In May and June 1808, when Joseph Bonaparte was installed as king of Spain, an open revolt against the French erupted, first in Madrid, then across Spain. We see Goya's *The Third of May 1808* (1814). This is a pendant to *The Second of May*, which depicts the people attacking the *mamelukes*—

David's horrific image unintentionally announced that revolutionary principles had led to violence and that the revolution had failed to achieve its ideals.

the North African mounted troops of Napoleon—in the streets of Madrid. That painting is a scene of chaos and carnage, a record of a spontaneous and essentially barbaric uprising against the totally surprised invaders. By contrast, *The Third of May* is tautly, starkly organized—and utterly horrific. Illuminated by a large lantern in the center, a group of men is lined up against a night background, with a city in the distance. They are about to be executed. The members of the firing squad are lined up on a diagonal, but their faces are unseen; they are anonymous. Goya spares us nothing. We see a dead body in the foreground, the earth stained with blood, men in abject terror, and one who has become physically ill from fear. One heroic figure stands in full light at the center; he seems intended as a Christ figure.

Our next work is *Tampoco*, an etching from Goya's series of *The Disasters of War*, a set of 83 etching and aquatint plates completed about 1815 but not published until 1863. The title is translated "Not [in this case] either," which is understandable only if one knows the preceding etching, showing another execution, called "Nobody knows why." Here, the officer contemplates his hanging victim with satisfaction; other hanged men are behind. This is one of the mildest of *The Disasters of War*, and the cumulative horror of the etchings is increased by the numbed monotone of their captions.

We turn to a comparison between Rubens's *Saturn Devouring his Son* (1636) and Goya's treatment of the same subject. In Greek legend, Mother Earth prophesied that one of Saturn's sons would overthrow him; to avoid this fate, Saturn devours all his children except Zeus, whose mother saved him. Saturn was also confused with Cronos, the god of time, and thus, the image can be read as Time devouring his young—that is, aging and death. In mythology, the story marks a transition from chaos to an orderly universe; Classical Humanists understood this transition. Rubens, for example, gives his painting, despite its gore, a Classical distance, a certain dignity that makes it bearable. Goya, who certainly knew the Rubens and knew the mythological significance as well, was having none of it when he painted his version: *Saturn Devouring One of his Sons* (1819–1823). This image is horrible beyond most imaginings. It is a statement about man's innate barbarity, about our capacity to kill one another, about our madness—because this Saturn is clearly insane.

During the same period, Goya was felled by an attack of the unknown illness that had deafened him in the 1790s. He survived through the persistent efforts of his friend Dr. Arrieta, and his *Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta* (1820) was his testimony and expression of gratitude. The doctor supports the patient, whose hands pluck at the bedclothes, and he offers Goya a glass of liquid, probably medicine. Goya's mouth and eyes are open, though he does not focus on anything. The doctor's eyes are dark with sleeplessness, but the pursed lips may hint at a degree of relief and satisfaction. The frontal pose is suggestive of paintings of the dead body of Christ supported by saints or angels, but then we notice that the two men are flanked by dark, insubstantial figures, grey heads that seem to fluctuate in and out of the black background. They are painted with the same harrowing unreality as demons and witches in other black paintings by Goya. The inscription at the bottom of this double portrait is much longer and more personal than the three brief words of David to Marat. We are now fully launched into the era of Romanticism, for the beginnings of which we will return to France in our next lecture. ■

Works Discussed

Jacques-Louis David:

The Death of Marat, 1793, oil on canvas, 5' 5" x 4' 2 ½" (162 x 128 cm), Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium.

The Death of Socrates, 1787, oil on canvas, 4' 3" x 6' 5 ½" (130 x 196 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Napoleon Crossing the Alps, 1800, oil on canvas, 8' 1" x 7' 7" (246 x 231 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

The Oath of the Horatii, 1785, oil on canvas, 10' 10" x 13' 11" (330 x 425 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Francisco Goya:

The Parasol, 1777–78, oil on canvas, 41 x 60" (104 x 152 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Saturn Devouring One of his Sons, 1819–23, oil on plaster, mounted on canvas, 57 ½ x 32 ¾” (146 x 83 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta, 1820, oil on canvas, 45 ¼ x 30 ¼” (114.62 x 76.52 cm), The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

Tampoco, from *The Disasters of War*, c. 1815, etching and aquatint, 6 ¼ x 8 ¼” (15.7 x 20.8 cm), private collection.

The Third of May 1808 and *The Second of May 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, 8’ 8 ¾” x 11’ 4” (266 x 345 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Jean-Antoine Houdon:

Benjamin Franklin, 1779, marble, 20 ½” H (52 cm H), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Peter Paul Rubens:

Saturn Devouring his Son (Time Devouring his Young), 1636, oil on canvas, 5’ 11” x 2’ 10” (180 x 87 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Suggested Reading

Licht, *Goya*.

Schnapper. *David*.

Questions to Consider

1. Choose a painting by David that we discussed in this lecture and describe its relationship to the historical events of the time.
2. Contrast Goya’s painting during the French occupation of Spain with his later work as it moves toward Romanticism.

Romanticism in the 19th Century

Lecture 40

Unlike Neoclassicism, which is clearly a stylistic term, Romanticism seems to me to be—and I emphasize “seems to me to be”—an attitude first and foremost, and one that can find expression in more than one style.

In this lecture, we will look at several artists’ “brands” of Romanticism, including those of Théodore Géricault, Eugène Delacroix, and William Turner. As we will see, the highly personal qualities of Romanticism make this style difficult to characterize. The painting by Goya we saw in the last lecture—his *Self-Portrait with Dr. Arietta*—can easily be described as an example of Romanticism in art. Indeed, it is precisely the personal, autobiographical nature of that painting, the personal anguish of the artist, that makes it a Romantic painting.

However, *Romanticism* is a tricky term to define. It arose so gradually and in so many places that it is an elusive concept. In France, it is closely connected with literature, especially with Victor Hugo, who urged the freeing of the artist from Classical restraints and rules. That it was also concerned with political ideas connects it with Neoclassicism and suggests that these two “isms” are not necessarily opposed in content. Unlike Neoclassicism, which is clearly a stylistic term, Romanticism seems to be an *attitude* first and foremost—one that can find expression in more than one style.

We see first *Paganini* (1819), a chalk drawing by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), one of the great draftsmen of the 19th century. This portrait is a striking, fully Neoclassical rendering of Niccolò Paganini, the famous Italian violin virtuoso, in which the delicately drawn body supports a more forcefully modeled head.

A dozen years later, after one of Paganini’s concert appearances in Paris, Eugène Delacroix produced this record of him, *Paganini* (1831). This is really an impression rather than a traditional portrait, and it may have been painted soon after Delacroix’s return from hearing and seeing Paganini in concert.

Note the hip-shot pose and the transported expression on the subject's face. This painting was meant to suggest what the artist saw and heard, not just to record a likeness. Painted rapidly and passionately, the painting parallels Paganini's own playing.

Before we return to Delacroix, we will look at two other artists and paintings. The first of these is Baron Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835), who painted *Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken at Jaffa* (1799) that we see here. In 1799, Napoleon conducted a campaign in the Holy Land; Jaffa is a port city there. The exotic locale and the Near Eastern architecture obviously appealed to the artist. We see Napoleon as a miracle worker, a healer. Unafraid, he touches an afflicted man. The obvious reference to biblical stories of Jesus healing the sick may seem odd in the anticlerical atmosphere of revolutionary France, but it helped guarantee the success of the painting. This is a prime example of art as propaganda, more complex than David's Napoleonic works but nearly as effective. Gros was a great admirer of Rubens, and he applied vibrant colors and manipulated light more freely than did David, whose disciple he remained. Some of the other figures include a large kneeling man and a wounded soldier.

The second artist is Théodore Géricault (1791–1824); we see his *Raft of the Medusa* (1818–1819). On July 2, 1816, the *Medusa*, a French frigate carrying colonists and soldiers to Senegal, foundered on a reef off the coast of Africa. The six lifeboats available were commandeered by the incompetent captain—a political appointee—and his senior officers. The 150 people left behind had to carpenter together a raft to carry them from the wreckage. For 13 days, they floated, suffered, starved, died or went mad, and were driven to cannibalism. Only 15 survived and 2 of them published an account of the tragedy that quickly mushroomed into a major political scandal.

Géricault's genius was to transform this contemporary event into a painting of epic, even mythic, resonance. His preparations for the huge painting included interviewing survivors, studying the movement of water, constructing a model of the raft, sketching corpses in morgues and the inmates of insane asylums, even collecting body parts from morgues, which he arranged as gruesome still lifes and painted as they decomposed. Géricault edited and composed these raw data into a dynamic, asymmetrical pyramid. The design

sweeps upward from the dead bodies that anchor it, the father and son at left and the dragging body at right, to the muscular black man supported aloft by his comrade who waves a white cloth to attract the attention of a distant ship. An upsurge of communal hope barely balances the sense of doom conveyed by the dark billow of the sail and the great wave beyond it.

This powerful diagonal composition was borrowed from Baroque art, to which Romantic painters often turned when mounting dramatic narratives. This Neo-Baroque style is perhaps the proper antithesis of Neoclassicism. The painting was not a particular success in the Salon of 1819; it was too new in style and content. In due time, the allegorical power of the great painting was recognized, but Géricault's physical and mental health had been ruined by the ordeal of its creation, and he died five years later.

We now turn our attention to Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), the greatest French Romantic painter and one of the greatest artists of the 19th century. Géricault died in

January 1824, when Delacroix was beginning his first monumental painting, *Massacre at Chios* (1824). The painting shows a scene from the Greek war for independence from the Turks. The Ottoman fleet had attacked the rich and peaceful island of Chios. Ten thousand troops set upon the population of 100,000, and at the end of a month, the European press reported that 20,000 had been slaughtered and most of the rest carried into slavery. Only 900 remained on the island. As Goya had done, so did Delacroix. The fury of these artists was stirred by the killing of civilian populations, modern renditions of the biblical massacre of the innocents. Delacroix honored the survivors with a striking, anti-heroic composition.

The individual Greek captives are painted with dignity, sadness, and infinite tenderness. Note the children gathered near their stoic father at the left, the couple who lean weakly on each other, the old woman who looks doubtfully

The trip [to France] stimulated Delacroix for the rest of his life, and it modulated his art, individuating and intensifying his colors, accentuating his love of horses, and deepening and warming his sensuality.

up toward heaven, the dead mother and her living child, and the nude woman whose bound arms indicate that she will be sold into slavery. The middle of the painting is open; the common pyramidal composition is inverted, so that a wedge of space opens in the center, revealing the chaos and destruction behind and below. The mounted Turkish soldier is the apex of a diagonal rising from the lower left. The S-curve of the old woman and its upward continuation may be what Delacroix referred to in his journal on May 7, 1824: “My picture is acquiring a twist, an energetic movement that I must absolutely complete in it.”

The night before the Salon opened, Delacroix paid a visit to the foreign section, where a rural landscape scene, *The Hay Wain* (1821), by the English painter John Constable (1776–1837) was on view. Delacroix is reported to have been elated by the sparkling effect of Constable’s vibrant flecks of paint, an effect that conveyed the sensation of natural light.

The Hay Wain deserves praise beyond this technical note, however. Constable loved the countryside, and he filled his paintings with the measured pastoral tempo of country life. The changing weather, which dominates rural agricultural life, was the object of his acute attention.

Delacroix followed up his proud painting of the *Massacre* with another one inspired by the Greek civil war, *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (1827). This painting was an allegory following the severe defeat of Greece at Missolonghi. For a defeat, however, it is a noble picture. The beautiful woman who personifies Greece spreads her hands as much in supplication as submission. Half kneeling on a great block of marble, suggesting a fragment from a ruined temple, from beneath which the haunting hand of a crushed patriot protrudes, she is “guarded” by a Turkish soldier behind her. But Delacroix has made certain that he is dwarfed in scale by the thrilling blue-and-white figure who dominates the painting.

In 1827, Ingres also painted a combination allegorical-historical work as a ceiling painting for the Louvre, where today it hangs on a wall. It was a commission from the restored Bourbon monarchy, and Ingres was eager for the opportunity to create a history painting in the tradition of Raphael. The painting is the *Apotheosis of Homer* (1827). This symmetrical composition

presents Homer as a virtual deity, enthroned before a Greek temple, while being crowned with a wreath by an angel who may represent Victory. Homer is seen as the progenitor of all the arts, and he is flanked by great creators from antiquity through the 18th century, including Apelles, in a blue robe, holding Raphael's hand; Mozart and Aristotle; Shakespeare and Tasso; and Racine and Poussin, who points to Homer, reminding us of the primacy of the ancients. Apart from the amusement of identifying the figures, there is not much here today to hold our interest, nor does it seem a likely candidate for future admiration. It was worked out with stupefying attention to placement and detail, but it is devoid of life.

The year 1830 saw the first of the mini-revolutions that marked 19th-century French political life. The “three glorious days” of the July Revolution overthrew the Bourbon restoration monarchy and, with the help of the Marquis de Lafayette, put Louis-Philippe on the throne as the “Citizen King.”

Liberty Leading the People (1830), by Delacroix, may be the last truly credible allegorical painting in European art. The genre had become artificial, and the way of thinking that produced it was no longer widely shared. This painting is believable because Delacroix believed in it and put all his genius into it. Liberty carries the French tricolor in her right hand and a musket in her left. To her left are a man with a saber and a man wearing a top hat and carrying a musket. At her feet is a figure looking up at Liberty with admiration, connecting the allegory with reality. To her right is a boy with two pistols, charging with Liberty. At the bottom of the painting are two dead bodies that serve as a barricade, blocking the forward motion of the picture.

France conquered Morocco in 1830, but the sultan was an unpredictable neighbor, inclined to interfere in French decisions. In 1832, an official diplomatic mission was sent to Morocco, and Delacroix was invited as a guest of one of the delegates. After this trip, he painted *Women of Algiers* (1834). Delacroix filled notebook after notebook with drawings and watercolors, recording the exotic locale, people, costumes, events, and the Jewish populace of Algiers. The trip stimulated Delacroix for the rest of his life, and it modulated his art, individuating and intensifying his colors, accentuating his love of horses, and deepening and warming his sensuality.

The “timeless torpor” and natural eroticism of these women, in relaxed poses that are never artificial and never cold, are communicated to us by colors newly infused with subtle warmth. This painting embodies the palette of the mature Delacroix, based on his continuing study of Titian, Rubens, and other colorists.

At the same moment, a great colorist, whose work was also known to Delacroix, was painting across the English Channel, in London. He was Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851). Turner infused nature with *his* spirit, his imaginings. Nature was filtered through his sensibility, and that sensibility, especially in his mature paintings, dictated the forms that nature took on his canvas. Turner was a prolific painter who left 300 paintings and 20,000 watercolors, of which just one work must suffice here, *The Burning of the Houses of Parliament* (1834–1835). When fire devastated the Houses of Parliament, Turner, an eyewitness, made two paintings of the scene. On the one hand, they are reports, showing Westminster Bridge and the medieval towers of Westminster Abbey across the river. But most of all, they show an infernal blaze that unites all the elements of the picture. Indeed, one historian has accurately observed that this painting unites the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—in a cosmic display that emphasized what was lost.

The coloristic expression typical of much of Romantic painting is found, in its different ways, in Turner and Delacroix. The next lecture will introduce us to the black and white world of Daumier’s lithographs and the dark, earthy world of mid-century Realism. ■

Works Discussed

John Constable:

The Hay Wain, 1821, oil on canvas, 4’ 3 ¼” x 6’ 1” (130.2 x 185.4 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Eugène Delacroix:

Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi, 1827, oil on canvas, 6’ 10 ¼” x 4’ 10” (209 x 147 cm), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux, France.

Liberty Leading the People, 1830, oil on canvas, 8' 6 ¼" x 10' 8" (260 x 325 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Massacre at Chios, 1824, oil on canvas, 13' 1" x 11' 7 ¼" (419 x 354 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Paganini, 1831, oil on cardboard on wood panel, 17 ½ x 12" (44.7675 x 30.1625 cm), The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA.

Women of Algiers, 1834, oil on canvas, 6' x 7' 6" (1.80 x 2.29 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Theodore Géricault:

Raft of the Medusa, 1818–19, oil on canvas, 16' 1" x 23' 6" (491 x 716 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Baron Antoine-Jean Gros:

Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken at Jaffa, 1799, oil on canvas, 17' 2" x 23' 6" (523 x 715 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

J. A. D. Ingres:

Apotheosis of Homer, 1827, oil on canvas, 12' 8" x 16' 9 ½" (386 x 512 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Paganini, 1819, pencil drawing, 17 ½ x 12" (45.7 x 30.5 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Joseph Mallord William Turner:

The Burning of the Houses of Parliament, 1834–35, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 48 ½" (92 x 124.46 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Suggested Reading

Barthelemy Jobert, *Delacroix*.

William Vaughan, *Romanticism and Art*.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the key elements of Romanticism?
2. Compare Delacroix's viewpoint on nature in his later paintings of Algiers with Turner's treatment of nature.

Realism—From Daumier to Courbet

Lecture 41

Honoré Daumier, who was born in 1808 and died in 1879, often gets slighted in survey courses because the work that made him famous and influential was newspaper work—his lifelong flood of lithographs attacking the government, ridiculing lawyers, and generally deflating social and intellectual pretentiousness wherever he found it.

Lithography is a printmaking technique that exploits the mutual repulsion of grease and water. In lithography, a porous surface is used, often Bavarian limestone. An artist draws a design with grease crayons or washes on the stone. Through a complicated process, the design is fixed to the stone, where it may be repeatedly inked and printed. Lithography had only been invented in 1798, and it made the mass illustrated popular press of the 19th century possible, including the acid caricatures by Daumier and others.

We begin with Daumier's *Freedom of the Press* (1834). As we see, the typographer stands his ground, fists clenched, while his political targets fall. In the right background, the last Bourbon king, Charles X, has fainted and is being revived. Intentionally, and perhaps wisely, Daumier had not aimed this picture at the newly installed Citizen King, Louis Philippe.

But the government could not count on much leniency from Daumier, as we see in *Rue Transnonain, 15 April 1834* (1834). Riots had erupted in Lyons because the silk workers there could no longer live on their wages. Troops were sent in and fighting continued for four days. On April 14, before dawn, troops in Paris were fired upon from an apartment building in the Rue Transnonain. They panicked and rushed into the building, breaking down doors, firing their rifles, and stabbing at bedclothes with their bayonets.

When the day dawned, scenes like the one Daumier imagined, or re-created from accounts, came to light. We see four dead family members: the grandfather, the wife, the husband, and the infant. The father—the worker—

is cast in a heroic mold by Daumier, the epitome of a man of the people. In Daumier, we meet the equal of Goya and Delacroix in their revulsion at the slaughter of innocents.

