

Renaissance

The Renaissance emerged from the end of the Medieval period. As towns and a merchant culture began to develop a strong sense of individualism began to develop.

In intellectual culture, the Black Plague had brought an influx of foreign scholars from the East, bringing with them copies of Aristotle updated with all the latest scientific knowledge. Aristotle's ideas about taking an interest in the physical world and appreciating the beauty of the world around us began to mingle with Plato's ideas of an ideal world.

That combination of individual motivation with rising monetary success and an appreciation of the real world gave rise to a rebirth in art and culture which produced some of the finest art works in history.

A lot of things were wrong with the renaissance (meaning rebirth). It wasn't the perfect time, and some of the trends started then caused later damage and degeneration. But in reviving art, culture, education, science, and, ultimately religion, the renaissance was a time worth noting.

Renaissance

RE – again, new

NAISSANCE – Birth

- *Study/ translation of Greek classics*
- *Influx of new literature from the east*
 - *Constantinople*
 - *Black death*
- *Rise of the merchant class*



With the rise of individualism came the rise of artistic competition. Throughout the renaissance with the tightly-packed and highly competitive artistic climate, artists were frequently butting heads over patrons, regional respect, and individual jobs.

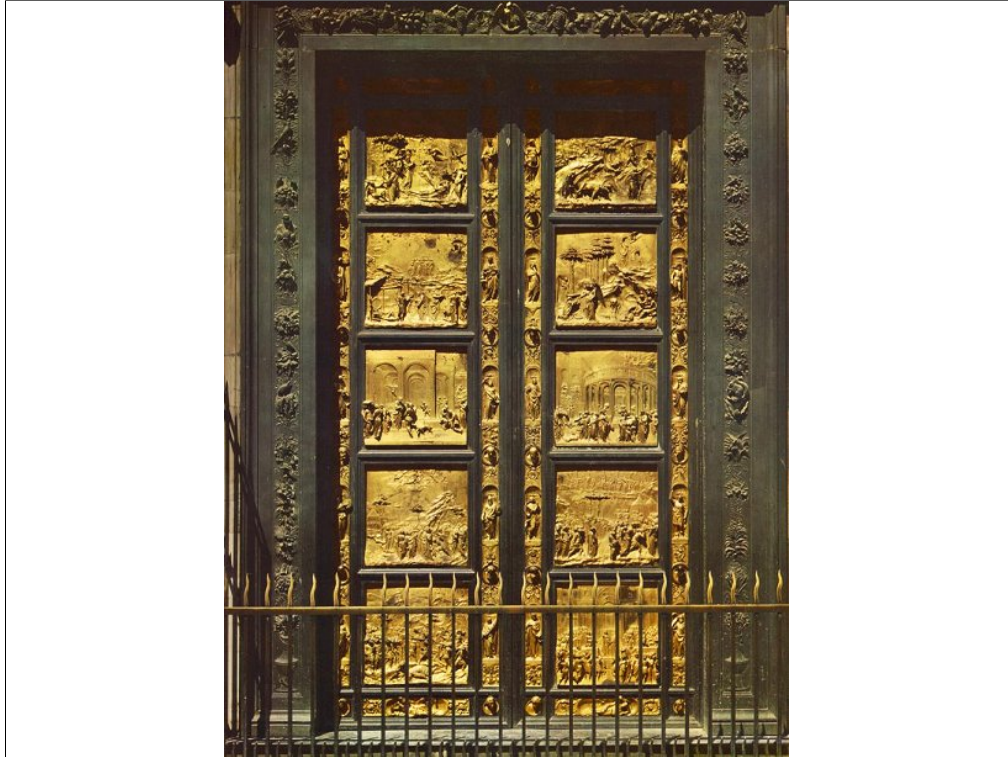
Among the first, greatest, and most influential of those rivalries was one between a pair of artists in Florence – **Brunelleschi** and **Ghiberti**.

A competition was held in Florence for the commission to create the doors of the baptistery at the Florence Cathedral.

