

EUROPE - 1300-1750 CE

Part 2: Northern Renaissance Art - Painting + Printmaking (1400-1650)

CONTEXT:

Painting:

IDEA:



EFFECT ON THE ARTS:

15th century:

1. secularization of culture = variety of subject matter in Northern Renaissance painting
"humanization of religious themes"
2. capitalism/banking/urbanization = new patrons for the arts
(1400- Dukes of Burgundy were the most powerful rulers in northern Europe - Court of Burgundy=powerful financial and trading center)
3. "sanctification of sight" (micro vs. macro) = intense detail and the miniaturist traditions
4. invention of oil painting technique = a. more detail possible because of slow drying time of oil
b. attention to surface textures and reflected light effects
c. intense, saturated color and subtle value gradations possible
5. printmaking develops into an art form = multiple images and wide dissemination of artistic ideas
1456 Gutenberg develops printing press and publishes Bible - cheaper than one oil painting!
6. Protestant Reformation = personalization of religious experience
1517 Martin Luther posts the 95 Theses condemning Church's practices

16th century:

STOKSTAD, 5th Edition, Chapter 19 and 22

Characteristics of Northern Renaissance Painting:

1. Sober realism - grave and sedate as opposed to Italian Renaissance's tendency to idealize using Classical models
2. Humanization of religious themes - site and time specific without overt religious depictions (Merode Altarpiece)
 - a. eliminating traditional religious iconography - religious figures often without halos
 - b. contemporizing religious events - bible stories taking place in an everyday household
 - c. secondary symbolism - secular scenes filled with religious symbolism
3. Analytical approach to the world - every object and details of each object is treated with equal emphasis
 - a. elaborately detailed interiors - Italian Renaissance fascination with linear perspective is not the obsession
 - b. rich color - due to oil technique
 - c. surface of form dominates over form itself - love of surface textures and detail
4. New interest in portraiture - due to stress on individuality and realism (Giovanni Arnolfini and his Bride)
 - a. intense scrutiny and analysis of individual trait, sometimes unflatteringly honest
5. Expressionist sensibilities - stressing human actions and dramas (Isenheim Altarpiece)
 - a. asking the viewer to personally identify with "human" pain and emotional grief

ARTWORKS

- 66. Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)
- 68. The Arnolfini Portrait, Jan van Eyck
- 77. Isenheim Altarpiece, Matthias Grünewald
- 74. Adam and Eve, Albrecht Dürer
- 79. Allegory of Law and Grace, Lucas Cranach the Elder
- 83. Hunters in the Snow, Pieter Bruegel the Elder
- * Garden of Earthly Delights, Hieronymus Bosch



What is the FUNCTION of this art work?

Terms and Techniques: Oil Painting ➤ pigment, glazes

Printmaking ➤ relief process: woodcuts, wood block prints
intaglio process: etching - acid baths / bite / tar
engraving - incising, burin