Adieu mon cher ... (1844) concerns women's suffrage and the *bluestockings*. These liberated Frenchwomen emulated the female novelist George Sand, and they adopted literary airs while putting aside their domestic duties. This is one of Daumier's funniest and most subtle prints from a series about the bluestockings. Note the unexpected characterization that Daumier gives to the father, who looks sweetly and happily at the child left in his care by Madame.

In February 1848, Louis Philippe was overthrown, and a republic was proclaimed. Artists were invited to submit designs for a symbolic image of the republic. Out of 100 entries, 20 were selected as finalists, including Daumier's *The Republic* (1848). The year 1848 was one of revolutions across Europe, one result of which was widespread emigration. The effects were felt everywhere, including in America, to which many of the emigrants came. Daumier's plaster relief entitled *The Emigrants* (1848–1849) shows nude figures on the move, some with heavy loads. We see again Daumier's proletarian hero, like the dead father on the Rue Transnonain; the figures show the compressed power of certain figures by Michelangelo. Compare the relief with Daumier's oil *The Emigrants* (c. 1865–1870). This painting is a continuing part of the series of related works on *émigrés* or fugitives that Daumier produced starting in 1848. It has an urgency that is quite different from the muscular march of the sculpture, but the dominant compositional motives in both are the diagonal slant and the endless procession.

The brief life of the progressive republic in France gave way to the surprising landslide election of Louis Napoleon, nephew of the first Napoleon, recently returned from exile, as president of the republic. In 1852, in a coup d'état, he declared himself Emperor Napoleon III. An odd combination of enlightened urban planner and dictator, Louis Napoleon appointed Baron Haussmann as his city planner to lay out the broad boulevards that transformed Paris into the city we know today. In the process, old quarters were often demolished,

leaving the poor and lower middle class with no housing. In an 1852 lithograph, Daumier's apartment dweller literally looks on the bright side of his neighbors' loss: *At last the sun will shine on my potted plant...* (1852).

Daumier also made many paintings and lithographs about artists, their exhibitions, and their studios. Our example is *In the Studios: Fichtre! ... Épatant! ... Sapristi! ... Superbe! ... ça parle!* (Wow! Amazing! Gosh! Superb! It speaks!) (1862). The superlatives issue from the mouth of the tall central figure, no doubt a connoisseur in his own mind. The responses of the other men are more varied. The man leaning into the picture with a pleased look may be Daumier himself.

Daumier also made many paintings and lithographs about artists, their exhibitions, and their studios.

The population growth of Paris during Napoleon III's reign (called the *Second Empire*) was continuous, and the conditions were, of course, hardest on the lower classes of society. We see this depicted in *The Third-Class Carriage* (c. 1863–1865). The scene is quite crowded. In the foreground are an older woman with a basket, a mother nursing her child, and a sleeping boy. Note the *interior drawing*—that is, the drawing with the brush—that describes the mother's collar, her breast, her face, and her hands. The painting has great presence.

Our last work by Daumier is *Street Show (Clown)* (c. 1868). The frantic waving of the clown (*saltimbanque*), the energized line, and the booming of the drum imply that this picture is about more than just street performers drumming up an audience. Interpreting this painting is tricky. It may be a premonitory work, anticipating the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871; it may have been a response to the political backlash that the French government's reactionary policies inspired; or it may even have been a celebration of the passage of a liberal press law and a freedom of assembly bill in May 1868.

Our next artist is Jean François Millet (1814–1875), one of the great Realist painters. Although he painted peasants, Millet never condescended or

prettified his subjects and was never sentimental. We see first *The Sower* (c. 1850). The painting shows a powerful figure precisely situated against the sloping horizon. He strides forward, filling the picture. The figure's casting of the grain probably refers to a biblical proverb. Another famous Millet is *The Gleaners* (c. 1857). We see, obviously, that the three women are performing back-breaking labor, but part of the story is also taking place in the far background. There we see hay wagons, people loading hay, and an overseer on horseback. This is the main harvest; this is what the landlord reaps.

Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) was born at Ornans, in southeastern France, near the Swiss border. At 21, he traveled to Paris, copied in the Louvre, and studied at the Atelier Suisse. Soon he developed a powerful Naturalism. Our first works shows *The Stone Breakers* (1849, destroyed at Dresden), a compelling painting depicting two anonymous peasants, again, at hard labor.

Our next example is *A Burial at Ornans* (1849). The work feels unedited, a transcript of the experience of the rural people of a corner of France distant from Paris, but the painting was made to be exhibited in Paris. The deep attachment of the French people to their individual regions is well attested and seems almost a mythical part of being French. In this painting, nothing is more or less important than any other thing. A kind of equality marches across the canvas. We sense the range of human experience, with the clergy on the left and the townspeople on the right. The isolation of the cross against the sky on the left seems intentionally ironic. This was painted in post-revolutionary, anticlerical France, and Courbet also seems critical of the clergy in this painting. In the center of this huge picture is a hole in the ground—the grave. The painting is antiheroic, as well as anticlerical.

Next, we see *The Artist's Studio* (1854–1855). A fuller title of this painting, though still an adaptation of the French, is *Interior of My Studio: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Life as a Painter*. This title is almost as long as the painting. When Courbet began the painting, he wrote to a friend that it would prove that “I am not yet dead, or realism either, for this is realism...

In it are the people who thrive on life and those who thrive on death; it is society at its best, its worst, its average.”

He continued, “I am in the center, painting; on the right are the ‘shareholders,’ that is, my friends, the workers, the art collectors. On the left the others... the common people, the destitute, the poor, the wealthy, the exploited, the exploiters; those who thrive on death.” Courbet’s irony is evident; his social and political concerns are imbedded in this painting. Dense with figures and predominantly dark in tonality, the painting is difficult to decipher in detail. Note the poet and critic Charles Baudelaire, who is seated at the far right; the life-size *lay figure* (an articulated wooden figure that artists use in lieu of a model) pointedly hung in the attitude of a crucifixion on the left just behind the easel (the side of “those who thrive on death”); and in the center, the artist, his nude model, a small boy, and a dog.

Everyone in the center group is admiring the landscape that Courbet is still painting. The female nude has nothing to wear and nothing to do except admire it; the boy looks up in awe at the magical imitation of reality that the painter has made; and the artist himself is confidently demonstrating his craft and achievement. Many have noted that this landscape painting has a greater brightness, in a sense, a greater reality, than the rest of the huge canvas, as though everything pales in comparison to this window onto the real world, while the artificial congregation of the “shareholders” and the “others” stands or sits about and takes little or no notice of the artist and his work. The “seven years” of Courbet’s life referred to in the title began with the revolutionary year of 1848, and the complex, subjective social and personal allegory that his ego has permitted him to force on the public may have roots in that fact.

We are still in the mid-1850s, and Courbet lived until 1877, but much would change by then: war, civil war, the rise of a new society and a new artistic movement. Courbet, caught up by forces he helped set in motion, died in exile in Switzerland. ■

Works Discussed

Gustave Courbet:

The Artist's Studio (Interior of My Studio: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Life as a Painter), 1854–55, oil on canvas, 11' 10" x 19' 8" (361 x 598 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

A Burial at Ornans, 1849, oil on canvas, 10' 4" x 21' 9" (315 x 668 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

The Stone Breakers, 1849 (destroyed 1945), oil on canvas, 6' 2" x 9' 9" (1.9 x 3 m), formerly the Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Germany.

Honoré Daumier:

At last the sun will shine on my potted plant... (Voilà donc mon pot de fleurs qui va avoir du soleil...), 1852, lithograph, 10 x 13 ¾" (25.4 x 34.9 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

The Emigrants, 1848–49, plaster, 11 x 26" (28 x 66 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

The Emigrants, c. 1865–70, oil on canvas, 15 x 26" (38.1 x 67.95 cm), Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

Freedom of the Press, 1834, lithograph, 12 x 17" (30.4 x 43 cm), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

Goodbye, my dear, I'm going to meet with my publishers (Adieu, mon cher, je vais chez mes éditeurs), 1844, lithograph, 11 ½ x 8 ½" (29.2 x 21.5 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

The Republic, 1848, oil on canvas, 28 ¾ x 23 ½" (73 x 59.6 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Rue Transnonain, 15 April 1834, 1834, lithograph, 11 ¼ x 17 ¼" (28.5 x 44.1 cm), Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany.

Street Show, c. 1868, black chalk and watercolor on laid paper, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

The Third-Class Carriage, c. 1863–65, oil on canvas, 25 ¾ x 35 ½” (65.4 x 90.2 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Wow! Amazing! Gosh! Superb! It speaks! (Fichtre!... Épatant!... Sapristi!... Superbe!... ça parle!), from *In the Studios*, 1862, lithograph, 10 x 8 ½” (25.4 x 21.5 cm).

Jean-François Millet:

The Gleaners, 1857, oil on canvas, 33 x 44” (83.5 x 110 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

The Sower, c. 1850, oil on canvas, 40 x 32 ½” (101.6 x 82.6 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Suggested Reading

Loyette, et al., *Honoré Daumier*.

Rubin, *Gustav Courbet*.

Questions to Consider

1. Discuss the historical importance of Daumier’s lithographs.
2. How would you differentiate Realism and Naturalism?

Manet and Monet—The Birth of Impressionism

Lecture 42

It has long been an art-historical commonplace that modern art begins with Manet. I see no reason to contradict that statement, although it oversimplifies a very complex man and complex artist by making him seem to be an artist who breaks sharply with the past and consciously sets out to be a “Modern” artist.

In this lecture, we look at two quite famous artists: Manet, who has been seen as the wellspring of Modernism, and Monet, whose *Impression: Sunrise* gave the name to the well-known style Impressionism. We’ll examine elements in their paintings that point to a break with art of the past, as well as the contemporary subject matter that each artist found compelling.

The French Salon was the annual official art exhibition sponsored by the Academy, but it was also open to artists who were not members of the Academy. In Manet’s day, the jury was composed of members of the French Institute, whose conservative taste was mostly unchallenged; thus, younger artists of independence and originality were often excluded from this opportunity to be seen by a wide public.

Manet was 31 when he exhibited the masterpiece that has established his place in art history, *Luncheon on the Grass* (1863). One would be hard pressed to recall a similar picnic, either in art or in real life. We have four figures: two well-dressed Parisian gentlemen and two women, one nude and one in a negligee who wades in a pond or brook behind them. The picnic basket is at the left; its partly spilled contents include a brioche, cherries and figs, a baguette, and a silver flask. The basket resides among the naked woman’s discarded clothes, and together, they constitute a lovely array of color, a beautifully painted still life within the larger picture. This was a scandalous painting because the people were clearly real Parisians in a Parisian park setting, but they were behaving incorrectly, although there is not the slightest overtly sexual suggestion in their actions or looks. Indeed,

the two men seem virtually unaware of their companion's nakedness, and one gestures in a conversational manner.

The naked woman's skin tone is a bright, flat white, with little contrast of light and shade, little modeling in the traditional sense, and so little flesh tone that she seems to have spent her life thus far indoors. Only her face is given a bit of color. Her body is posed in pure profile, which emphasizes the flatness introduced by the lack of modeling. She is almost as flat as a playing card, except that she turns her head to look directly at the viewer; this not only gives her life, but it is the main connection between the pictorial space and ours. Her expression explains nothing; it only adds to our puzzlement about the situation.

Manet was a great painter of black and of white. Here, that is seen in the white pants of the man beside the naked model, the diaphanous white negligee of the other woman, and the black coats and hat worn by the men. Black and white are the major accents in the composition; the rest, except for the fine still life, is mostly given over to dark trees and green vegetation. This painting was rejected by the Salon of 1863, but there was a great uproar because so many works had been rejected by the artistic authorities that year. Thus, the Emperor Napoleon III decreed that a separate pavilion—the Salon des Refusés (“Salon of the Refused Works”)—be opened to display the rejected works.

Manet had borrowed his composition and content from two works of the Italian Renaissance. The grouping and gestures of the three foreground figures were taken literally from a corner group in an engraving of a lost drawing by Raphael, and the theme was borrowed from a famous painting by Giorgione, the *Pastoral Concert* (c. 1510). Manet had copied Giorgione's painting and must have pondered the subject, which also shows two clothed men seated, one of whom plays a lute, and two nude women, one seated with a recorder and the other standing by a well, pouring water from a clear glass pitcher. Why didn't this painting scandalize the public? Because, of course, it was a Renaissance Old Master painting, in which nudes were not unexpected. It had the patina of respectability.

Although painted in 1863, *Olympia* was not entered in the Salon until 1865. Manet was wise enough not to try to show the *Luncheon* and *Olympia* at the same time. In fact, in 1865, *Olympia* was accepted into the official Salon. Olympia is a prostitute. Her name was a common one for prostitutes of this period, including a famous fictional prostitute in *The Lady of the Camellias* (1848–1852) by Alexander Dumas *fils*. We can compare *Olympia* with Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538), which Manet copied in Florence in 1853. Venus here is also a prostitute, a courtesan.

Our next example by Manet is *At the Café* (1879). The *café concert* was a popular type of entertainment, combining a café setting and a cabaret. Manet painted several of these scenes in a cabaret on the Boulevard Rochechouart. The next year, Manet developed the first symptoms of a degenerative disease, *locomotor ataxia*, which so weakened him that he stopped making large paintings in favor of floral still lifes and pastel portraits. The great exception to this diminution in his work is his last masterpiece, the *Bar at the Folies-Bèrgères* (1881–1882). It is no exaggeration to say that modern art begins with Manet, a claim that can be made because of his vivid, painterly technique and his high-toned palette and because of his often enigmatic, personal subject matter.

Claude Monet (1840–1926) was born in Paris but raised in Le Havre, where his father was in the wholesale grocery business. Monet began drawing caricatures when he was a teenager. Meeting the landscape painter Eugène Boudin, Monet was persuaded to accompany the older artist on painting expeditions in the area and to paint directly from nature in the open air. Open-air painting had long been practiced by landscape artists but almost always for sketching, not for completing paintings out-of-doors. Nonetheless, the practice of open-air painting had been growing in popularity; what was to make it revolutionary was Monet's genius, because no one before him had combined the brilliant light effects observed outdoors with the compositional imagination and technical skill that he developed. After a year of military

Art historians often talk about the “painting of modern life” in late-19th-century France, but the politics of modern life affected everyone.

service, Monet entered the Paris studio of Charles Gleyre in 1862, where he met Renoir and Sisley. These three were among, the painters who would become known as *Impressionists*.

Our first example shows *Terrace at Saint-Adresse* (1867), which was painted during a period when poverty forced Monet to live with his family, now at Ste. Adresse on the coast, while his mistress, Camille, was in Paris expecting their child. The painting looks down from a high point of view and is divided into three broad bands of land, sea, and sky, pinned together by the two flagpoles. We see a beautiful flower garden and a wonderful parasol, like a blossom itself, in the bottom center. Monet's talent exploded at this time, and he turned out some of his most gorgeous paintings, including *The Magpie* (1869). This is a brilliant painting of white on white—snow and sunlight.

On July 19, 1870, France declared war on Prussia, an act of foolishness on the part of Emperor Napoleon III that led to catastrophe. The first phase of the war lasted only six weeks; the French were defeated in several major battles, and the emperor was captured at Sedan on September 2. On September 4, the Assembly removed the emperor from office and set up a republic and a provisional government. On September 19, 1870, the siege of Paris began. In December, the French government removed to Bordeaux.

In January 1871, the Prussians defeated the French in several battles. On January 28, Paris surrendered, and an armistice was established; in February, the new Assembly came under conservative domination. March 18, 1871 saw a revolt in Paris and the start of the Paris Commune. The government moved to Versailles, from which a new siege of Paris was directed, this time by French troops in cooperation with the Prussians. During the two months of the Commune, France ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia. We see *The Burning of Paris* (1871) from this period.

The Commune was more than the final phase of the Franco-Prussian debacle; it was the origin of a lasting national trauma. As we see in this photo, the *Assassination of the Hostages* (1871), the Communards publicly assassinated their hostages, among whom was the archbishop of Paris. But it was the citizens of Paris who suffered most: About 20,000 supporters of the Commune were killed, and 7,500 were later deported. The revolt ended

with the “Bloody Week” of May 21–28, during which the last 147 supporters of the Commune were massacred, as we see in another photo, *Corpses of Executed Communards* (1871).

Art historians often talk about the “painting of modern life” in late-19th-century France, but the politics of modern life affected everyone, artists included, although not every artist reflected politics in his or her work. Monet had already seen military service and had no love for the emperor; thus, he crossed the Channel, followed by Camille and their son, Jean. In England, he joined Camille Pissarro and their future dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel. From this period, we see *The Thames below Westminster* (1871). The dark pier in the foreground played against the Houses of Parliament makes this a memorable picture.

Manet, who had a surprisingly resonant response to the politics of the day, produced two lithographs at around this time, including *Civil War* (1871). The aged and poverty-stricken Daumier also was still in the game, producing a lithograph of a woman—Monarchy—in a coffin; the picture is captioned, *And all this time they maintained she never felt better!* (1872).

Monet returned from London and soon produced the wonderful painting that accidentally gave its name to a disparate group of painters, then to a whole movement, *Impression: Sunrise* (1873 [misdated 1872]).

This painting was number 98 in the first group exhibition of those painters who would soon become known as the Impressionists. It has been reported that Monet had not yet titled his painting when the final list was being compiled and, upon being pressed, decided on this title, in French, *Impression, soleil levant*. An art critic, Louis Leroy, wrote a review of the exhibition and played with heavy-handed irony on the word *impression*. Another critic borrowed Leroy’s satiric use of the painting’s title to refer to the “School of Impressionism.” As a style name, *Impressionism* is even less helpful than most, yet people generally think they know what it is. ■

Works Discussed

Honoré Daumier:

And all this time they maintained she never felt better! (*Et pendant ce temps-là ils continuent à affirmer!*), 1872, lithograph, 12 ½ x 11 5/8" (31.7 x 29.5 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Édouard Manet:

At the Café, 1879, oil on canvas, 18 5/8 x 15 3/8" (47.3 x 39.1 cm), Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

Bar at the Folies-Bèrgères, 1881–82, oil on canvas, 37 ¾ x 51" (95.3 x 129.7 cm), Courtauld Institute Galleries, London, Great Britain.

Civil War, 1871, lithograph, 15 ¾ x 20" (40 x 50.8 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass), 1863, oil on canvas, 6' 9" x 10' 8" (2.1 x 2.6 m), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Olympia, 1863, oil on canvas, 4' 3" x 6' 2" (1.31 x 1.90 m), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Claude Monet:

Impression: Sunrise, 1873, oil on canvas, 19 x 24" (48.2 x 60.9 cm), Musée Marmottan, Paris, France.