The two final contenders were **Brunelleschi** and **Ghiberti**. With a pair of quatrefoils.

The one that was chosen was selected for particular reasons

- Clear composition, perspective, division of space
- Dramatic emotion and 3-D sculpting
- Use of space w/o falling over the edges



Ghiberti was chosen to create the baptistery doors, which are still a frequently visited tourist attraction.

17 feet high

Gilt (gold-covered) bronze relief

New square panels are more “Modern” (renaissance) than medieval quatrefoils.

Current doors are a modern copy of the originals which are currently safely in a museum.



Brunelleschi was peeved. Seriously peeved that he had lost. He pretty much abandoned sculpting, but he didn't stop creating art or seeking out commissions to pay the bills.

Bruno turned to architecture. He understood geometry and proportion, and he got a whopper of a commission.

The Florence cathedral wanted to commission the biggest dome ever built
**earlier domes (Panteon, Hagia...)

Bruno was presented with a double challenge: 1. Biggest open dome ever built w/o external supports 2. Dome had to support a tower/oculus at its apex.

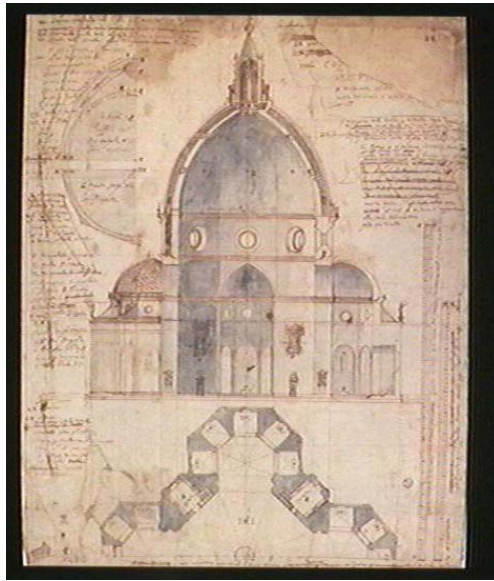
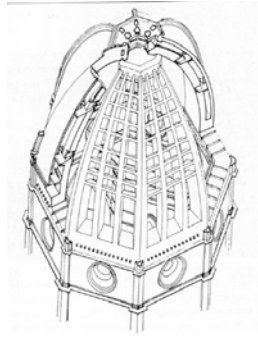


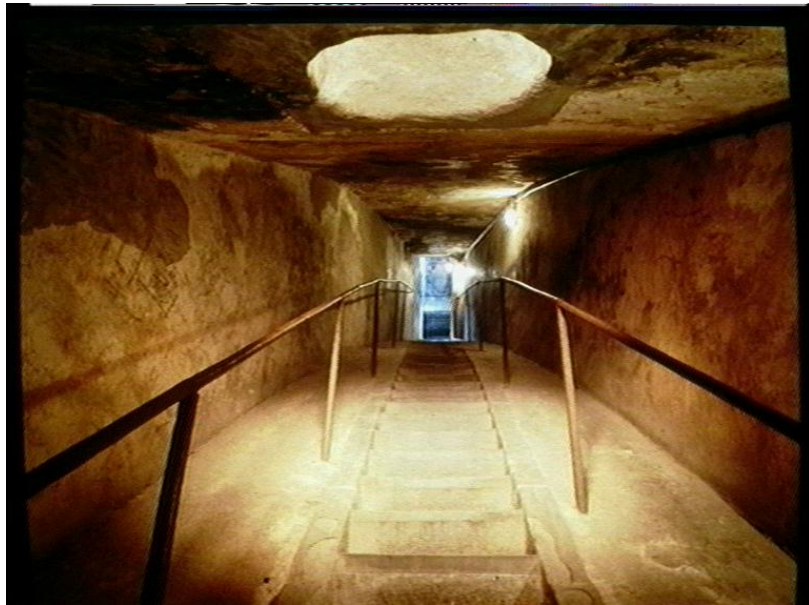


Bruno came up with a plan to make the dome work, both during construction and after.