The Magpie, 1869, oil on canvas, 18 ½ x 51 ¼" (89 x 130 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Terrace at Sainte-Adresse, 1867, oil on canvas, 38 ½ x 51 ¼" (98.1 x 129.9 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

The Thames below Westminster, 1871, oil on canvas, 18 ½ x 28 ½" (47 x 72.5 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Suggested Reading

Fried, *Manet's Modernism*.

Sproccati, *Monet*.

Questions to Consider

1. What elements in Manet's work were so shocking to his contemporaries?
2. What is your immediate response to the question asked at the end of the lecture: Why does Monet make no reference whatsoever in his art to the central political trauma of France?

Monet and Degas

Lecture 43

We're going to continue looking at the works of Monet today, and then continue with the paintings of Edgar Degas.

None of the Impressionists, not even the politically engaged Pissarro, touched on the subject of Paris in the aftermath of the Commune. In a sense, the closest Monet came to doing so was in a pair of remarkable and thrilling paintings that he made on the same day, one of which is *The Rue Montorgueil, Paris, Celebration of June 30, 1878* (1878). This was the first national celebration since the crisis of 1870–1871, held in conjunction with the World's Fair that had opened that spring. In looking at this painting, we can feel the ecstatic release of the pent-up emotions that must have simmered for seven years.

Monet and his contemporaries found compelling subject matter in the city, especially the café life and the world of entertainment, as well as the new architecture that followed the construction of the grand boulevards built during the Second Empire and the nearby countryside and coast, easily reached on the new railroads. We see, for example, the *La Gare Saint-Lazare (Arrival of a Train)* (1877), by Monet. The Saint-Lazare railroad station perfectly typifies the new subject matter, because it is *modern* architecture, built to accommodate the *modern* railroad, which gave access to the world beyond Paris. Striking in this painting is the steel-and-glass shed, obscured by the steam of the train entering the station. In a series of paintings of the station, Monet plays with the contrast between the insubstantial—steam—and the solid, modern architecture.

This series on *La Gare Saint-Lazare* evolved, but it was not initially conceived as a series in the way that Monet would later systematically plan them. In the 1890s, he thoroughly explored the potential of painting in series. We see here three examples. The first is *Haystacks, End of Summer* (1891). Around 1880, the concentration on light in Impressionist painting threatened to overwhelm the substance of its subjects. Monet found a solution to this problem in his series by having an object serve as the composition of the painting. Here,

the haystack has a pyramidal shape with bands of landscape neatly behind it. With this structure in place, Monet could then concentrate on the effects of light on his subject. Perhaps the most radical series that Monet painted was of the Rouen Cathedral. We see *Rouen Cathedral, Morning Sun, Blue Harmony* (1893). The entire canvas is filled with the façade of the cathedral. As a contrast to *Morning Sun*, we see *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Sunlight* (1894). *Morning Sun* seems more infused with a bright, deep blue, while *Sunlight* shows the strong effects of full day. The three-dimensionality of the façade is more fully expressed in the second painting.

Monet lived and worked at Giverny, on the Seine near Rouen, for more than 40 years. Although he traveled often and widely, Giverny was his center. There he gradually created his own world to paint, in the Norman garden and the waterlily garden. He also painted nearby on the Seine. We see here *Morning on the Seine, near Giverny* (1897). At first glance, the painting exhibits a degree of abstraction that makes the viewer think it could be inverted; however, Monet clearly shows the horizon line.

When he was painting this poetic series on the Seine, Monet was also working continuously on paintings of his waterlily garden. When he exhibited 48 of them in 1909, he called them *Waterlilies, Waterscapes*. He painted

from the bank or in a small rowboat, but he never showed the bank or the edge of the pond—in other words, he never showed the horizon line. We see a photo of Monet’s Giverny water garden (September 1992), which shows that studying the garden could be a rich and somewhat puzzling visual experience. The only sky and light seen are in reflection, and the floating waterlilies confound our sense of depth and space.

When the opportunity was offered Monet to paint two series of paintings for two large oval rooms in a museum in Paris, the artist did something quite different. As we see in this photo showing an interior view of one of the Waterlily Rooms (Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris), Monet made a great

Degas died in a much changed world, with the First World War raging. He lived his last years in what a friend called “his vague and grandiose solitude.”

imaginative leap: In the past, he had painted the waterlily garden from the bank or from a boat, but always it was a pond surrounded by land. Now he inverted the situation, and we are, when in the galleries, standing on a magical island in the middle, with the waterlily garden surrounding us.

We see the left section of *Waterlilies: The Morning* (c. 1917–1925). The light seems to emerge from the water, and we see the sky through the surface of the water. There is something deeper here than the study and recording of colored light on objects, something as deep as the reflection of sky on water, as deep as memory. In the final analysis, Monet was looking for a deeper reality below the surface, and as far as he could probe, as much as he could discover, he shared it with us.

Edgar Degas (1834–1917) was born in Paris of a wealthy family. His respect for past masters of art was balanced by his passion for the contemporary world that Paris offered him. He began work on a number of history paintings but was soon drawn to the painting of everyday life. From the beginning, Degas was a great portrait artist, but he never painted portraits for a living, and most of his portraits remained unseen in his private collection. They were mostly of himself and his family, friends, and fellow artists. We see an example here, *The Bellelli Family* (1858–1862). Degas' father was born in Naples, and his Aunt Laura, to whom the artist felt very close, married a minor Italian nobleman, Baron Bellelli, but the marriage was unhappy.

Our next example is *The Dancing Class* (1871–1872). This is a tiny jewel of a painting showing Monet's love of the ballet, but what kind of ballet pictures did he make? He rarely painted the ballet on stage in performance. Instead, he painted dancers in rehearsal rooms, waiting in the wings, and taking bows. He wanted to capture the unobserved world of the ballet. Degas loved all kinds of entertainment, as we see in *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando* (1879). The subject here is swinging by her teeth. Monet catches her movement in the upper left quarter of the painting, aligned with the ribs of this domed space.

Miss La La is a dramatic painting filled with movement, quite in contrast to *L'Absinthe (At the Caf )* (c. 1876). This painting has the sense of a world observed or captured, but it was actually painted in the studio with models.

Finally, we look at *The Breakfast after the Bath* (c. 1895). This painting was also a studio setup with hired models. A woman has stepped out of the bath and is vigorously drying her hair; her stoic maid stands waiting to hand her mistress a brilliant blue cup. Degas died in a much changed world, with the First World War raging. He lived his last years in what a friend called “his vague and grandiose solitude.” He had lived beyond his time. ■

Works Discussed

Edgar Degas:

The Bellelli Family, 1858–62, oil on canvas, 6' 6 ¾" x 8' 2 ½" (200 x 250 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

The Breakfast after the Bath, c. 1895, pastel and brush drawing, 48 x 36" (121.9 x 91.4 cm), private collection.

The Dancing Class, 1871–72, oil on wood, 7 ¾ x 10 5/8" (19.7 x 27 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

L'Absinthe (At the Café), c. 1876, oil on canvas, 36 x 27" (91.3 x 68.7 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando, 1879, oil on canvas, 46 x 30 ½" (116.8 x 77.5 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Claude Monet:

Haystacks, End of Summer, 1891, oil on canvas, 23 ¾ x 39 ½" (60.3 x 100 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

La Gare Saint-Lazare (Arrival of a Train), 1877, oil on canvas, 31 ½ x 38 ½" (80.3 x 98.1cm), Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

Morning on the Seine, near Giverny, 1897, oil on canvas, 38 3/8 x 29" (96.5 x 73.6 cm), private collection.

Rouen Cathedral, Morning Sun, Blue Harmony, 1893, oil on canvas, 35 ¾ x 24 ¾" (90.8 x 60.3 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Sunlight, 1894, oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 25 7/8" (100.05 x 65.8 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

The Rue Montorgeuil, Paris, Celebration of June 30, 1878, 1878, oil on canvas, 32 x 20" (81 x 50.5 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Waterlilies: The Morning (left section), from *Waterlilies series*, c. 1917–25, oil on canvas, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Dunlop, *Degas*.

Tucker, Shackelford (contributor), and Stevens (contributor), *Monet in the 20th Century*.

Questions to Consider

1. Choose two contrasting paintings from one of Monet's series and describe their differences.
2. Give examples from the artist's work of some of the subjects that seemed to attract Degas.

Renoir, Pissarro, and Cézanne

Lecture 44

Among the characteristics that are today associated with Impressionist painting are the use of a pale grey or even a white ground applied to the canvas, rather than a dark one.

In this lecture, we continue with the Impressionists, noting the hallmarks of that style but keeping in mind that the Impressionist artists did not necessarily follow all these “rules” at all times. As we examine the work of Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, and Paul Cézanne in detail, we will underscore the importance of approaching each artist and, indeed, each work of art individually.

Among the characteristics associated with Impressionist painting are:

- The use of a pale grey or even a white ground applied to the canvas, rather than a dark one. Manet had already done this, and the effect is to increase the intensity of brightness, of light, in the final painting.
- The use of color, blues and violets, for example, for shadows, because the artists had observed that shadow is not black.
- The application of small strokes of complementary colors, not mixed on the palette but side by side on the canvas, which the eye blends optically.
- The flickering quality of light that results from this application.
- The delight in painting sky and water and the sky reflected in water.
- A sense of impermanent, volatile flux, of the dissolution of distinctly contoured form.

Although these characteristics are associated with Impressionism, we should not expect to find them in equal measure in each artist or even in each painting by the same artist. In short, if we approach Impressionist painting with these rules in hand, we will be more confused than enlightened. We must always take paintings one at a time and see what the artist actually does, rather than look for the application of a theory.

We begin with Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) and his *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881). *Luncheon* is a response to the crisis of Impressionism mentioned in the last lecture. You will recall that this crisis involved the dissolution of objects as a result of the artist's concentration on light. Renoir found his solution to this problem in lessons learned from Titian and Michelangelo about both color and form during a long visit to Italy. *Luncheon* has many figures, most of which are gathered in the right-hand side of the painting. The front of the picture, however, seems open to admit the viewer into the group. The painting has a relaxed quality, and the characters seem to be connected in various ways. We see, first, a seated young woman with her dog and a standing man. Behind them is a woman leaning on the railing, conversing with a young man in brown. Behind them, two men, one in a top hat, are conversing. In between them is a woman drinking wine, lost in her own thoughts. Finally, we see a group of three in the back and a large, important group of three in the foreground.

The scene takes place outdoors, but we're hardly aware of the landscape. The Seine is only glimpsed through the foliage around the porch of the restaurant. Colors hold this picture together, such as the yellow hats of the seated lady, the man beside her, and the woman in the background. The red or red-orange in the awning connects to the orange in the bow on a woman's sleeve, an orange patch on a brown coat, a red-orange flower on another woman's hat, and so on. Renoir never surpassed this painting in its solidity of composition, beauty of color, and sense of *joie de vivre*.

Our next artist is Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), born in St. Thomas, in the West Indies, of a Portuguese Jewish father and a Creole mother. Older than most of the Impressionists-to-be, Pissarro was among the first of them to give subtitles to his paintings that indicated a time of day or a weather condition, as in this painting, *L'île Lacroix, Effect of Fog at Rouen* (1888), among the

subtlety he ever painted. Blue-grey permeates the painting; there is very little distinction between sky and water. The fog is given structure through the verticals of the posts along the water's edge, the strong smokestack on the right side, and smaller verticals, as well as their reflections in the water. It is probably true that Pissarro never created a single great masterpiece on the order of Renoir's *Luncheon* or Monet's greatest waterlily paintings, but he did paint a large number of bold and beautiful paintings in his long lifetime.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) worked closely with Pissarro in the early 1870s. Cézanne was born in Aix-en-Provence. His father was a banker who owned the largest, most historically significant house in the area, called the Jas de Bouffan. As a nouveau-riche father, he wanted his son to enter an exalted profession and insisted he study law. Cézanne did so, for two years, but was already interested in art and studied at the local drawing academy. His closest boyhood friend was Emile Zola, the future famous novelist, who had already moved to Paris and urged Cézanne to follow. In 1861, Cézanne's father finally permitted him to go to Paris, where he enrolled at the Atelier Suisse.

As a Provençal, Cézanne was an outsider, with a thick accent and a rough manner. It is not surprising that in spite of studying and working in Paris, he was to spend the greater part of his life in Provence, exploring his own ideas and following his own intense vision.

We see Cézanne's *Trees and Houses* (c. 1885), probably painted in the neighborhood of the Jas de Bouffan ("habitation of the winds"). This handsome and ambitious picture is among several similar paintings done at or near Cézanne's home. The screen of trees, a pictorial device explored here, had been used by other landscape painters, most recently Pissarro and Corot. It is painted across the foreground and serves to organize the picture.

As mentioned earlier, Pissarro and Cézanne had worked closely in the early 1870s. We see here *Red Roofs* (1877), painted by Pissarro during this period. It is particularly beautiful for the whites and warm reds of the houses and the elaborate, skillfully designed skein of tree limbs, like tapestry threads, that organize the surface of the picture.

Here we turn for a comparison to Camille Corot (1796–1875), a great independent landscape artist whose working life spanned the period from the beginnings of Delacroix to the birth of Impressionism. Corot also painted numerous scenes with trees in the foreground, such as *The Bridge at Mantes* (c. 1868–1870). Corot painted oil sketches in the open air a great deal. *Plein-air* (“open-air”) painting was common enough before the Impressionists, but earlier painters were just sketching, not producing finished paintings outdoors. Such artists preferred to paint under controlled conditions, and they saw lighting as an artistic device, not a *subject*. Painting larger, finished works out-of-doors, especially paintings intended to catch the effects of light and weather, would not have been practical before the invention of the paint tube in the 1840s. Of course, painting outdoors meant carrying a heavy load. It was hard work, as we can see in Daumier’s humorous lithograph *Landscape Painters at Work* (1862).

Cézanne also painted out-of-doors, often walking many miles daily to a particular site that he wanted to record. We see here as an example, his *Mont Sainte-Victoire and the Viaduct of the Arc River Valley* (c. 1885). Mont St.-Victoire preoccupied

Cézanne throughout his years in Aix-en-Provence. This limestone ridge is not at all impressive by Alpine standards, but it so dominates the low landscape of Provence that it is noble and commanding. Cézanne had grown up with the mountain, and he studied it as Monet studied his waterlily garden. He saw it as a living presence, always the same, yet always changing as he changed his point of view, or focused on some particular aspect of it, or analyzed its structure, contours, volumes, or colors. In this painting, we see that Cézanne has pushed the mountain to the left, now secondary to the Arc Valley in front of it. The artist painted the valley with measured strokes of carefully gauged color. Our eye steps slowly into the painting with the strokes and blocks of color, then flows more continuously with the curving road. The small arches of the viaduct in the distance are not merely a record of this landscape feature

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but an essential part of the painting's structure, because they intersect with the daringly placed pine tree that vertically bisects the canvas.

The pine tree is too close to the front of the picture to be its focus; it causes our eyes to shift from side to side. The right side of the painting is more open, with a broader expanse of valley, foothills, and sky. The secure horizontal of the viaduct subdivides this side into two equal parts; its line continues more subtly into the left side. The left side is much denser, with the compact stand of pine trees at the edge merging with the mountain. Such a description makes the painting sound almost geometric, but although it has a mathematical constituent, it is not rigid but compellingly organic.

Having established his deep space, Cézanne then took care to reconnect the illusionistic distance with the picture surface. For example, the branches on the upper left side of the center tree nestle into the contour of the mountain, picking up its rhythm, while the branch halfway down the left side seems to be floating in space. Cézanne has released it from the tree and allowed it to float like a green cloud, so that it, too, mediates between near and far. The corresponding branch on the right side seems to meander down to the valley floor, where it deposits its leaves among the fields. Such inventions are the hallmark of Cézanne and are about *picture-making*, not mere representation of the land.

Another site near Aix painted by Cézanne was the *Quarry at Bibémus* (c. 1895). This abstract composition is complex and sorts itself out only as we follow the faceted planes of the stone walls and allow our eyes to step among the green accents of trees and bushes up to the top of the painting, capped by a sliver of sky.

Many people value Cézanne, like Chardin in the preceding century, for his still life paintings above all else. And by common consent, *Still-Life with Apples and Oranges* (c. 1895–1900) is among the greatest. Cézanne's fruits and other objects do not obey the laws of physics or gravity; they obey the higher law of painting. This incisive composition, in which the richly patterned tapestry is balanced by the plowshare of the white tablecloth, is the field on which his fruits are disposed, their vibrating contours not necessarily adhering to their bodies. The fruits are anything but "still"; they are in motion

like electrons, and they orbit around a nucleus—a single apple, more firmly modeled than the others. Cézanne placed this apple at the precise center of this monumental but otherwise asymmetrical painting.

Cézanne also plays symmetry against asymmetry in *Woman with a Coffee Pot* (c. 1890–1894). To come face to face with this solemn servant, whose body presses toward the picture plane like some of the late figures of Rembrandt, is to feel an immutable physical presence. More than that, she possesses a somber and indomitable spirit that would be appropriate for an honored statesman. The housekeeper is placed off center, but her body is symmetrical; the door behind her has its own symmetry, and the little group of the coffee pot and cup and saucer with spoon inhabit the right side of the picture with equal symmetry. The straight side of the coffeepot is marked with a heavy, dark line, and the cup and saucer hover rather near the table's edge, while the spoon emerges from the cup with authority. Note, too, that the uprightness of these objects is countered elsewhere by a calculated leaning of otherwise upright objects—the door, the housekeeper. A certain cushioning of the authoritative composition is provided by the large, vaguely painted flowers on the wall covering, which seem to float quietly toward the floor.

Such rigorousness sometimes leads people to overlook the emotional side of Cézanne, to forget that this artist is also a lyrical painter and a splendid colorist and that his treatment of people, of the human figure, can be sympathetic and empathetic. We see this side of the artist in *Portrait of Madame Cézanne* (1890–1892). The artist's love for his wife is obvious in the handling of the paint, the slight smudges around her lips, the liquid depth of her eyes, the inclination of her head. The shadows behind her head seem both to support and animate it.

Cézanne's paintings are notoriously difficult to date, but we can date *Lac d'Annecy* (1896) because we know that Cézanne traveled to this location only once, on vacation. This painting is a luscious blue, deep as a Monet water painting, but a different sort of blue, one that seems to step out of Venetian painting. The work is superbly organized, and the activity and the reflections of light are exciting, but the profound pull of this consoling blue is its claim to a permanent place in our memory. About a month before his

death, Cézanne wrote to the painter Emile Bernard, “I am continually making observations from nature, and I feel that I am making some slight progress.” That humility before nature is what drove Cézanne, and his *slight* progress drove much of the art of the century that began soon after he died. ■

Works Discussed

Paul Cézanne:

Lac d'Annecy, 1896, oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 32” (65 x 81 cm), Courtauld Institute Galleries, London, Great Britain.

Mont Sainte-Victoire and the Viaduct of the Arc River Valley, c. 1885, oil on canvas, 25 ¾ x 32 1/8” (65.4 x 81.6 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Portrait of Madame Cezanne, 1890–92, oil on canvas, 24 3/8 x 20 1/8” (62 x 51 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Quarry at Bibémus, c. 1895, oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 32” (64.7 x 81.2 cm), Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany.

Still-Life with Apples and Oranges, c. 1895–1900, oil on canvas, 29 1/8 x 36 5/8” (74 x 93 cm), Musée d’Orsay, Paris, France.

Trees and Houses, c. 1885, oil on canvas, 21 ¼ x 29” (54 x 73 cm), Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris, France.

Woman with a Coffee Pot, c. 1890–94, oil on canvas, 51 ½ x 38” (130.5 x 96.5 cm), Musée d’Orsay, Paris, France.

Camille Corot:

The Bridge at Mantes, c. 1868–70, oil on canvas, 15 ¼ x 21 ¾” (38.5 x 55.5 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Camille Pissarro:

L’île Lacroix, Effect of Fog at Rouen, 1888, oil on canvas, 18 3/8 x 22” (45.7 x 55.8 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Red Roofs, 1877, oil on canvas, 21 ½ x 25 ¾” (54.5 x 65.6 cm), Musée d’Orsay, Paris, France.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir:

Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881, oil on canvas, 4’ 3” x 5’ 8” (129.5 x 172.7 cm), The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA.

Suggested Reading

Castellani, *Renoir: His Life and Works*.

Schapiro, *Cézanne*.

Questions to Consider

1. What qualities differentiate *plein-air* painting from studio work?
2. Compare Chardin’s Still Life with Plums to Cézanne’s Still-Life with Apples and Oranges.

Beyond Impressionism—From Seurat to Matisse

Lecture 45

We're going to look at paintings by Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Matisse. The paintings of the last name, Matisse, would scarcely be understandable without the first three.

This lecture covers art that is classified as *Post-Impressionism* and *Fauvism*. The artists Georges Seurat, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent Van Gogh paved the way for 20th-century painting, and Henri Matisse serves as the bridge between 19th- and 20th-century art. As we look at these artists, we'll see the move toward expressing the increasingly personal world of the artist and away from a sense of shared meaning between the artist and the viewer.

In my view, the term *Impressionism* is imprecise and, in fact, misleading, because people have become so interested in its supposed characteristics that they are sometimes confused by actual works of Impressionist art. Equally misleading is the term *Post-Impressionism*, used to differentiate such artists as Cézanne, Gauguin, and Seurat from Monet, Renoir, and Degas. All three of the former artists, however, exhibited with the Impressionists and all three were outlived by the latter.

Georges Seurat (1859–1891) was born in Paris, studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and spent hours at the Louvre. This path was all part of normal preparation for painting, but Seurat's means of preparing was not. No work of his seems to be without preparatory drawings, and for his large, imposing paintings, he did dozens of drawings and many small oil sketches before starting the larger work.

Of course, we must look at *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte* (1884–1886). Seurat is usually called a Post-Impressionist, but at the time, his work was called *Neo-Impressionism*, and the technique with which it was painted was called *Pointillism*. The practice was to apply dots of pure color with the tip of the small brush. The theory was simply that if complementary colors laid side by side produced a vibrant effect while

allowing the colors to mix in the eye, as Impressionist theory held, then using smaller strokes and subdividing the colors still further should increase the vibrancy and the effect of natural outdoor sunlight. Starting at the right of the painting, we see the dominant couple, she with a parasol and both of them with pets. As we move across to the left, we see a group of three figures who seem unrelated. There is a gentleman with a top hat and a cane, perhaps a clerk. Behind him is a woman doing needlework. Reclining in front of these figures is, unmistakably, a workman, smoking a pipe and wearing a sleeveless shirt; he is dominant in the painting and is given quite specific features. Seurat has set up a perspective system in the traditional sense of linear perspective, but he contradicts it by using a very high horizon line and dense trees that obstruct the movement into space.

The painting has many interesting figures, such as the tall, columnar woman with a parasol who walks directly toward us from the center. To the left is a nursemaid, seen from behind; a bulky figure with a turban, she is almost an abstraction. She is reminiscent of a figure by the head of Christ in Giotto's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*. We also see a woman fishing and many pleasure boats on the water. Seurat shows us two steam-powered boats, which are a mechanized intrusion into the scene.

Looking at this picture, most viewers are struck by the solemnity of the figures and their lack of movement. It can be compared with Piero della Francesca's Arezzo frescoes of the *Adoration of the Holy Wood* and *Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (1455–1456). It has often been observed that Seurat's nearly immobile figures in the *Grande Jatte* resemble those of Piero in their stoic dignity and hints of otherworldliness. In fact, the chapel at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where Seurat studied, had copies of two of Piero's frescoes. It is not just Piero, however, but the entire Italian tradition, from Giotto to Masaccio to Piero, that Seurat has revisited. From this tradition, Seurat drew order and solidity for his painting.

Like other Parisian painters of the last third of the 19th century who drew on Renaissance and Classical traditions, Seurat was applying their lessons to modern subject matter. Looking again at the *Grande Jatte*, we see that it suggests arrested time, a world held perpetually in abeyance, a sense that was enhanced by the Pointillist technique. Because the paint dots have no

direction, they have no movement, and they contribute to the stasis of the painting. Note that this is the opposite of the momentary effect of motion and light that was the aim of some of the Impressionists. Seurat also painted a border, like the mat on a print, in the same Pointillist technique; the colors in the border are darker than, but related to, the colors to which they are adjacent. The painting was then finished with a pure white wooden frame. Seurat was an anarchist, and we can certainly read social commentary in this painting, yet we cannot pin it down specifically.

Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) was born in Paris but spent part of his childhood in Peru and six years as a sailor, which helps to explain his later life. Gauguin was a Sunday painter and stockbroker who, learning his craft from the Impressionist paintings he collected, was invited by Pissarro to show with them. He exhibited with the Impressionists five times between 1879 and 1886 but was considered an amateur by some members of the group.

From this later period [of Gauguin], we see the *Day of the God* (1894). Astonishingly, this masterpiece of the South Seas was painted in Paris!

We see *The Yellow Christ* (1889). Gauguin gave up his job in 1883 and, in 1886, went to Brittany, where he lived in poverty at Pont-Aven and Le Pouldu until 1890. This painting was inspired by a wooden crucifix that is still in the chapel near Pont-Aven where the artist saw it. Gauguin enlarged the crucifix to

life size and placed it in a Breton meadow, where pious women kneel in prayer and contemplation. The image is ambiguous, because it has the size of a real cross, but the yellow body of Christ is unreal. On the other hand, Gauguin uses the same intense yellow, interspersed with an equally intense and unnatural red, in the landscape. The scene is not treated as a vision and, in the final analysis, was probably inspired both by the small cross he saw and by the larger cavalries—stone crucifixion groups—that are found beside many Breton churches.

Gauguin sailed from Marseilles to Tahiti in 1891, returned to Paris in 1893, and went back to Tahiti in 1895, spending the rest of his life there. His health was ruined, but he continued to paint until his death. From this later period,

we see the *Day of the God* (1894). Astonishingly, this masterpiece of the South Seas was painted in Paris! A wooden idol is at the back center, and women approach it. Women are bathing and sleeping in the foreground. In the distance, we see the seashore and the surf. Exquisitely beautiful in color and pattern, the painting suggests a mythic Arcadia, one that has echoes in earlier art and that anticipates and surely influenced the Arcadian paintings of Henri Matisse 10 years later.

Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890) was born in the Netherlands, the son of a pastor. As a young man, he was quite uncertain of his direction. He jumped from job to job as a young man before finally turning to art, with the support of his brother, Theo, when he was 27 years old. Through his brother, Van Gogh discovered that he could use drawing as a means of recovering his mental balance. He spent some months working in a painter's studio in Brussels and may have attended classes at the Academy.

In 1881, Van Gogh moved to Etten to live with his parents. There he taught himself perspective, anatomy, and physiognomy. Only six years later, he was accomplished enough to paint his *Self-Portrait as an Artist* (1887–1888). This was not the artist's first self-portrait, but it is the first in which he shows himself as a self-confident painter, palette in hand, and with all the colors of the painting carefully included on the palette.

Next, we turn to *The Harvest* (1888), which first was worked out carefully in a pen and watercolor drawing. In letters to his brother, Van Gogh described the colors of the painting in great detail.

Our next example is *The Red Vineyard* (1888). Again, the artist described the scene in a letter to Theo. Van Gogh looked at nature as intensely as Cézanne did but filtered it through a different psyche, a personality so tenuously balanced on the brink that the painting seems to have been created in a rush of emotion. Yet Van Gogh also controls the painting as carefully as he describes the scene, so that the wine-warm colors; the fluid, improvisatory brushwork; the expansive sweep of space; and the animation of the small figures in the vineyard all coalesce.

Of course, we must look at *The Starry Night* (1889), a painting that is majestic, Expressionistic, and unexpected. This painting is often cited as one of the most important precursors of German and Nordic Expressionism, but as at least one historian has observed, it is “more powerful and imaginative than anything in later Expressionistic art, which proceeded from a similar emotionally charged vision of nature.” The paintings of these months are full of passion and turmoil, although only *The Starry Night* pushes these emotions to the extreme. In this case, the extreme is *abstraction*, not in the 20th-century sense, but in the sense of painting the natural world *from memory and imagination*, rather than face to face. In a letter to Emile Bernard, six months later, at the beginning of December 1889, Van Gogh wrote, “...And yet, once again, I let myself go reaching for stars that are too big—a new failure—and I have had enough of it.” He died in Auvers-sur-Oise in 1890, a suicide.

The painters whose work we have been looking at in the last few lectures prepared the way for the painters of the 20th century, to whom we will now turn our attention. We look at Henri Matisse (1868–1954) first, because he was already a mature artist when Gauguin and Cézanne died, and he consciously bridged the 19th and 20th centuries as he developed his art. We see first *Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line)* (1905). The nickname for the painting came from its first owners and, of course, referred to the dark green stripe running vertically from the hairline of Mme. Matisse to her upper lip and continuing in a haphazard way onto her chin and neck, not to mention spilling over into the area surrounding her right eye. The background is divided into three distinct zones of color—green, violet, and red-orange—and her hair is painted in blue and black. It is, of course, the abstract, expressive use of color that distinguishes the painting and that thoroughly upset many viewers of Matisse’s work in 1904–1905. In discussing the work of Matisse, a critic made a reference to *fauves* (“wild beasts”), and the derogatory name has stuck for a century, though now it is an accolade. But why was the painting so startling? It should not have been unsettling or unexpected in light of the paintings of Gauguin or Van Gogh, because the abstract use of color had been announced by them in works of the preceding 15 years. As a portrait, *Mme Matisse* is dignified and restrained in every way *except* color.

We close this lecture with *Le Bonheur de Vivre* (*The Joy of Life*) (1905). We see a wonderful pair of figures in the right-hand corner, literally united in love; only one head serves for both of them. We also see a figure reclining in the foreground playing pan pipes, a figure plucking at the grass, and one standing with arms raised, almost like wings. In the middle background is a group engaged in a circle dance. Note the beautiful trees that vary in color, showing every possible delicate tone in the palette. This sylvan glade with its pastoral nymphs, fauns, lovers, and dancers delights the eye—as long as we don't expect reality. We can, however, understand the painting Classically. The correct translation of the title in English is “*Good Hour of Life*,” which is a Classical reference to the Golden Age of Man, before the disruptive strife of industry and warfare supplanted the pastoral, agricultural “Eden.” This Golden Age was the subject of many paintings and poems in the Renaissance and Baroque eras, especially in Venetian art, and was the basic reference point for Matisse.

This is a masterpiece of early-20th-century color painting in France, and its impact was enormous. Matisse himself would follow his own lead, as we shall see in the next lecture, but other painters, French and non-French, would also find it irresistible and inspiring. Unfortunately, World War I destroyed Arcadia, and the new Golden Age that many artists, writers, and musicians had ardently hoped was dawning disappeared in the trenches. ■

Works Discussed

Paul Gauguin:

Day of the God (*Mahana no Atua*), 1894, oil on canvas, 27 x 36” (68.3 x 91.5 cm), Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

The Yellow Christ, 1889, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 28 ¾” (92 x 73 cm), Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York, USA.

Henri Matisse:

Le Bonheur de Vivre (*The Joy of Life*), 1905, 5' 8 ½” x 7' 9 ¾” (7.14 x 2.38 cm), Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, USA.

Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line), 1905, oil on canvas, 16 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (40.6 x 32.3 cm), Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Georges Seurat:

Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte, 1884–86, oil on canvas, 6' 10" x 10' 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (207.6 x 308 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

Vincent van Gogh:

The Harvest, 1888, oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (73 x 92 cm), Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Red Vineyard, 1888, oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 36" (73 x 91 cm), The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia.
Self-Portrait as an Artist, 1887–88, oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 20" (65.4 x 50.8 cm), Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Starry Night, 1889, oil on canvas, 29 x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (73.7 x 92.1 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Suggested Reading

Herbert and Harris (contributor), *Seurat and the Making of La Grande Jatte*.

Spurling, *Matisse the Master*.

———, *The Unknown Matisse*.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your interpretation of the social commentary offered by Seurat in *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte*?
2. Using a painting by Matisse that we have not seen in this lecture, describe the artist's abstract use of color.

Cubism and Early Modern Painting

Lecture 46

This lecture will cover a span of about 20 years at the beginning of the 20th century and is principally about the innovations and achievements of Picasso and Matisse in that critical period of their development. In a period that was very rich in artistic exploration and diverse discoveries, it remains true that these two men produced some of their finest paintings during these years, and that they had a greater immediate influence on other artists than most of their fellow artists.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was born in Malaga on the south coast of Spain, the son of an art teacher. He was remarkably precocious, mastering the Realistic style of painting that his father taught and that was dominant in Spain at the time. The family had settled in Barcelona, however, and the currents of new art flowing from France and northern Europe soon reached that cosmopolitan city. Picasso began experimenting with ideas found in the art of Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, and the Norwegian Expressionist Edvard Munch, among others. He was also quite naturally open to the Spanish culture in which he grew up. The Iberian peninsula had a prehistoric art of stone carvings that Picasso was aware of, and it had the imposing example of the golden age of Spanish art that we have already studied.

Our first example is *The Old Guitarist* (1903/1904), which Picasso painted in Barcelona before he settled permanently in Paris. The elongated and angular body has parallels in paintings by El Greco. Picasso accentuates the distortions by squeezing the body into a narrow space and further stresses the profound melancholy and despair of the picture with the pervasive blue, the color chosen, of course, for its evocation of sorrow. There is elegance and life in the guitarist's hands, which together with the curves of the warmer brown guitar, give needed contrast to the rest of the painting. The perceived connection to El Greco and the Mannerist style of the 16th century has sometimes led writers to call paintings of the *Blue Period* "Mannerist" pictures. After the 17th century, El Greco's reputation had faded, even in Spain, but in the late 19th century, there was a revival of interest in him. The

art of El Greco, like the later art of Goya, was to become an important source for many Expressionistic painters of the early 20th century.

Our next example is *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (1907). The title of this painting was a private joke. There was a notorious brothel on Avignon Street in Barcelona, and the subject here is a brothel. Picasso later said that he disliked the title. In May or June 1907, Picasso had a “revelation” about African sculpture during a visit to the Trocadero ethnographic museum in Paris. Matisse had already begun to collect such sculpture, but Picasso had not paid much attention to it. After his revelation, he repainted the *Femmes d'Alger* with the African mask-influenced faces of the figures on the right. The painting was much more explicit in its first state. It included a sailor in port who was visiting the brothel and examining the “merchandise.” That figure was soon removed, which at once made the painting less explicit and more ambiguous. The angles from *The Old Guitarist* are reintroduced here in a different tonality and with a different subject. Note the angularity of the arms, breasts, and torsos of these figures, as well as the background. The spaces between the figures suggest broken glass.

The *Femmes d'Alger* is most indebted to the bather compositions of Cézanne, one of which we see here for comparison, *Four Bathers* (1888–1890). Picasso had unquestionably seen some of these paintings before 1907 and, from their alien presence, distilled his own strong brew. Note the central nude with her arms raised in Cézanne’s painting and the similar pose of the central figure in *Femmes d'Alger*. Picasso understood not just the compositional and structural ideas of Cézanne’s pictures but their emotional and psychological core. Cézanne’s paintings are not superficial, not just about finding the right color or shape or line, but about uncovering and reproducing in paint the essential, organic relationships in nature, and he did it stroke by stroke, while simultaneously trying to bring every part of the picture to the same degree of completion. This is why so many Cézannes seem to be still in progress while nonetheless satisfying us with the overall resolution that he has achieved.

We see this quality in one of Cézanne’s many paintings of *Mont-Saint-Victoire* (1904–1906). Note the insistent structure in this painting, every brushstroke counterbalancing another, every part of the painting brought to the same degree of completion. Late work by Cézanne

shows the road to Cubism, the dissecting and reshaping of objects with the artist's scalpel, which is his brush.

Looking at our next example, *Factory at Horta de Ebro* (1909), it seems as if Picasso began from Cézanne but painted the subject with a more consistent and geometricizing approach. Obviously, the buildings gave him the cue for the strongly faceted structure, but he chose the *motif*, to use Cézanne's word, and knew what he was looking for. Note the buildings and the complex courtyard in the background, with a smokestack beyond it. Even the trees seem to spring from cylindrical bases. The limited palette—sandy browns and tans, dark and light greens with white highlights—is typical of Picasso when he is exploring a new idea. Once it was unrelenting blue; now in the years of Cubist exploration, it is increasingly monochrome again, but toward browns and greys with only occasional touches of bright color.

Picasso and Georges Braque evolved the new style of Cubism during the period 1907–1912, with their closest contact occurring from 1909–1911. Perhaps no truly revolutionary style has ever been developed in such a short period of time as Cubism. Fauvism was also the work of a few men in a brief period, but it was not as revolutionary because it was another in the periodic assertions of the primacy of color in art. Fauvism used color more abstractly, a development from Gauguin and Van Gogh. Cubism developed from Cézanne, but it is a more focused, intensive effort, quasi-scientific in its analytical rigor.

We'll look at a few important examples of full Cubism, starting with Picasso's *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (1910). This is a great and somber portrait, and those who claim that they cannot recognize the subject in a Cubist painting cannot say the same about this painting. The features are there; the intellect is there; note the powerful forehead and the top of the head, above the eyes. That his eyes are either closed or looking downward emphasizes both the rational mind and the insight of Vollard. The essential logic of Cubism seems to flow from all of Picasso's earlier works. They may seem initially

Picasso understood not just the compositional and structural ideas of Cézanne's pictures but their emotional and psychological core.

to be different moments, or “periods,” of his work, but they are coherent, even inevitable.