- Double shell - inner, lighter; outer, weatherproof
- Brickwork in herringbone shape to distribute weight to supports – outward not just down
- Two dome supported one another

Just like Bruno perfected earlier methods to produce new stuff, other artists did the same. Therefore, it's worth taking a detour into general methods before returning to specifics.







Italy was the primary hotbed of art during the Renaissance. Just like Paris was the center of education in the Medieval period, Italy was the center during the Renaissance.

There were 3 reasons for that :

1. Government
2. Money
3. Money (demand & power)

Italy was divided in to small city states or principalities. Each city state had its own governmental system and ruling family. Usually the ruling families hated each other and were frequently at war. Additionally, the pope and the Vatican were involved in the mix, with their lands and states that they claimed were under their political authority (and owed them taxes).



Medici



The “first family” of Italy, patrons of some of the greatest artists of all time, producers of 2 popes, and general power-brokers were the Medici.

The medici were a family of bankers and money lenders. They were very good at their business.

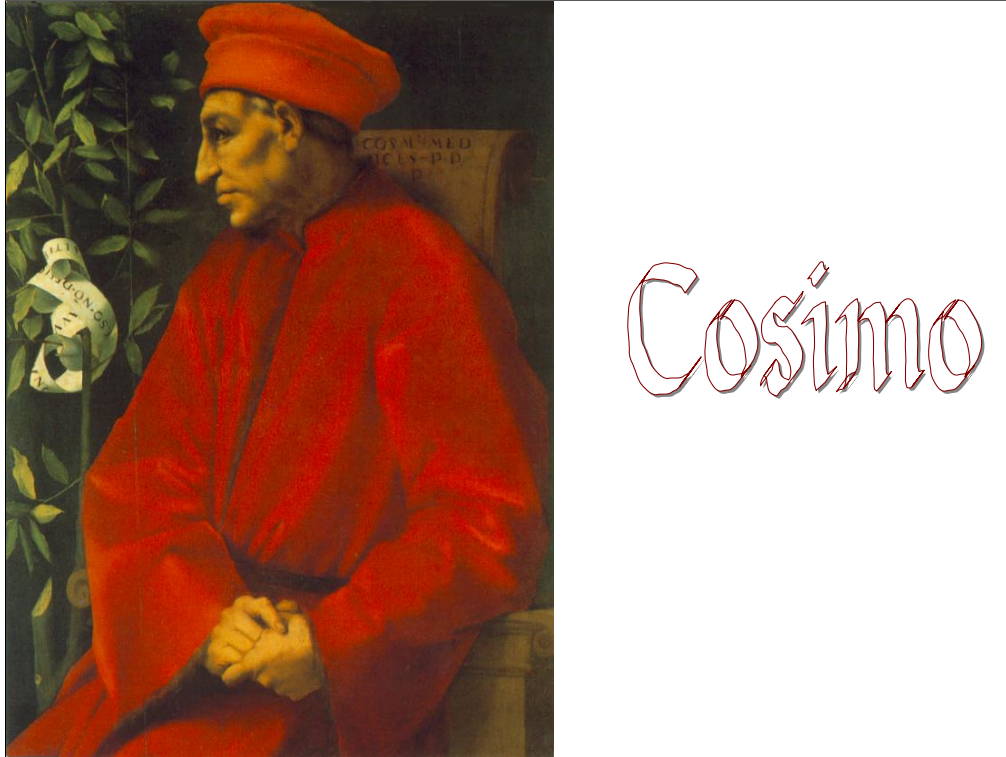
- Usury – charging interest (believed to be a sin)
- Taking out the competition
- Papal backing

Family crest – One outraged contemporary of Cosimo il Vecchio declared that "He has emblazoned even the monks' privies with his balls."



The Medicis set the money standard for Europe. They were centered in Florence, and their coins were the Florin.

Their coins made their way across Europe and gained a lot of respect – control over the amount of metal in the coin.



The first godfather of the world, Cosimo D'Medici was the founder of the great Medici empire. He was not only a lover of money and power, but a lover of art and learning as well.