Next, we see Picasso’s *Still Life with Chair-Caning* (1912). This was Picasso’s first collage, made by gluing a piece of oilcloth printed with a caning pattern onto the painted surface, then partly painting over it with bold brushstrokes. The painted goblet and sliced lemon are fragmented; part of the word *Journal* is painted boldly; a painted pipe stem (over the *u* in *Journal*) seems to stick out of the picture. The pipe stem and the oilcloth force us to ask, “What is painted; what is real?” We become part of a debate between aesthetics and metaphysics. This collage also represents the first time Picasso introduced an illusionistic element—*trompe l’oeil*—into his art. Finally, the work is framed with a piece of rope. This is the first collage of the 20th century, and Picasso knew that it was a seminal work; for this reason, he kept it in his private collection.

We now turn to Georges Braque, looking at his *Table with Pipe* (1914). As mentioned earlier, Braque and Picasso had developed Cubism simultaneously and with full awareness of each other’s work. This Braque is later, but all the innovative ideas of Cubism are strongly asserted here, although composed with a greater sense of ease. Each object is shown with multiple points of view but more directly. The die, for instance, is *unfolded* to show two sides; essentially it is flattened onto the picture plane. At the same time, there is a definite sense of recession. In this painting, as in Picasso’s portrait of Vollard, we are struck by the extreme subtlety of modeling—real modeling in the traditional sense of a gradation from light to shadow—as well as by the alternating opacity and transparency of the planes. The pictorial structure is secure and convincing. Technically, some of the shapes are built up of sand and some of gesso, and the painting is covered with Pointillist dots of blue paint. The result is a varied and rich surface. Throughout his career, Braque often used sand and other materials in his paintings.

At the same time, Matisse had been working through his own dialogue with the art of Picasso, not in collaboration, but in response to the Picassos he saw on exhibition or in private collections, including Gertrude Stein’s. We see first Matisse’s *Harmony in Red* (*The Tablecloth*) (1908–1909).

This painting was commissioned by a Russian merchant living in Paris, Sergei Shchukin, for his dining room in the Trubetskoi Palace, Moscow. When Matisse painted this, he had just moved to a larger studio in the Hotel Biron, where Rodin also lived. There he began to paint on a more monumental scale. As we run our eyes over this large painting, we find delight in the decorative beauty, as well as the large, assertive shapes: the decanters, the fruit stand, the arabesque patterns on the wall and tablecloth design, the window, the chair, and the table edge.

The title calls attention to the extraordinary red in this painting, which is difficult to reproduce in photographs. In fact, the red is the result of two earlier paintings—a *Harmony in Green* and a *Harmony in Blue*—which lie *underneath* the surface of this painting! Matisse's work for Shchukin's mansion led him to create daring masterpieces of space and anti-space, canvases as flat as Picasso's yet both airy and open and vibrant in color.

Our next example is *The Piano Lesson* (1916), also by Matisse but quite different from the preceding example. The composition is rectilinear and is, in part, dictated by the metronome on the piano. The shape of this object is repeated in other shapes in the painting, such as the small shadow on the boy's face and the abstract green form in the background. Notice in the lower left corner Matisse's own bronze or clay model of a seated female figure; the brand name of the piano, Pleyel; and the painting on the wall on the right side. This painting has been called "an artist's monologue." Did the mood in France during the war have an effect on Matisse that is reflected in this somber painting?

Picasso had begun to develop his so-called "Neoclassical" style around 1917–1918, and it reached its apogee in this great figure grouping, *Three Women at the Spring* (1921). This painting is completely unsentimental and not picturesque either—not about femininity and not about some childhood memory of Spanish women gathered at a spring. Instead, the painting is heroic, and it ultimately developed from *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, with many steps along the way. The weight—not just physical but psychological and emotional—is tremendous, and one comes away from the painting with a sense of having witnessed something important. This is the same feeling one experiences with Manet's *Bar at the Folies-Bergeres* and Seurat's *Sunday*

Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte, and as with these works, we are left with a profound impression, but no storyline to support it.

As I said of Manet's works in general, we have left the world of *shared meaning* behind in modern art and must now confront and deal with the *semiprivate* world of the artist. I use the term *semiprivate*, because there are many hints in all these paintings of the artist's concerns, but the work is not literal, and those who insist that pictures tell them a story will be frustrated, puzzled, and unhappy with these paintings. To refuse to join in the artist's enterprise—which in great art is always to communicate something that the artist finds compelling—is to lock oneself out of an experience that is life-enhancing. I generally believe that when an artist says something new, or in a new way, and I don't understand it, the problem is mine. It is up to me to work at understanding what the artist is trying to do.

Perhaps Picasso can sum up my feelings in this regard. Here he is, in 1923, speaking on Cubism, "The fact that for a long time cubism has not been understood and that even today there are people who cannot see anything in it, means nothing. I do not read English; an English book is a blank book to me. This does not mean that the English language does not exist, and why should I blame anybody else but myself if I cannot understand what I know nothing about?" ■

Works Discussed

Georges Braque:

Table with Pipe, 1914, oil with sand and gesso on canvas, 15 x 18" (38 x 45.7 cm), National Museum of Modern Art, Pompidou Center, Paris, France.

Paul Cézanne:

Four Bathers, 1888–90, oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (73 x 92 cm), New Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Mont-Saint-Victoire, 1904–06, oil on canvas, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 35 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (69.8 x 89.5 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Henri Matisse:

Harmony in Red (The Tablecloth), 1908–09, oil on canvas, 5' 10" x 7' 2" (180 x 221 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Piano Lesson, 1916, oil on canvas, 8' ½" x 6' 11 ¾" (245.1 x 212.7 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Pablo Picasso:

Factory at Horta de Ebro, 1909, oil on canvas, 20 x 23 ¾" (50.7 x 60.2 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.), 1907, oil on canvas, 8' x 7' 8" (243.9 x 233.7 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

The Old Guitarist, 1903/04, oil on panel, 48 ½ x 32 ½" (122.9 x 82.6 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

Portrait of Ambroise Vollard, 1910, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 25 5/8" (92 x 65 cm), The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia.

Still Life with Chair-Caning, 1912, collage of oil, oilcloth, and pasted paper on canvas, 10 ¾ x 13 ¾" (26.7 x 35 cm), Musée Picasso, Paris, France.

Three Women at the Spring, 1921, oil on canvas, 6' 8 ¼" x 5' 8 ½" (203.9 x 174 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Suggested Reading

Leal, Piot, Bernadac, and Leymarie, *The Ultimate Picasso*.

Wilkin, *Georges Braque*.

Questions to Consider

1. Describe the elements of Cubism seen in Braque's *Table with Pipe*.
2. What is your personal response to Cubism?

Modern Sculpture—Rodin and Brancusi

Lecture 47

Today we're going to talk about modern sculpture, or at least a few modern sculptors, but it means backing up into the 19th century, to begin with Auguste Rodin, who was born in 1840 and died in 1917.

This lecture is also devoted to the sculpture of Constantin Brancusi and Naum Gabo. In these sculptors, we see three possibilities offered to artists in the 20th century: Expressionism, Idealism, and Constructivism. We also see the beginnings of the rapid spread of modern art from its center in Paris across Europe.

Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) began work as a stone mason and traveled to Brussels in 1871 to work on decorative sculpture for the new Stock Exchange. A lifelong study of Michelangelo combined with his love of French history and literature to give him the desire and the ideas to produce some of the most famous works in French sculpture. When Rodin died, his fame was at its height, but the world had changed. In art, the late Romantic Expressionism personified in sculpture by Rodin gave way to Modernism. We should not forget, however, that Rodin offered one of the major alternatives for modern sculpture, because his Expressive style was never abandoned, even when the Idealism of Brancusi (and Mondrian in painting) with its pure, svelte, pared-down minimalism, was most influential.

We see first Rodin's *Man with a Broken Nose* (1863–1864), a probable homage to Michelangelo, whose work was a continual inspiration to Rodin. Note the expressive modeling. Rodin began with a complete understanding of anatomy, of the structure beneath the skin, then altered it for his own expressive reasons.

In 1875, Rodin went to Italy and, soon after his return, began work on *The Age of Bronze* (1877). The piece is striking in its precise Naturalism; indeed, one critic accused the artist of having made a cast from the model's body. Rodin was furious and never again made a life-size figure—his later figures were larger than life size or considerably smaller. The pose derives

from Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*; the evidence is the raised right arm. In Rodin's sculpture, the model was probably held a pole in his left hand as an aid to posing. When the pole was removed before casting, it gave the hand an expressive ambiguity.

The most important work, or nexus of many works, in Rodin's career is *The Gates of Hell* (1880–1887), which began as a commission for the doors for a projected Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. Rodin never finished a definitive model for the commission, and the decision was made *not* to build the new museum but to install Rodin's sculpture in a wing of the Louvre, where it remains. The concept of the *Gates* evolved slowly. In the end, it was never completed in any formal sense, nor was it ever cast in Rodin's lifetime. Instead, the *Gates* became the fountainhead of Rodin's art. The work is filled with figures inspired by Dante's *Inferno*.

Looking at a full view of the *Gates*, we see the two sides of the doors, the overdoor above the lintel, and a broad capstone with three standing figures. The door as a whole is flanked by pilasters. The three figures at the top are known as the Fates. They seem to be pointing relentlessly downward. Just below them and below the top lintel is a famous seated figure. It is known to us as *The Thinker*, but on the doors, it is Dante, presiding over his *Inferno*.

To compare, we see a version of *The Thinker* (n.d.), which was removed from the door and cast and carved in various sizes. The modeling of the figure on the doors was done in 1880 and was 27 inches high. The figure was enlarged around 1902–1904. The pose of *The Thinker* is complex and artificial, but it conveys intensity of thought.

Returning to the figures of the Fates, we see that they appear to be three different male figures. However, they are actually the same figure repeated but in different positions. As a model for the composition of the *Gates*, Rodin used Ghiberti's Baptistery doors in Florence. Like those doors, these were subdivided into individual panels. Gradually, however, the "walls" between the panels broke down, allowing the space to flow through the whole valve. The figures also seem to float in this unconfined space. Even the background seems to be continuously in motion.

In another detail of the doors, we see *Ugolino and his Children* and the same figures enlarged to more than life-size in a plaster sculpture at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. In Dante's *Inferno*, Count Ugolino was a traitor; he had been locked in a tower, together with his four sons, where they starved to death, one by one. The harrowing story is given form by Rodin, who cares little for Ugolino's crime and only for his cruel fate.

The first major public commission that Rodin competed for and won was a commemorative sculpture to honor the heroic medieval citizens of the city of Calais, on the coast of France on the English Channel, who had offered to sacrifice themselves to save their city.

The pose of *The Thinker* is complex and artificial, but it conveys intensity of thought.

The competition was announced in 1884. The commission was from the city of Calais and was to stand before the city hall. The result from Rodin was his *Burghers of Calais* (1884–1889).

From the *Chronicles* of Froissart, we learn the story of the siege of Calais by the English in the Hundred Years' War. The city had withstood a nearly year-long siege but capitulated in 1347, when six of its leading citizens surrendered themselves as hostages so the siege would be lifted and the citizens would be fed. These six citizens—the burghers—expected to be executed. Through the intervention of the French-born queen of Edward III, they were not, but what Rodin shows us is the expectation of death and the ways in which these six respond as they leave the city that they had saved. As demanded by the English, they have put on sackcloth and halters of rope, and one of them carries the keys to the city to deliver to the enemy.

Our example shows the cast that belongs to Philadelphia's Rodin Museum. Looking at the front of the group, we see the stoicism of the burgher with the keys to the right, as well as the bent old man, embodying wisdom. This is the principal view of the sculpture, and it has an opening that seems meant for us. As we can see, the sculpture has a green *patina*. *Patina* originally meant the green or greenish-blue crust or film that forms on bronze or copper as it naturally oxidizes over a period of time. However, a patina can be induced by means of chemicals, and many sculptors, Rodin included, experimented

with different-colored patinas, from black to silvery-gray to the more familiar shades of green. Looking at details of a cast in the Rodin Museum in Paris, we see figures in the back, including a young man with extended arms. His gesture echoes the expression on his face—incomprehension. Approaching the next corner, we see an erect figure on the right, the back of the old man whom we've seen from the front, and a tormented, despairing figure on the left, grasping his head in his hands. We now turn to *The Kiss* (1886). Originally part of *The Gates of Hell*, this piece was removed early on and became the artist's most popular independent work.

As we move on to Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), compare Rodin's version of this subject with Brancusi's *The Kiss* (1916). Brancusi was born in Romania but worked in Paris from 1904. He is the pioneer abstract sculptor of the 20th century. Brancusi's *The Kiss* is witty, warm, and lovable. It carries as much conviction as Rodin's *Kiss* does, although it has left the ideal realm for the world of chunky humanity.

Our next sculpture is *Bird in Space (Yellow Bird)* (1923–1924). Just as Seurat and others had surrounded their pictures with frames painted white or other colors, disdaining the pseudo-French Rococo frames that dealers and wealthy clients preferred, so, too, did Brancusi control the presentation of his sculptural figures. Brancusi repeated the basic theme and form of the *Bird in Space* 17 times using different materials. This one was the first marble *Bird in Space* in which the conical footing at the tapering bottom of the bird was carved from the same piece of marble as the body itself. Another version of this theme is *Bird in Space* (1932–1940). The metal versions of the *Bird* have a more ethereal quality because of the highly reflective surface. Light striking the long convex shape tends to dissolve the contours into an unstable gleam, obscuring the perception of its absolute shape. Next, we see *Mlle. Pogany I* (1912–1913). This sculpture is meant to capture a purified, primitive essence. "Simplicity," wrote Brancusi, "is not an end in art, but one reaches simplicity in spite of oneself by approaching the real meanings of things."

As Brancusi had emulated the perfect finish of machine-made objects, so, too, Naum Gabo (1890–1977) and his brother Antoine Pevsner decided that art must accept the technology of the modern age and its materials. But their style, which they called *Constructivist*, was anti-materialistic. We see

Gabo's *Constructed Head No. 2* (1916; enlarged version 1966). Gabo's first two constructed heads of 1915–1916 were made of small planes of wood or metal. These were positioned at right angles to what would be the natural surfaces of the head, revealing the interior as open, interpenetrating volumes of space—small, separate spaces defined by the edges of planes. Cubism is one source of this style, but it is Cubism opened up to admit space as an equal partner with mass. Both the Cubists and the Constructivists spoke of *real time* as an element in their art, and Gabo tried making some kinetic art with moving parts but decided that it was distracting and that the movement and the passage of time had to be supplied instead by the moving eye scanning the art. Compare Brancusi's *Mlle. Pogany* with Gabo's *Head*. Note the closed, idyllic quality of the Brancusi and the open, suave quality of the Gabo.

Now make a three-way comparison among Rodin's *Man with Broken Nose* and the Brancusi and Gabo. We see three possibilities offered to the 20th century:

- The Expressionist modeling of Rodin, including its distortions and abstractions.
- The idealized elegance of Brancusi, including *its* distortions and abstractions.
- The Constructivist mask of Gabo, including its Cubistic planes and its peeling away of the natural surface to reveal the space within.

Each of these has been the inspiration for sculptors in the 20th century and now in the 21st. They offer a wide range of stylistic approaches and potential. It is interesting and important to realize that suddenly, as we entered the 20th century, modern art seems to have spread rapidly across Europe. A short time before, Paris was the center of the modern movement, and Rodin had been part of that center. But Brancusi, although he moved to Paris, was Romanian and Gabo was Russian, and Rodin himself became an international art star. ■

Works Discussed

Constantin Brancusi:

Bird in Space, 1932–40, polished brass, 5' H (151 cm H), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, New York, USA.

Bird in Space (Yellow Bird), 1923–24, marble with marble, limestone, and oak base, 8' 7" H (261.62 cm H), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

The Kiss, 1916, limestone, 23 x 13 ¼ x 10" (58.42 x 35 x 25.4 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Mlle. Pogany I, 1912–13, plaster, 17 ½" H (45.7 cm H), Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France.

Naum Gabo:

Constructed Head No. 2, 1916/1966, Cor-ten steel painted grey, 5' 9 ½" H, (175.3 x 134 x 122.6 cm), Tate Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Auguste Rodin:

The Age of Bronze, 1877, bronze, 5' 11" H (180.34 cm H), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Burghers of Calais, 1884–89, bronze, 6' 10 ½" H (210.82 cm H), Rodin Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, and Musée Rodin, Paris, France.

The Gates of Hell, 1880–87, plaster, 18 x 12' (5.49 x 3.7 m), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

The Kiss, 1886, marble, 34 ½" H (89 cm H), Musée Rodin, Paris, France.

Man with a Broken Nose, c. 1870, bronze, 9 ½" H (24.1 cm H), Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA.

The Thinker, bronze, 79" H (200.66 cm H), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons, France.

Ugolino and his Children, 1880–87, plaster, 16 ¼" H (43 cm H), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Suggested Reading

Masson, Mattiussi, Vilain, *Rodin*.

Varia, *Brancusi*.

Questions to Consider

1. How did *The Gates of Hell* serve as a wellspring for sculpture by Rodin?
2. Describe two versions of Brancusi's *Bird in Space* made in different materials.

Art between Two Wars—Kandinsky to Picasso

Lecture 48

I have no chance, and make no pretense, to adequately explain all these *isms* to you. Instead, I will show you a series of works of art that responded to, were conditioned by, or even, one could say, created by, the events of the 20th century between the two world wars.

This last lecture includes Russian, Italian, Belgian, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Swiss artists, and it covers such styles or movements as German Expressionism, Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, and Neo-Plasticism. We begin with Wassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944) and his *Improvisation No. 30 (Cannons)* (1913). Kandinsky, working in Germany, produced some of the earliest abstractions of the century. A first glance at this work suggests that it is among them, and its title, *Improvisation No. 30*, seems to confirm that impression. But the subtitle—*Cannons*—which was probably not part of Kandinsky’s original title, contradicts it. In fact, Kandinsky did not produce any pure abstractions before the war. The cannons, in the lower right, discharge blue and red blasts of color, although there is a suggestion of shells, as well as a suggestion of architectural forms at the upper right.

Our next artist is Marcel Duchamp (American, born in France, 1887–1968); we see his *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (1912). Taking his initial cue from sequential, stop-motion photography that revealed how people and animals actually moved, Duchamp added the fragmentation of objects and the monochromatic palette found in Cubism and the study of motion from the Italian Futurists. The title provoked the kind of consternation that Cubist titles often do when the thing described is not easily located. Where is the nude? We see only a figurative shape, repeated, overlapping, suggesting motion.

Next, we see an example from Umberto Boccioni (Italian, 1882–1916), *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913). The mechanistic or armored appearance of the figure is striking; it has the abstraction of a robot. We know that Boccioni started with the idea of doing a modern nude, but it is as wrapped in mechanistic abstraction as is Duchamp’s *Nude*. Seen from the

side, the sculpture gives the impression that it is striding with forcefulness; a strong wind has forced back the clothing or covering. Seen from in front, if the sculpture is placed at our level, it seems to rush irresistibly headlong toward us.

Next is Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (German, 1880–1938); we see his *Self-Portrait as a Soldier* (1915), painted when the artist was on garrison duty during World War I. The painting is a grim fantasy of the possibility of dismemberment or amputation caused by war and, at the same time, a sexual fantasy of castration. Kirchner had not lost a hand, although in this picture, he is shown as having lost his right hand—his painting hand. Nor is he, as it at first appears, standing in front of a nude woman. Instead, he is standing in front of a painting of a woman; the angle of the canvas can be seen at right. The ambiguity, however, is intentional and has a strong sexual component.

When the war to end all wars ended, the tallying up of the physical and psychological toll began. How was one to get on with life? The utter irrationality of mankind seemed to have been demonstrated. To some, the futility of the period could be expressed only by the absurd, and in art and literature arose a movement called *Dada*, named by Tristan Tzara in 1916, in response to that absurdity. We see an example in Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917, replicated in 1964). As a member of an exhibition jury that had announced its intention to admit all art submitted, Duchamp anonymously entered this work. *Fountain*, of course, is a urinal without plumbing that has been removed from the lavatory, inverted, signed with a pseudonym, and dated. Duchamp “found” an object, divorced it from its intended use, reordered it by repositioning it, and tried to place it in an exhibition where it could be seen “differently.” The concept of *found objects* incorporated into art or presented as art in their own right has been around for a century and is now generally accepted in the world of artists.

From Dada, or partly from it, came *Surrealism*, meaning “above” or “beyond” Realism. Though Surrealist artists often used Realistic techniques, it was to express the irrational, such as the world of dreams. On the other hand, Surrealism might also utilize non-rational techniques, such as automatic writing or painting. Much of Surrealism had a sexual content, because it was informed by the theories and explorations of Sigmund Freud. As an

example, we see *The Menaced Assassin* (*L'assassin menacé*) (1926) by René Magritte (Belgian, 1898–1967). Magritte, whose deadpan Surrealism is exemplified by this painting, excelled in the combination of unexpected objects or the creation of unexplained tableaux. The painting is so peculiar that it is memorable. Who are the witnesses and what are they waiting for? For the record to end? For the man to exit? Where is this sparsely furnished apartment with the bare floor? It is all expressionless, without meaningful clues. It looks like a scene from a crime film or detective novel, but it doesn't *act* like one. It simply *is*. Why should we care about the questions it raises, given that no answers will be forthcoming?

In complete contrast is this almost contemporary painting by Picasso, *The Dance* (1925). We see three frantic dancers; one is doubled over at the left and seems to have a “hole” in the body, created by the space between the arm and the torso. The long, extended figure of the central dancer fills the canvas, and its right hand extends over to the other dancer, who is partly in bright white and partly in near-black. In this frantic, Dionysian outburst, Picasso is the expressive opposite of Magritte: Both paintings are repositories of emotional and sexual content, but Picasso chooses to release rather than box in the emotion. It is Expressionistic, and one small part of it commemorates the death of a friend, whose black silhouette is seen at the top right. Next, we see *Woman with her Throat Cut* (1932; bronze cast, 1949) by Alberto Giacometti (Swiss, 1901–1966). This eviscerated form may be abstracted but is still too clearly what its title says it is to be looked at with detachment. It is about sexual torture and murder and is, therefore, as relevant today as the day Giacometti conceived it.

During the 1930s, with a worldwide Depression, Fascism rising, and the possibility of another war looming, art reflected world events. If Dada, an embracing of the anti-rational and the nihilistic, was one response to the postwar trauma, the art of Piet Mondrian (Dutch, 1872–1944) was another. It is all too easy to assume that the highly structured, non-objective mature paintings of Mondrian are exercises in art for art's sake. Nothing could be further from the truth, because he was not an aesthete—he was an idealist: since the world was without order, Mondrian would supply it.

From 1920 onward, Mondrian's paintings are quite clear in their intention. Further, Mondrian and his friends, who called their movement *de Stijl* ("the style"), designed furniture, interiors, and architecture that were imbued with the same ideal order, the same intellectual and ethical rigor, that would, in turn, be absorbed by those who used them, inhabited them, or saw them. Mondrian never permitted diagonal lines or bars in his compositions,

The concept of *found objects* incorporated into art or presented as art in their own right has been around for a century and is now generally accepted in the world of artists.

because they were too violent. No violence, indeed no interactive movement, is possible without the diagonal, and conflict and violence were forbidden.

We see Mondrian's *Composition with Yellow* (1936). This is a tautly composed, rigorous canvas with a white ground traversed by four black horizontal bands and two black verticals. In the lower right quadrant, Mondrian seems almost to have painted a small painting within the larger, adding two short black horizontals and two verticals and introducing two bright yellow

rectangles. I point out the obvious here, because it is not at all obvious. If you could spend a quiet hour with this painting, you would understand the gift of its certitude in an uncertain world. When it was painted, it was a response to the social and political moment of its day.

In Spain in the 1930s, the political polarization of the country caused a descent into violence. Joan Miró (Spanish, 1893–1983), one of the founders of Surrealism, was painting in and near Barcelona, the center of Catalan culture. For several years, labor strikes and anarchist uprisings increased, while the government became increasingly reactionary. As Miró watched the disintegration of order, this painting, *Deux Personnages* (*Two Personages*) (1935), was his response. In the spring of 1935, Miró's painting, previously poetic and witty, fluid and airy, was suddenly invaded by heavy splashes and smudges of paint. Whereas before he had painted small floating faces, insectile forms, and tiny, amusing creatures, he now painted this large, inhuman female figure with red fangs and a red eye. The figure is savage, and it threatens a small, vulnerable figure floating at the left, the other

“personage.” Miró’s metamorphosis of the human form into the grotesque elevates it to the epitome of elemental aggression. Miró abandoned beauty of surface and substituted a rubble field of cheesecloth collage, a nest of looped string, sand, and tacks!

We next see a work by Salvador Dali (Spanish, 1904–1989), *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* (1936). A monstrous figure rears above the plain of northern Spain and literally tears itself apart in grotesque frenzy. At the bottom left, the tiny professorial figure of a man peering over the giant hand supplies the scale and with it the enormity of civil war, which Dali anticipated with this painting. Dali said that he aimed at the “materialization of concrete irrationality” in his paintings, and he succeeded here, in his most personal and universal creation.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939 engaged the sympathies of liberals in Europe, Britain, and America to an extraordinary degree. Some 35,000 foreign nationals fought in the International Brigades on behalf of the Republicans against Franco’s army. We will close with Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937). On April 26, 1937, Guernica, a small market town in northern Spain, was bombarded by German warplanes—dive bombers under Franco’s command, allowing the Nazis to test their new toys in Spain. It was the first time a civilian population had been subjected to military air power, and Picasso was outraged over the killing of civilians.

Just as Salvador Dali had raised his brand of Surrealism to its highest level under the impetus of the civil war, so, too, did Picasso discover a previously unseen expressive power in the inventions and experiments of Cubism. At the right, a building is in flames, with a woman falling into them. Another woman, dragging her wounded leg, struggles toward the center, toward the light that emanates from a candle thrust into the scene by an astonished head that comes through a window. A horse—its body impaled by a spear—screams, while a fallen warrior lies broken, like a statue, on the ground. At the left, a mother holding her dead child raises her grief-wrenched upturned face to the implacable bull immediately above. In Picasso’s personal but unmistakable symbolic language, the bull is unmovable power and the horse is innocence. In this stark black-and-white image, the victims and the aggressors are locked into a tight composition by a large triangle that leads

the eye to a glaring electric light at the top, in which the light bulb is set in an eye-like oval. Whose eye is this? The eye of God? The eye of conscience? The eye of the world turned on atrocity?

My reasons for concluding with *Guernica* are several: This is a survey of European art, and World War II brought European art to a momentary standstill. *Guernica* itself is a masterwork of European art, and it is a history painting with allegorical elements, similar to Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*. Taking an even longer view, we may place it beside the Bayeux Tapestry, which we discussed in Lecture Two and a detail of which we now see. Recall the violent climax of the Battle of Hastings in the tapestry, where horses are turned upside down and dead soldiers float in the bottom margin of the embroidered chaos. Some 860 years separate these two works, but much also connects them, both in history and in art history.

Much art is beautiful, as beautiful as life often is, and creating beauty is one purpose of art. Another purpose of art is to remind us of historic and personal truths, many of them unpleasant. The achievement of great art is to express both the beautiful and the unpleasant in such a way that we never forget them. ■

Works Discussed

Umberto Boccioni:

Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, 1913, bronze, 48 ½ x 34” (124.5 x 86 cm), Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Milan, Italy.

Salvador Dali:

Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War), 1936, oil on canvas, 39 5/16 x 39 3/8” (101.5 x 102 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Marcel Duchamp:

Fountain, 1917 (replicated 1964), porcelain, 14” H (35.6 cm H), Galleria Schwarz, Milan, Italy.

Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912, oil on canvas, 57 x 35” (147.3 x 89 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Alberto Giacometti:

Woman with her Throat Cut, 1932 (cast 1949), bronze, 8 x 34 ½ x 25” (20.3 x 87.6 x 63.5 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Wassily Kandinsky:

Improvisation No. 30 (Cannons), 1913, oil on canvas, 43 ¼ x 43 ¾” (109.2 x 110.5 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner:

Self-Portrait as a Soldier, 1915, oil on canvas, 27 ½ x 24” (69 x 61 cm), Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, USA.

Rene Magritte:

The Menaced Assassin (L’assassin menacé), 1926, oil on canvas, 4’ 11 ¼” x 6’ 4 7/8” (150.4 x 195.2 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA.

Joan Miró:

Deux Personnages, 1935, oil and collage on cardboard, 41 1/16” x 28 1/8” (102 x 74 cm), The Kreeger Museum, Washington, D.C., USA.

Piet Mondrian:

Composition with Yellow, 1936, oil on canvas, 29 ¼ x 26” (74 x 66 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Pablo Picasso:

The Dance, 1925, oil on canvas, 7’ x 4’ 8” (215.3 x 142.2 cm), Tate Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Guernica, 1937, oil on canvas, 11’ 5 ½” x 25’ 5 ½” (349.3 x 776 cm), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain.

Suggested Reading

Lucie-Smith, *Visual Arts in the 20th Century*.

Selz, *Art in Our Times: A Pictorial History, 1890–1980*.

Questions to Consider

1. Of the isms discussed in this lecture, which one appeals most to you and why?
2. Thinking back to Lecture One and our discussion of subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion, choose one of the artworks from this lecture and consider it in relation to those elements.

Timeline

- 800..... Coronation of Charlemagne (742–814).
- 840..... Death of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne’s successor, and outbreak of a war of succession.
- 962..... Coronation of Otto I, first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.
- c. 1000–1160..... Period of Romanesque architecture.
- 1066..... Norman conquest of England at the Battle of Hastings; work begins on the Bayeux Tapestry.
- 1096–1099 First Crusade.
- 1147–1149..... Second Crusade.
- c. 1160–1500..... Gothic style in art and architecture, exemplified by Notre Dame Cathedral (1163–1250).
- 1189–1192..... Third Crusade.
- 1194–1220 Rebuilding of Chartres Cathedral after it was destroyed by fire in 1194; the new structure is a masterpiece of the full Gothic style.
- 1200..... Rebuilding of Rouen Cathedral begun after its destruction by fire.
- 1202–1204 Fourth Crusade.
- c. 1260..... Golden Legend written by Jacobus de Voragine.

1303–1305/10	Painting of the 38 frescoes of the Arena Chapel by Giotto di Bondone, precursor of the Renaissance.
1308–1311	Painting of the Maestà by Duccio di Buoninsegna.
1309–1378	Avignon Papacy.
1337.....	Beginning of the Hundred Years' War.
1338–1339	Frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, Allegories of Good and Bad Government, painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti.
1348–1350	Black Death sweeps across Europe, decimating populations.
c. 1350–1450.....	Rise of Humanism.
c. 1380-1420	International Gothic style.
c. 1400–1550.....	Italian and Northern Renaissance.
1403–1424, 1425–1452.....	Design and completion of doors for the Baptistery of Florence by Lorenzo Ghiberti.
1415, 1430–1432.....	Donatello carves St. George for Orsanmichele in Florence.
1419.....	Design of the Hospital of the Innocents, Florence, by Brunelleschi.
1420–1436.....	Design and construction of the dome of the Florence Cathedral by Brunelleschi.
1424–1427.....	Fresco cycle in the Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria del Carmine, Florence, begun by Masolino and continued by Masaccio, whose achievement was the first great landmark of Italian Renaissance painting.

- 1430–1432..... Donatello models David in Florence, probably commissioned by the Medici.
- c. 1434..... Arnolfini Wedding Portrait by Jan van Eyck.
- 1435..... Leon Battista Alberti publishes *On Painting*, a treatise that includes the first description of the method of linear perspective.
- c. 1435..... Completion of Rogier van der Weyden’s *Deposition*.
- 1452–1459..... *Painting of the Legend of the True Cross*, in Arezzo, fresco cycle by Piero della Francesca.
- 1453..... End of the Hundred Years’ War.
- 1469..... Lorenzo de’Medici (“the Magnificent”) becomes ruler of Florence and one of the greatest cultural patrons of the Renaissance.
- 1474..... Mantegna completes the *camera picta*, “painted room,” in the Gonzaga Ducal Palace in Mantua.
- 1478..... The Spanish Inquisition established.
- 1482..... *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli.
- c. 1495–1498..... *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci.
- c. 1495–1500..... *Lamentation* by Botticelli.
- 1497–1498..... Trial and execution of the Dominican friar Savonarola, who had preached against the excessive materialism of the Medici and Florentine society.
- c. 1498..... Albrecht Dürer’s woodcut *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

1498–1499.....	Michelangelo designs and carves the Pietà for the tomb of a French cardinal in the Basilica of St. Peter’s.
1501–1504.....	Michelangelo carves monumental statue of David in Florence.
1503–1506.....	Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci.
1505.....	Giovanni Bellini paints his masterpiece of the Venetian High Renaissance style, the San Zaccaria Altarpiece, Venice.
c. 1505–1510.....	Painting of the famous triptych Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch.
1508–1511.....	Painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling by Michelangelo.
1510.....	Matthias Grünewald begins work on the Isenheim Altarpiece.
c. 1510–1511.....	Pastoral Concert by Giorgione.
1510–1514.....	Raphael paints the Stanzae, the rooms of the papal apartments in the Vatican.
1517.....	Beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
c. 1520.....	Beginnings of Mannerism.
1522.....	Bacchus and Ariadne painted by Titian for the rulers of Ferrara.
c. 1526–1530.....	Antonio Correggio paints the Assumption of the Virgin in the cathedral at Parma, which served as the principal model for illusionistic dome paintings of the Baroque and subsequent eras.

1527.....	Sack of Rome by the troops of Emperor Charles V.
1535–1541.....	Michelangelo frescoes his Last Judgment on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.
1545–1563.....	Council of Trent; beginning of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.
c. 1558.....	Fall of Icarus by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.
1561.....	Spain withdraws troops from the Netherlands, leading to the rapid spread of the Protestant Reformation.
1567.....	Philip II of Spain re-invades the Netherlands, intent on crushing the Reformation.
1568.....	Northern Netherlands revolts against Spain; beginning of the Eighty Years' War; Blind Leading the Blind by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.
1575–1675.....	Golden age of Spanish painting.
c. 1580–1585.....	Founding of an anti-Mannerist teaching academy in Bologna by Annibale, Ludovico, and Agostino Carracci.
1585–1590.....	Papacy of Sixtus V; beginning of the recovery of Rome after the Sack.
1590s.....	The Agony in the Garden by El Greco; beginning of the Baroque in Italy.
c. 1596–1597.....	Rest on the Flight into Egypt by Caravaggio.
1597–1600.....	Frescoes of the Farnese Gallery, Rome, by Annibale Carracci.

c. 1622–1625.....	Rubens paints the Marie de' Medici cycle.
1624.....	Bernini begins work in and on the Basilica of St. Peter's continuing on and off until his death.
c. 1640–1642.....	Night Watch by Rembrandt.
1645–1651	Fountain of the Four Rivers, Piazza Navona, Rome, by Bernini.
1648.....	Treaty of Münster, end of the Eighty Years' War; Fronde Parliament.
1656.....	The Maids of Honor by Velázquez.
1661–1715.....	Louis XIV reigns as absolute monarch in France.
1662.....	The Syndics of the Cloth Guild by Rembrandt.
1662–1665	The Art of Painting by Vermeer.
1676–1708.....	Design and construction of the Palace of Versailles, with Louis Le Vau as architect and André Le Nôtre as landscape architect.
1682.....	French court moves to Versailles.
1720s–1760s	Rococo style in France.
1748.....	Archaeological discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum bring about renewed interest in ancient art and Renaissance Classicism.
c. 1770–1850.....	Neoclassicism and Romanticism.
1775–1783	American Revolution.
1789–1793.....	French Revolution.

1792.....	French invasion of Austria, launching a series of wars of “liberation” initiated by the French armies.
1793.....	Execution of King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette; murder of Jean-Paul Marat; Reign of Terror.
1796.....	French invasion of Italy.
1798.....	Invention of lithography.
1799.....	Napoleonic campaigns in the Holy Land.
1799–1804.....	Consulate of Napoleon.
1804.....	Napoleon declares himself emperor.
1808.....	Napoleon compels King Charles IV of Spain to abdicate in favor of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte; open revolts erupt across Spain.
1814.....	Napoleon deposed.
1815.....	Defeated at Waterloo, Napoleon exiled to St. Helena.
1816.....	The frigate Medusa founders off the coast of Africa and only 15 of its passengers survive; the incident inspires Géricault’s Raft of the Medusa.
1821–1828	Greek war for independence against the Turks.
1830.....	July Revolution in France; Louis-Philippe, the “Citizen King,” installed on the throne.
c. 1840–1900.....	Realism, a style which can include Impressionism, but is best exemplified by the paintings of Courbet and Millet.