Big on Plato, Cosimo went to regular weekend retreats on the works of Plato, and sponsored new translations of this works.

He also began a long and remarkable tradition of sponsoring artists. Cosimo sponsored personal, family artists who created portraits (individuality) and fine art for his houses and for public places (donated by the Medici family). He also sponsored art works for churches – in order to expunge his personal... indiscretions.



Piero was Cosimo's heir. He was frequently not in good health.

He wasn't around that long, but he continued Cosimo's legacy. He kept power in Florence, sponsored artists (most notably Botticelli), and promoted education, including the works of Plato and Aristotle.

(Adoration of the Magi - central)



The last of the “big 3 Medici” (the family kept going, but the great ones headed into other little jobs like the papacy), Lorenzo the magnificent pushed the family business and interests forward.

Having saved his pop from a hit when only 18 years old, Lorenzo displayed both a genius for the banking business and for the fine arts. He wrote poetry and studied the classics; he played practical jokes and participated in public tournaments; he tinkered with new inventions.

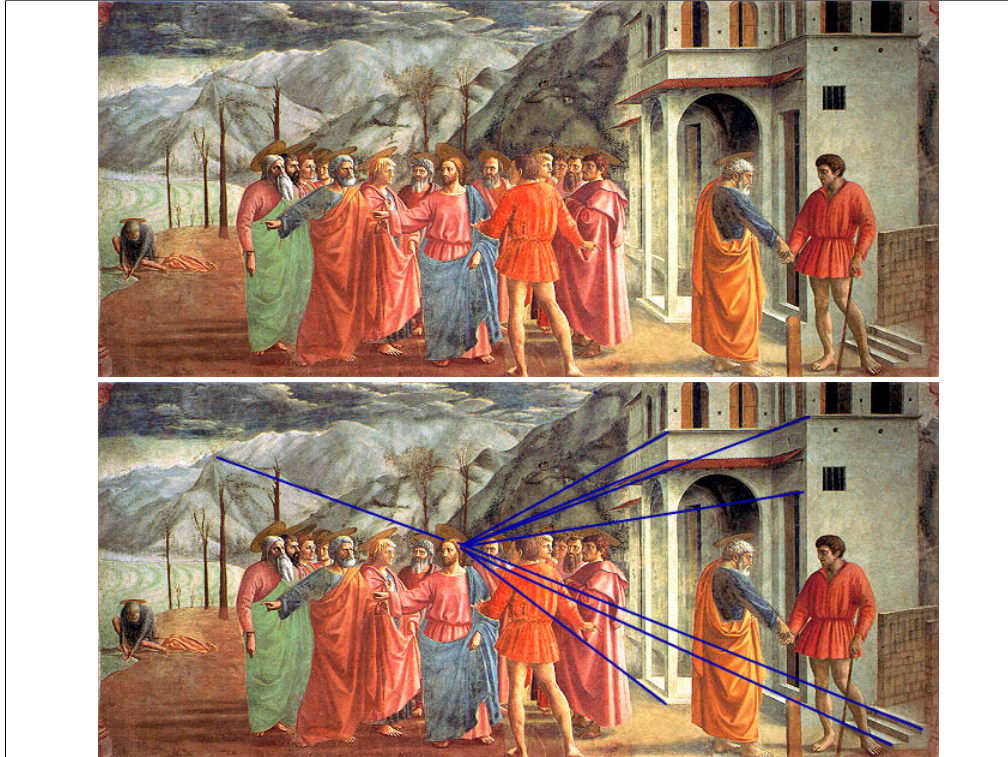
Fight between Papacy & Florentines resolved by Lorenzo

He also had a major love for art and sponsored many of the greatest artists of the Renaissance. His patronage extended to a laundry list of the “biguns” - DaVinci, Botticelli, Donatello, Michelangelo. Even if he couldn't commission things himself, he arranged for them to be commissioned.

Carpe Diem – Seize the day

Masaccio

Among the first great artists of the Renaissance was Masaccio. Following in the footsteps of Giotto, Masaccio was a frescoist of great talent. Using perspective, detailed backgrounds, and geometry know-how, he created some of the first “realistic,” and dramatic images of the Renaissance period.