1848.....	Failed revolutions across Europe; Louis-Philippe is overthrown.
1852.....	Louis Napoleon declares himself Emperor Napoleon III, establishing the Second Empire in France.
1854–1855	Interior of My Studio: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Life as a Painter by Courbet.
1855.....	Universal Exhibition in Paris; Courbet’s Pavilion of Realism.
1863.....	Salon des Refusés, show of rejected Salon paintings; Manet’s Luncheon on the Grass.
1870–1871.....	Franco-Prussian War; siege of Paris (September 19, 1870).
1871.....	Revolt in Paris leads to civil war (the Commune).
1873.....	Impression: Sunrise by Monet, the painting that would give its name to Impressionism.
1874.....	First of eight pioneering exhibitions of Impressionists (the last in 1886).
1876.....	L’Absinthe (At the Café) by Degas.
1880–1887	Rodin at work on the The Gates of Hell.
1881.....	Luncheon of the Boating Party by Renoir.
1884–1886	Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte by Seurat.
1889.....	The Starry Night by Van Gogh.
1905.....	First application of the term Fauve to the art of Henri Matisse.

1906–1907.....	Beginning of Cubism with Picasso’s Les Femmes d’Alger (O.J. Version O), 1911.
c. 1912.....	Movement known as De Stijl.
1913.....	Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 (1912), by Duchamp, shown at 1913 Armory Show in New York; Birth of the Constructivist art movement in Russia.
1914–1918.....	World War I.
1916.....	Term Dada coined by Tristan Tzara.
1917–1918.....	Picasso develops his Neoclassical style, which reached its apogee with Three Women at the Spring (1921).
1924.....	Beginnings of Surrealism.
1929–1939.....	Great Depression.
1936–1939.....	Spanish Civil War; bombing of Guernica (April 26, 1937).
1939–1945.....	World War II.

Glossary

aerial perspective: The effect of deep space in a landscape painting, created by diminution of scale and softened contour lines and by giving a bluish-green tint to the distant hills and other objects. Also called *atmospheric perspective*.

alla prima (Italian: “at first”): Painting directly on canvas without preparatory drawings.

altarpiece: A painted or carved artwork placed behind or above the altar in a Christian church.

Annunciation: The announcement of the Incarnation to the Virgin Mary.

apse: Semicircular or polygonal recess at the end of the long axis (**nave**) of a Christian church.

aquatint: A method of etching a printing plate to hold tone rather than line.

arch: A curved structure used as a support over an open space, as in a doorway or bridge.

baptistry: A separate building or part of a church in which baptism is performed.

Baroque: Derived from the French and Portuguese word *barocco*, meaning an irregularly shaped pearl, this style was highly ornamental and typically involved emotion, drama, and tension. Beginning in Italy and spreading throughout Europe, the Baroque period had its beginnings in the late 16th century and continued into the 18th century.

basilica: Any church that has a longitudinal **nave**, flanked by colonnaded side aisles, terminating in an **apse**. Originally an ancient Roman public building with the same ground plan.

Book of Hours: Prayer book, often illuminated and containing a calendar.

burin: A steel tool used in the technique of engraving to make V-shaped grooves into metal plates.

burr: A ridge of metal ploughed up by the burin during engraving. The metal is left on the plate, where it collects ink that prints as soft, dark areas on the paper.

Campagna (Italian): Countryside around Rome and south to Naples.

campanile (Italian): A bell tower.

campo santo (Italian): Literally a holy field, a cemetery.

cantoria (Italian): Choir gallery or balcony.

carpet page: Manuscript page with an overall design that resembles a Turkish carpet.

casting: Technique for producing a work of sculpture in metal.

cathedral: A church where a bishop has his diocese and official seat (from the Latin *cathedra*, “throne”).

chancel: The part of the church reserved for the clergy, most often at the east end of the **nave**, beyond the crossing (**transept**).

chiaroscuro (Italian): “Light-dark,” refers to the dramatic or theatrical contrast of light and dark in painting.

classical: Term used to refer to the art produced in ancient Greece or Rome, or later art inspired by it.

clearstory: A row of windows in an outside wall that provides lighting in a church. Also spelled clerestory.

collage: A composition made of cut and pasted materials.

Constructivism: Artistic movement initiated in Russia that emphasized abstract works inspired by modern machinery.

Counter-Reformation: The reform movement within the Catholic Church brought on by the Protestant Reformation.

Cubism: A movement in modern painting that sought to show multiple views of an object on a flat surface; characterized by fragmented, geometric forms.

cupola: A small rounded structure (a small dome) traditionally built on top of a church roof.

Dada: A 20th-century movement in art in reaction to World War I that emphasized the illogical and the absurd.

de stijl (Dutch): Literally, “the style”; an art movement of the early 20th century that emphasized the use of rectangular forms and primary colors and was concerned with the integration of painting and sculpture with architecture and industrial design.

diptych: An altarpiece consisting of two hinged panels that could be opened and closed.

Doge (Venetian or Genoese dialect): “Duke,” signifying the head of state.

donor: The person who commissioned a work of art and whose portrait, along with portraits of other family members, may sometimes be included in a composition.

drypoint: A printmaking technique that involves incising a design into a metal plate using a sharp steel needle; the plate is then inked to create

multiple original impressions. Drypoints are characterized by soft, dark blacks due to the absorption of ink by the **Burr**.

duomo (Italian): Cathedral.

elevation: An architectural scale drawing showing the side, front, or rear of a building.

engraving: A printmaking technique that involves cutting a design into a metal plate with a **burin**, then inking and printing the metal plate to create multiple original impressions. The term is also used for the print that results from this process.

etching: A printmaking technique that involves drawing a design into an acid-resistant ground covering a metal plate. The plate is then bathed in acid, exposing and incising the lines in the metal surface that are unprotected by the ground. Finally, the plate is inked and printed to create multiple original impressions. The term is also used for the print that results from this process.

Eucharist: The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, celebrated in the Mass. Also the bread and wine used in the rite.

Expressionism: Style characterized by distorted and exaggerated shapes and vivid colors; used to convey the emotions aroused in the artist by certain objects or events.

Fauvism: Derived from the French word *fauves*, meaning "wild beasts." A style of painting in France around 1905 that was characterized by vivid color and intense emotionalism.

flamboyant Gothic: The last phase of the French Gothic architecture style, which was characterized by S-shaped or flame-shaped curvilinear forms. *Flamma* is Latin for "flame," and *flambeau* is French for "torch"; from these, the word *flamboyant* was derived.

flying buttress: A characteristic technique of Gothic architecture; diagonal buttresses supported by exterior arches carry the thrust of the ceiling away from the upper wall to a solid, exterior pier.

foreshortening: A technique in painting for creating the illusion of three-dimensional objects. Forms appear shortened in relation to the angle from which they are observed.

fresco (Italian): Literally, “fresh.” The technique of painting in wet plaster on a wall. If the color is painted onto wet plaster it becomes part of the plaster wall and is “true fresco” (*buon fresco*). If it is painted onto the dry surface, it is “dry fresco” (*fresco a secco*). The latter technique is used with expensive pigments or for finishing details.

frieze: A horizontal architectural band along the upper part of a wall, usually decorated with relief sculpture or painting.

Futurism: Italian style of the early 20th century that emphasized the speed and power of the machine and the vitality of modern life.

genre: A work of art showing a scene from everyday life.

Gothic: Evolving from the Romanesque style, this architectural style originated in France and spanned a period from the 12th century to the 16th century. The style is characterized by pointed arches, rib vaulting, height, stained-glass windows, and flying buttresses.

Humanism: Associated with the Renaissance and the revival of the freer intellectual spirit of Classical times, this philosophy emphasized the importance of man as an individual. It took hold in Italy in the 15th century and emphasized education, reason, and science in conjunction with theology.

illumination: A painted decoration in a manuscript.

illusionism: The use of painting techniques to convince us that we are seeing real three-dimensional forms.

Impressionism: Artistic movement originating in the 1860s in which artists attempted to capture the transient effects of light and used the high-keyed spectrum range of colors. The term was derogatory when coined.

international Gothic: A subset of Gothic art, this style may be seen as a counter-reaction against the severe religiosity that followed the Black Death, as well as a rebirth of courtly late Gothic art. It focused more on observation than symbolism.

lay figure: An articulated wooden figure that artists use in lieu of a model.

linear perspective: The mathematical system of creating the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface that was first known in ancient Greece and was redeveloped in the early 15th century in Florence. The architect Filippo Brunelleschi is generally credited with the invention.

lithography: A method of printmaking invented in 1798 that involves drawing a design on a porous stone or metal plate with a greasy crayon, then fixing the design to the stone and washing, inking, and printing the stone to create multiple original impressions. The term is also used for the print that results from this process.

Maestà (Italian: Majesty): Refers to certain large representations of the Madonna and Christ Child.

mannerism: Derived from the Italian phrase *maniera della antica*, meaning “manner of the antique.” This style predominated in Italy and was widespread throughout Europe from the end of the Renaissance to the beginning of the Baroque period. It was characterized by distortions of space, form, and color.

Mass: The celebration of the Eucharist, in reference to the sacrifice of Christ. The central rite of the Christian liturgy.

medium: The material or technique in which an artist works.

modeling: Technique used to produce the illusion of three dimensions in painting by changing colors, adding shadows, and so on.

naturalism: A stylistic approach, found in many eras, that emphasized capturing the precisely detailed image of an object. Not the same as **realism**.

nave: Central aisle of a church, extending from the entrance to the chancel.

Neoclassicism: Artistic style of the late 18th and early 19th century inspired by the Enlightenment and the art of Classical antiquity.

Neo-Plasticism: An alternative term for *de Stijl*, with an emphasis on using rectangular forms and primary colors.

Neo-Platonism: A system that attempted to reconcile the ancient philosophy of Plato and Plotinus with the teachings of Christianity. Developed in Alexandria and other Greek centers in the 3rd century A.D. and revived in the Italian Renaissance.

oil: Describes the medium in which pigments are suspended in a drying medium, such as linseed or walnut oil. Because the medium does not dry rapidly (as tempera does), it can be applied freely over a wide area, and because the colors are translucent rather than opaque, they create effects of depth and luminosity. When dry, oils are solid films. The Renaissance development of the oil medium can be traced to the Netherlands in the early 15th century, and it became the dominant medium from the 16th century onward.

Passion: The sufferings of Christ from the Last Supper through the Crucifixion; in art, may be used to include post-Crucifixion events.

perspective: See **linear perspective** and **aerial perspective**.

Pietà (Italian: Pity): The name given to a representation of the dead Christ supported by the Virgin Mary.

plein air (French): “Open air”; refers to painting out-of-doors, as opposed to studio painting.

pointillism: The technique of applying tiny brushstrokes of paint to an entire work, developed by Seurat in the 1880s.

polyptych: An altarpiece or other devotional picture or relief sculpture, made up of multiple panels. Typically, a central panel flanked by wings and surmounted by gables or other forms and sometimes accompanied by smaller panels (the *predella*) below the main panels.

predella (Italian): The lower part of a large altarpiece, decorated with small paintings relating to the figures above.

quatrefoil (French): A decorative shape similar to a four-leaf clover, common in Gothic art as a field for relief sculpture or painting.

realism: The fidelity to natural appearance in painting, found in many periods of art. In the mid-19th century, it was a movement in which artists abandoned Neoclassicism and Romanticism in favor of depicting subjects from the everyday contemporary world, sometimes with a political or social message.

Reformation: A 16th-century religious movement that sought to reform the Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of Protestant churches.

relief: The projection of a figure or design from the background on which it is carved, molded, or stamped.

Renaissance: Derived from the Italian word *rinascimento*, meaning “rebirth” or “revival.” Originating in Italy, this period from the late 14th century through the 16th century was characterized by a rebirth of interest in ancient Rome and Classical literature and emphasized art, culture, and learning.

rococo: An 18th-century style characterized by pastel colors, lively brushwork, and the choice of light, exotic, often erotic, subjects. The term is derived from *rocaille*, a word referring to decorative rock work, as in gardens or parks.

romanesque: An architectural style developed in France in the 11th century. The style is based on ancient Roman architecture and is typically massive, with round arches, heavy walls, and barrel vaults.

Romanticism: A late 18th- and early 19th-century art style that focused on subjects of intense emotional importance to the artist and emphasized the depiction of nature in its untamed state.

sarcophagus: A large stone coffin.

stanza (Italian): Room.

Surrealism: From the French meaning “super-reality.” A 20th-century art movement based upon the unconscious and depicting irrational, dream-like, or fantastic images.

tempera: A water-based painting medium in which ground colors are usually suspended in egg yolk. The principal medium before the late 15th century in Europe, it is characterized by a gleaming surface, decorative flatness, and durability. Sometimes used in conjunction with oil paints.

transept: The short axis, or cross arm, of a church. It intersects the **nave** just before the chancel. The ground plan of such a church is cross-shaped.

triptych: An altarpiece or other devotional image made up of three painted or carved panels. The wings are smaller than the center panel and are sometimes hinged for closing.

trompe l'oeil (French): Literally, “trick the eye”; a style of painting that is intended to deceive the viewer’s perception of three-dimensionality. See **Illusionism**.

tympanum: The area between the lintel of the doorway and the arch above it. It may be decorated with sculpture or painting.

woodcut: The earliest printmaking technique in Europe, involving producing a design on a block of wood by cutting away everything but the raised design, then inking and printing the block to create multiple originals. The term is also used for the print that results from this technique.

Biographical Notes

Alberti, Leon Battista (1404–1472). Important Florentine architect and theorist whose lasting fame derives from his book *On Painting*, in which the principles of perspective were articulated for the first time, and from his *Ten Books on Architecture*, the first publication on the subject since Roman times.

Baciccio (Giovanni Battista Gaulli) (1639–1709). Italian painter who was influenced by Rubens, van Dyck, and Bernini; most well known for his *Adoration of the Holy Name of Jesus*, painted on the ceiling of the Church of il Gesu in Rome.

Barocci, Federico (1535–1612). A famous painter in his time, Barocci was also an important reformer of the complexity of the Mannerist school.

Bellini, Gentile (c. 1429–1507). A major Venetian artist who painted narrative cycles and other large paintings in which contemporary Venice was vividly rendered. Gentile was the older brother of Giovanni Bellini (see below).

Bellini, Giovanni (c. 1430–1516). The first great master of the Venetian Renaissance and a major painter of Madonnas and large altarpieces that span the period from the Early to the High Renaissance. Among the first to introduce landscape as an important expressive element in his paintings.

Bernini, Gian Lorenzo (1598–1680). Roman sculptor and architect of the Baroque period, Bernini is considered a universal genius of 17th-century art. He was appointed official Architect of St. Peter's.

Boccaccio, Giovanni (1313–1375). Humanist, poet, and author of the *Decameron*, a collection of 100 stories whose backdrop was the Black Death. These tales established the vernacular Italian prose style.

Bosch, Hieronymus (1450–1516). A Netherlandish painter known for his dreamlike compositions blending fantasy and reality.

Botticelli, Sandro (1445–1510). A student of Filippo Lippi who became one of the most original painters of the last quarter of the Quattrocento. Botticelli is noted for a lyrical style joined to innovative religious and allegorical subject matter. Among his famous works are *The Birth of Venus* and *Primavera* (“*Spring*”), both created for the Medici family.

Boucher, François (1703–1770). The most famous exponent of the Rococo in French painting, embodying a playful, curvilinear style and lighthearted subject matter.

Brancusi, Constantin (1876–1957). A pioneer of modern sculpture, he is well known for his 17 versions of *Bird in Space*.

Braque, Georges (1882–1963). Originally associated with Fauvism, this French painter later worked closely with Picasso in the invention and evolution of Cubism. He is known for painting still lifes using geometric shapes and for adding collage elements to his work.

Bronzino, Agnolo (1503–1572). Court painter to Cosimo de’Medici in Florence; known for his Mannerist-style portraits.

Bruegel, Pieter (1528/30–1569). Great Netherlandish painter and designer of prints; known for his paintings illustrating proverbs, as well as seasonal landscapes and views of peasant life.

Brunelleschi, Filippo (1377–1446). Seminal architect and engineer of the Italian Renaissance, he was famous for designing the great dome of the Cathedral in Florence. Usually credited as the inventor of linear perspective, he was also a sculptor.

Campin, Robert (c. 1375/80–1444). One of the founders of Netherlandish painting and the teacher of Rogier van der Weyden.

Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio) (1571–1610). One of the founders of the 17th-century Baroque style in Rome. Also known for his dramatic use of *chiaroscuro*, the contrast of light and dark in painting.

Carracci, Annibale (1560–1609). Bolognese painter known for his decoration in the Farnese Palace. Together with his older brother, Agostino, and his cousin, Ludovico, Annibale founded an art academy that emphasized Naturalism and reacted against Mannerist stylistic principles.

Castiglione, Baldassare (1478–1529). Author of *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), a vivid description of the manners and ideals of a Humanist court (Urbino) and the intellectual and cultural life of the Renaissance aristocracy.

Cézanne, Paul (1839–1906). One of the greatest French artists of the late 19th century whose seminal work paved the way to abstraction in 20th-century art.

Chardin, Jean-Simeon (1699–1779). French artist known for his still life and genre paintings.

Cimabue (Bencivieni di Pepo) (c. 1240–1302). Florentine painter who began the development from the Italo-Byzantine style toward Realism that reached fruition in the Renaissance.

Claude Lorrain (Claude Gellée) (1600–1682). Influential French landscape painter working in Rome, known simply as Claude in English. His compositional innovations in landscape painting became the established mode for 200 years.

Constable, John (1776–1837). Major English landscape painter of the 19th century. He was a Romantic realist absorbed in the rhythms of nature.

Corot, Camille (1796–1875). French landscape artist who practiced *plein-air* painting. His work was a precursor of Impressionism, and he had an important influence on Monet and Pissarro.

Correggio (Antonio Allegri) (1494–1534). Centered in Parma, he took spatial illusionism to a new level of daring in his dome frescoes in the cathedral and the Church of St. John the Evangelist. He used a soft, fluid brushwork in his easel paintings, especially of erotic nudes, that anticipated the 18th-century Rococo style.

Courbet, Gustave (1819–1877). French painter and the greatest exponent of Realism; best known for his earthy scenes of peasant life around the provincial town of Ornans, including *The Stonebreakers*.

Dali, Salvador (1904–1989). Spanish painter and one of the leading artists of Surrealism. His paintings depict a dream world in which everyday objects are transformed in bizarre ways.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). Author of the *Divine Comedy*, one of the enduring masterpieces of world literature. This long theological poem, written in the vernacular rather than Latin, was the most influential work in establishing Italian as the written language of Italy. A Florentine, he spent most of his life as a political exile.

Daumier, Honoré (1808–1879). French painter, sculptor, and lithographer known for his newspaper caricatures critiquing the vicissitudes of French life and often attacking the government of France.

David, Jacques-Louis (1748–1825). The greatest painter in the Neoclassical style, David was also involved with important political events in his lifetime, from the French Revolution to the downfall of Napoleon.

Degas, Edgar (1834–1917). French painter and sculptor who was an important member of the Impressionist circle. A friend of Manet's, his subject matter included the ballet, theater, circus, racetrack, and café life of Paris.