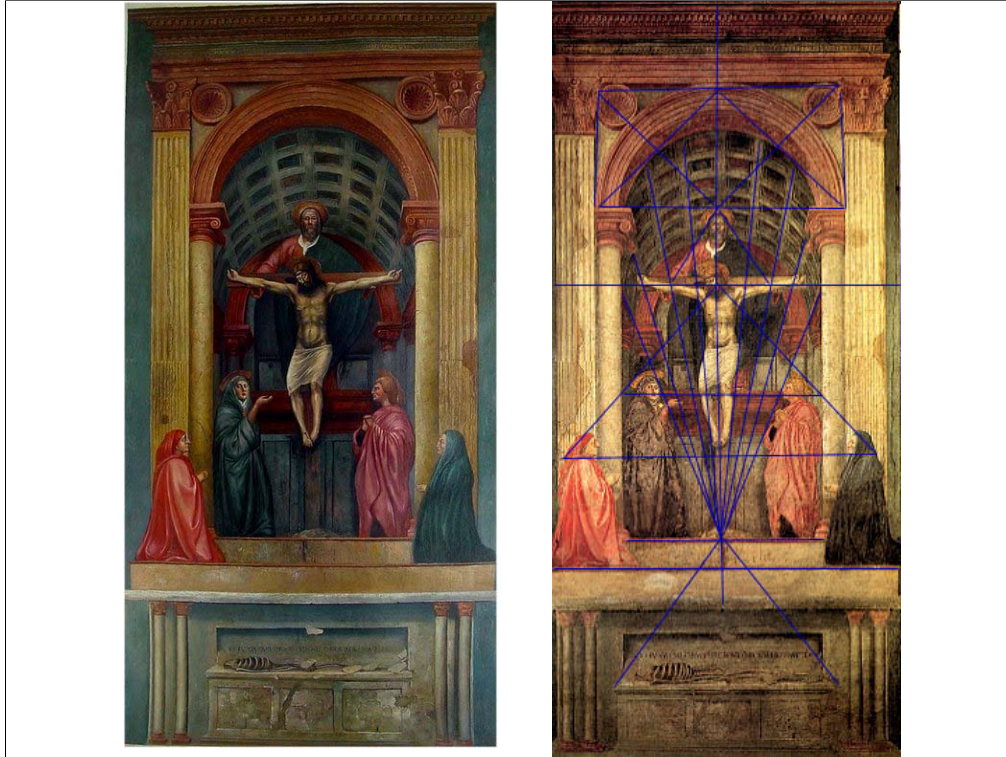


Drawing on the principles of carvings-as-education, Masaccio's used the long, horizontal wall spaces frequently used as areas for frescos as a story that could be "read."

For example, his painting of The Tribute Money, Massacio tells a story from the Bible. The beginning of the story is in the center, the second part at the left, and the ending at the right.

Masaccio shows a better sense of proportion than earlier artists, and creates individualized figures with more natural poses. He also uses a "real" background that creates a much more believable image.

That background also allows him to use geometry to create a focal point. All of the "lines" created by elements in the painting point back to Jesus' head.



Masaccio's masterpiece The Holy Trinity demonstrates several huge jumps forward past his idol Giotto.

****Discovery**

First of all, the piece is neatly organized without any crowding of figures. Secondly, the design is organized using architectural devices and perspective to emulate real space. It uses symbolism and analogy – trinity. Also, it shows the Renaissance tilt toward the individual (patrons included) as well as the Medieval holdover in the Memento Mori.

****artists as craftsmen**

The fresco is organized in perfect geometrical form as a series of interlocking triangles and 90 degree angles.



Done by Jan Van Eyck – Dutch artist – commissioned to paint the picture of Giovanni Arnolfini, the Medici representative to the Netherlands.