Delacroix, Eugène (1798–1863). The greatest French Romantic painter, Delacroix influenced the development of Impressionism. Well known for his paintings of literary, historical, and contemporary events, and of exotic subjects inspired by a trip to Morocco.

Domenichino (Domenico Zampieri) (1581–1641). Bolognese painter who studied with the Carracci and assisted in the decoration in the Farnese Palace. He was an important fresco painter in Rome and Naples and is also important in the evolution of landscape painting in Italy.

Donatello (Donato di Niccolò Bardi) (1386–1466). The greatest Florentine sculptor of the early Renaissance, he was equally adept in carving stone and wood and in modeling and casting bronze figures. He was among the first to introduce linear perspective in relief sculpture and the first since antiquity to create a life-size bronze equestrian statue.

Duccio di Buoninsegna (active c. 1278–1318). Sienese painter, contemporary with Giotto, famous for his elaborate altarpiece for the Siena Cathedral, *Majesty (Maestà)*.

Duchamp, Marcel (1887–1968). An American born in France who combined Cubism and Italian Futurism in his work. He later entered into the Dada spirit with gusto and influenced the Surrealists. His intellectual influence remained strong throughout the 20th century and to the present time.

Dürer, Albrecht (1471–1528). German painter and printmaker and one of the greatest Renaissance artists in northern Europe. Famous for his woodcuts and engravings, and an incisive portraitist.

Dyck, Anthony van (1599–1641). Flemish painter who was influenced by and worked with Rubens. His influence in portraiture was lasting and widespread.

Eyck, Jan van (c. 1395–1441). Flemish painter, probably the most famous artist of the Northern Renaissance. Known for his altarpieces and portraits.

Fragonard, Jean-Honoré (1732–1806). Along with Boucher, with whom he studied, a primary exponent of the French Rococo style.

Gabo, Naum (1890–1977). Russian sculptor of the Constructivist style, who produced abstract work using glass, plastic, and wire, among other materials.

Gainsborough, Thomas (1727–1788). English portrait and landscape painter of the 18th century.

Gauguin, Paul (1848–1903). French artist best known for his lush, colorful paintings of Tahitian subjects. His work had a significant influence on Fauvism.

Gentile da Fabriano (c. 1385–1427). Painter who excelled in the International Gothic style through the first quarter of the 15th century.

Géricault, Théodore (1791–1824). French painter known for his *Raft of the Medusa*. His work influenced Delacroix and the development of Romanticism in art.

Ghiberti, Lorenzo (c. 1381–1455). Celebrated sculptor whose greatest achievements were two sets of bronze doors for the Florentine Baptistery, including the so-called *Gates of Paradise*.

Ghirlandaio, Domenico (1449–1494). Florentine fresco specialist who operated one of the most sought-after large workshops of the late 15th century. His narrative scenes are packed with details of contemporary life and with portraits of notable Florentines.

Giacometti, Alberto (1901–1966). Swiss sculptor and painter who worked in a style related to Cubism. His best-known figures are recognizable by their elongated, slender forms.

Giorgione (Giorgio da Castelfranco) (c. 1476/78–1510). Exceptional Venetian artist who studied with Giovanni Bellini and worked with Titian. He is considered one of the founders of the Venetian High Renaissance. His extensive inclusion of landscape in his paintings, his masterful use of oil paints, and his characteristic softness of touch, together with his ambiguous subject matter and the rarity of his surviving paintings, have made him one of the most discussed and admired artists of the Renaissance.

Giotto di Bondone (1266/67–1337). One of the greatest Italian painters of any period, his frescoes in the Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel in Padua became a pilgrimage spot for subsequent artists. He is often described as a proto-Renaissance painter, because of his emphasis on substantial figures of solemn and significant bearing and his early intuitive anticipation of perspective recession.

Goes, Hugo van der (c. 1440–1482). A Flemish painter from Ghent who was commissioned by Tommaso Portinari, a Medici banking agent in the Netherlands, to paint a huge altarpiece for a family chapel in Florence, where it had a measurable impact on Florentine painters.

Gogh, Vincent van (1853–1890). Dutch painter who lived and worked in France during the period of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. His still lifes, landscapes, and depictions of peasants working in the countryside had a significant impact on modern painting. He suffered severe depression, which culminated in his suicide, and sold only one work of art in his lifetime.

Gossaert, Jan (called Mabuse) (1478–1532). Flemish painter who introduced the style and subjects of the Italian Renaissance to the Low Countries.

Goya, Francisco (1746–1828). Spanish artist who embodied many political and artistic movements in his work. As a court artist, he designed tapestries in a Spanish Rococo style; under the French occupation, he painted many portraits; and after the expulsion of the French, he made haunting and powerful paintings that have the emotional immediacy of Romanticism.

Goyen, Jan van (1596–1656). One of the founders of Realistic landscape painting in the Netherlands, his focus was the depiction of atmospheric effects.

Greco, El (“the Greek”) (Domenico Theotocopoulos) (1541–1614). El Greco was the first great master of the Spanish Golden Age in painting. His unique distortions of form, associated with Mannerism, became his signature style.

Greuze, Jean-Baptiste (1725–1805). French painter celebrated in his lifetime for heavily moralizing genre paintings; now most admired for his drawings and portraits.

Gros, Baron Antoine-Jean (1771–1835). Accompanied Napoleon on his campaigns as the official painter of battles. His work influenced Delacroix and the development of Romanticism.

Grünewald, Matthias (c. 1470–1528). Creator of the famous Isenheim Altarpiece in Colmar, a masterwork of German Renaissance art.

Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri) (1591–1666). Bolognese painter known for his illusionistic ceiling fresco *Aurora* and his influence on the development of the Baroque.

Hals, Frans (1581/85–1666). Dutch painter whose portraits and bravura brushwork have rarely been equaled. He is considered, along with Rembrandt and Vermeer, among the preeminent Dutch painters.

Heda, Willem Claesz (1594–1682). Dutch still-life painter of the Baroque era.

Hooch, Pieter de (1629–after 1684). Dutch genre painter known for the harmony, quiet, and simplicity of his best paintings.

Houdon, Jean-Antoine (1741–1828). French sculptor famous for his portrait busts of leading figures of his day.

Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique (1780–1867). A long-lived French Neoclassical painter, pupil of David, and well-known portraitist in his day. His work influenced Degas, Renoir, and Picasso.

Kandinsky, Wassily (1866–1944). Russian painter who produced some of the earliest abstract works of the 20th century.

Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig (1880–1938). German painter, printmaker, and sculptor and one of the founders of German Expressionism.

Lanfranco, Giovanni (1582–1647). Italian Baroque artist who became the leading fresco painter in Rome after the death of Annibale Carracci. Later worked in Naples

Laurana, Luciano (c. 1420/25–1479). An architect from Dalmatia, he worked in Mantua and Pesaro before he was chosen by Federigo da Montefeltro to be the architect of the ducal palace in Urbino (1465–c. 1472). His courtyard there is regarded as one of the finest architectural achievements of the Renaissance.

Lebrun, Charles (1619–1690). Artist in charge of the vast interior decoration of Versailles.

Le Nôtre, André (1613–1700). Landscape architect in charge of the gardens at Versailles.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519). The embodiment of the Renaissance man, Leonardo was a universal genius in painting, sculpture, architecture, drawing, and the sciences of his day. He trained in Verrocchio's workshop in Florence. He later worked for a long period in Milan for the Sforza family, as well as in Rome. He spent his last years in France at the court of Francis I.

Le Vau, Louis (1612–1670). Principal architect of Versailles.

Lippi, Filippino (1457/8–1504). Son of Filippo Lippi, he studied with his father and with Botticelli and completed the fresco cycle in the Brancacci Chapel.

Lorenzetti, Ambrogio (c. 1290–1348), and **Pietro Lorenzetti** (b. c. 1280–1348). These brothers dominated Siennese painting from the 1320s to the time of their deaths from the plague. Ambrogio is known for his *Allegories of Good and Bad Government*, frescoes in the city hall of Siena.

Lorenzo Monaco (c. 1370–c. 1425). A Siennese painter of the International Gothic style, he also worked in Florence. For a time, he was a Carmelite monk, hence his name.

Lucas van der Leyden (1494–1538). One of the finest draftsmen and engravers in Holland and a painter of religious pictures and other subjects in brilliant colors.

Magritte, René (1898–1967). Belgian Surrealist painter who excelled in the combination of unexpected objects or the creation of unexplained tableaux.

Manet, Edouard (1832–1883). The French artist whose paintings are usually said to mark the beginning of modern art. His work is characterized by a vivid, painterly technique; a high-toned palette; and enigmatic, subjects, usually with figures.

Mansart, Jules Hardouin (1646–1708). Architect who completed Versailles.

Mantegna, Andrea (c. 1430/31–1506). Master painter in Padua and Mantua, his art has a sculptural quality, combined with rich color and a spirit of pathos. Deeply influenced by the remains of Roman art, he was also an innovator in spatial illusionism.

Martini, Simone (c. 1284–1344). A student of Duccio's, he emulated both the elegant linearity and the coloristic brilliance of his teacher.

Masaccio (Tommaso di ser Giovanni) (1401–1428). The most important and famous early Renaissance painter in Italy, his fame centers on the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence. His frescoes in both the Brancacci Chapel and Santa Maria Novella present a new sense of solidity in his figures and a greater understanding of scale and perspective than that of any of his contemporaries.

Masolino da Panicale (1383–1440 or 1447). Masolino was the artist who began work in the Brancacci Chapel before being joined by Masaccio. His art essentially continues the International Gothic style.

Matisse, Henri (1868–1954). One of the dominant artists of the 20th century, Matisse was a painter, sculptor, and graphic artist. In 1905, he was the principal painter of the group known as the “Fauves” (wild beasts). His work is characterized by use of vivid color, two-dimensional design, and bold line.

Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475–1564). One of history’s greatest and most famous artists, he was a sculptor, architect, and painter whose work was so overpowering in its effect that his influence was inescapable during his own lifetime and has never ceased. His training was in Florence, and his career was divided between that city and Rome, where his imprint on the architecture and decoration of St. Peter’s and the Vatican is permanent.

Millet, Jean François (1814–1875). French Barbizon painter known for his peasant scenes and landscapes.

Miro, Jean (1893–1983). Spanish painter and sculptor influenced by Dada and Surrealism. His work draws on memory, fantasy, and the irrational.

Mondrian, Piet (1872–1944). A Dutch painter whose work is characterized by straight lines, right angles, and primary colors—his attempt to supply order to a disordered world. He was a member of the movement known as *De Stijl* (“the style”) and a founder of Neo-Plasticism.

Monet, Claude (1840–1926). French artist and the leading practitioner of landscape Impressionism; his painting *Impression: Sunrise* gave the name to the movement. Also known for his series paintings of train stations, haystacks, Rouen Cathedral, and his gardens at Giverny.

Murillo, Esteban (1617–1682). Spanish artist, principally a religious painter but also known for his genre paintings of peasant boys.

Orcagna, Andrea (c. 1308–1368). Florentine painter, sculptor, and architect whose mature career coincided with the catastrophic plague that ravaged Italy and Europe. His art consequently was regressive and medieval in its severe hieratic style.

Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) (1503–1540). Born in Parma, where he was influenced by Correggio, he was a fluent draftsman, printmaker, and painter. He was imprisoned during the Sack of Rome. His mature style was Mannerist, characterized by the stylized elongation of forms.

Patinir, Joachim (1480–1524). Netherlandish painter well known for setting religious subjects in detailed natural landscapes, usually alpine.

Perugino (Pietro Vanucci) (1446–1523). As his name implies, he was from the central Italian hill town of Perugia. He was the head of a large and influential workshop and the teacher of Raphael. An esteemed painter, he worked on the 1842 decorations of the new Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

Picasso, Pablo (1881–1973). Spanish artist, with Georges Braque, the inventor of Cubism, and the dominant name in 20th-century art. He worked in many styles throughout his long life. *He is also credited with being the first modern artist to include collage elements in his work.*

Piero della Francesca (c. 1420–1492). Now considered one of the greatest of Renaissance painters, he was primarily associated with smaller urban centers, such as Urbino and Arezzo, where he created the fresco cycle *The Legend of the True Cross*. He was also a theorist and skilled mathematician.

Pietro da Cortona (Pietro Berrettini) (1596–1669). Italian Baroque painter, sculptor, and architect, known for his illusionistic ceiling decoration in the Barberini Palace in Rome.

Pisano, Giovanni (c. 1248–after 1314). Son of Nicola Pisano (see below), who shared his father's genius for sculpture. Along with his father, Giovanni was also an architect whose work shows a combined Classical and Gothic influence.

Pisano, Nicola (1220–1278). The finest Gothic sculptor in 13th-century Tuscany. He revived Roman Classical forms for use in his religious sculpture.

Pissarro, Camille (1830–1903). One of the founders of French Impressionism, Pissarro is noted for his landscapes and scenes of rural life.

Pontorno (Jacopo Carucci) (1494–1556). A 16th-century Florentine painter of frescoes, portraits, and religious subjects on canvas. He worked in a Mannerist idiom characterized by ambiguous expressions, illogical space, and strangely weightless forms.

Poussin, Nicholas (1593/94–1665). The founder of French Baroque Classical painting in the 17th century. Poussin spent most of his career in Rome, where he enjoyed many commissions and completed many masterworks depicting sacred subjects, such as *The Rape of the Sabine Women* and *The Massacre of the Innocents*. Also painted mythological subjects and landscapes.

Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio or Santi) (1483–1520). The illustrious Renaissance painter born in Urbino who studied first with his father, then with Perugino. He worked in Florence from 1504 to 1508 and later in Rome, until his premature death. A major portrait artist who also was renowned for his many graceful images of the Madonna, his larger masterpieces were the frescoes decorating the papal apartments in the Vatican that were painted for Popes Julius II and Leo X. His historical importance and fame has continued throughout the 500 years since his death.

Rembrandt (van Rijn) (1606–1669). A Dutch painter and printmaker and one of the dominant names in art history. Rembrandt painted and etched nearly every category imaginable, from mythological scenes to scenes from the Bible and Dutch history and, of course, portraits. His portraits seem to communicate the thoughts and emotions of his subjects. His work is noted for its rich warm color and masterful *chiaroscuro*.

Reni, Guido (1575–1642). Bolognese Baroque painter of religious and mythological subjects. His work exhibited great technical skill, and he was once ranked as the peer of Raphael.

Renoir, Auguste (1841–1919). One of the most well-loved of the Impressionists; known for the beauty of his color and the sensuality and *joie de vivre* in his work.

Riemenschneider, Tilman (1460–1531). German artist who worked principally as a sculptor in wood and stone; his work displays a compelling Humanism and emotional directness.

Robbia, Luca della (1400–1482). Luca was the most important artist of a large Florentine family of sculptors associated with the invention and use of glazed terracotta. He is famous for his *Cantoria*, or choir gallery, executed for the Florentine Cathedral.

Rodin, Auguste (1840–1917). French sculptor whose work personified late Romantic Expressionism. His most important works include *The Burghers of Calais*, *Balzac*, and *The Gates of Hell*, from which he derived many individual sculptures throughout his career.

Rosso Fiorentino (Giovanni Battista di Rosso) (1495–1540). Rosso was a Florentine painter who was deeply affected by the Sack of Rome. He developed a personal version of the Mannerist style, which he later introduced into France, where he worked for Francis I at Fontainebleau from 1530.

Rubens, Peter Paul (1577–1640). Flemish Baroque painter who was famous throughout Europe and extraordinarily productive. Today, Rubens is considered one of the foremost painters in art history and is noted for the energy given his work through his handling of light and color.

Ruisdael, Jacob van (c. 1628/29–1682). Dutch artist of the Baroque era; often considered the greatest Dutch landscape painter.

Savonarola, Girolamo (1452–1498). Savonarola was a charismatic Florentine religious reformer and Dominican monk. He preached in Florence against the vanity, materialism, and immorality of the upper classes (including the Medici) and the corruption of the clergy. He urged the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII of France. In 1497, he was excommunicated, and the following May, he was burned at the stake in Florence.

Schongauer, Martin (1450–1491). German painter and innovative printmaker who expanded the range of contrasts and textures in engraving.

Seurat, Georges (1859–1891). Most well known practitioner of the technique of Pointillism, an extension of the Impressionists' attempts to capture the play of light in painting. His most famous work is *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte*.

Steen, Jan (1626–1679). One of the greatest Dutch genre painters; known for both his humor and the technical skill exhibited in his work.

Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) (c. 1488/90–1576). The long-lived Titian was the greatest Venetian High Renaissance painter. The unsurpassed richness of his color and his sensuous and monumental figures defined Venetian painting, and his influence has reverberated through the history of art from Rubens to Delacroix to Renoir.

Traini, Francesco (active 1321–1363). A minor Pisan artist to whom the *Triumph of Death*, in the Campo Santo there, is attributed.

Turner, Joseph Mallord William (1775–1851). English landscape painter whose Romanticism was expressed in vibrant color and improvisatory brushwork. Astonishingly prolific, his painting influenced Impressionism.

Vasari, Giorgio (1511–1574). Famous biographer of Italian and other artists (*The Lives of the Artists*), as well as an architect and painter. He was a close friend and disciple of Michelangelo.

Velázquez, Diego Rodriguez de Silva (1599–1660). One of the greatest Spanish painters and a master of Realism. He was the court painter at Madrid and is known for his landscapes, mythological and religious paintings, genre pictures, and portraits, as well as for his brilliant illusionism and unique interpretations of subjects.

Vermeer, Johannes (1632–1675). Dutch genre painter who left only about 35 known works. Relatively little is known about his life, but his paintings are valued for their sensitive treatment of light and color.

Veronese, Paolo (Paolo Cagliari) (c. 1528–1588). In the 16th century, Veronese worked in Venice as the greatest decorator of palaces, mainland villas, and monastery refectories. He was famous for his depiction of richly colored, sumptuous costumes and his immense, illusionistic settings. He worked extensively in the ducal palace in Venice, as well as on numerous other wall and ceiling frescoes. He was also an important painter of altarpieces.

Watteau, Antoine (1684–1721). One of the initiators of the French Rococo style; his favorite subjects included the theater and ladies and gentlemen at play in outdoor settings, often suffused with melancholy.

Weyden, Rogier van der (1399/1400–1464). A pupil of Robert Campin, Rogier served as city painter in Louvain and executed the *Descent from the Cross* for the chapel of the Archers' Guild. His emotional art was very influential in Germany as well as Flanders in the later 15th century.

Witte, Emanuel de (1616/18–1692). Dutch painter who specialized in architectural scenes, primarily church and house interiors; his work depicted the play of light and shadow in these settings.

Zurbaran, Francisco de (1598–1664). Spanish painter known for direct narrative scenes and strong light-dark contrasts. He frequently painted for monasteries, and his art reflects the solemnity of those establishments.

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