Tempera & oil on wood

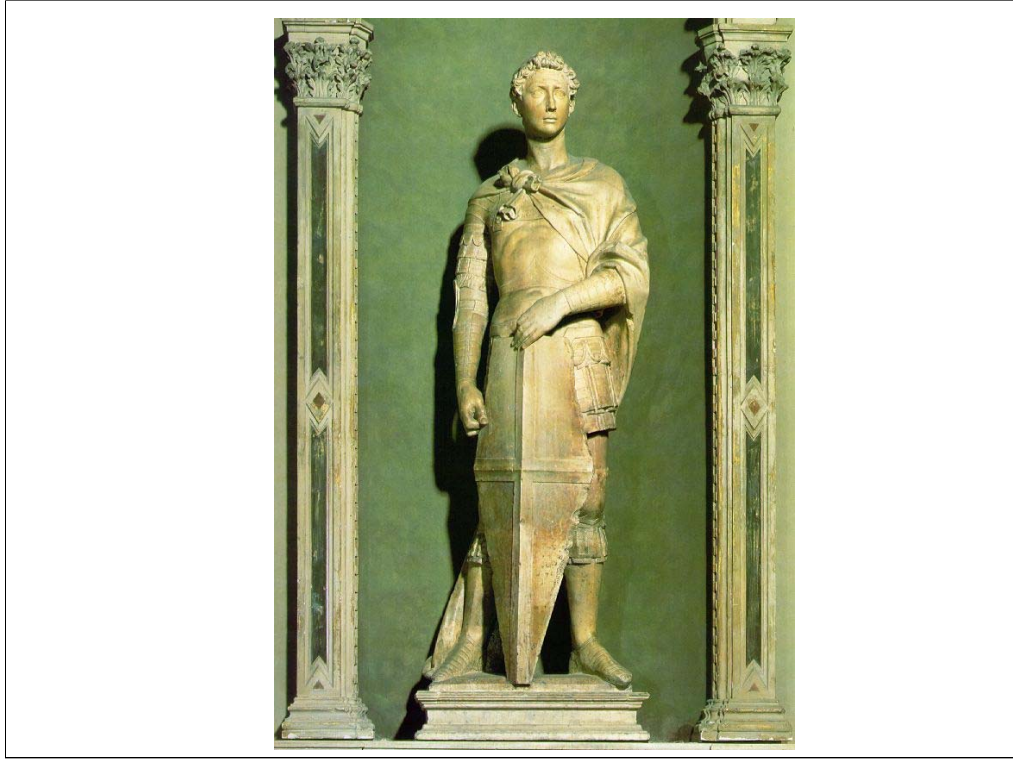
Heavy symbolism

- Name of artist & mini-portrait in painting
- Chandelier – marriage candle
- St Margaret on the armchair (women wanting children)
- Dog – fidelity
- Sandals – sacredness & home
- The red bed curtains allude to the physical act of love, the carnal union of the married couple. The green of the woman's dress symbolizes hope (the hope of becoming a mother, perhaps?). Her white cap signifies purity.

Humanism

- Focus on logic and thought
- Recognition of the beauty of man as the pinnacle of creation
- Focus on education and beauty
- Acceptance of the value of art/ creation as an emulation of God

Donatello





Lost Wax Bronze

- Clay core
- Wax layer – detail
- Husk w/ spouts
- Heated – wax drains
- Bronze poured into space remaining
- Husk cracked off
- Statue polished/ finished

Sculpting had its own methods

Marble and stone sculpting, of course, required a chisel, hammer, strength, patience, and a heckofa lot of talent.

The **Lost Wax Bronze** method was used to create many metal sculptures and is still used today.

- Clay core created
- Wax layer added and detailed
- Outer layer set over wax and allowed to dry w/ tubes included
- Whole thing baked – wax drains via tubes
- Molten bronze poured in
- Outer layer cracked open
- Detailed – sanded down, engraved



Among the first great artists of the Renaissance (and the first Ninja Turtle we've encountered) – Donatello was one of the great sculptors of all time.

First to create a free-standing sculpture since the Greeks

Lost wax bronze

Ancient and modern mixed

5 foot 2

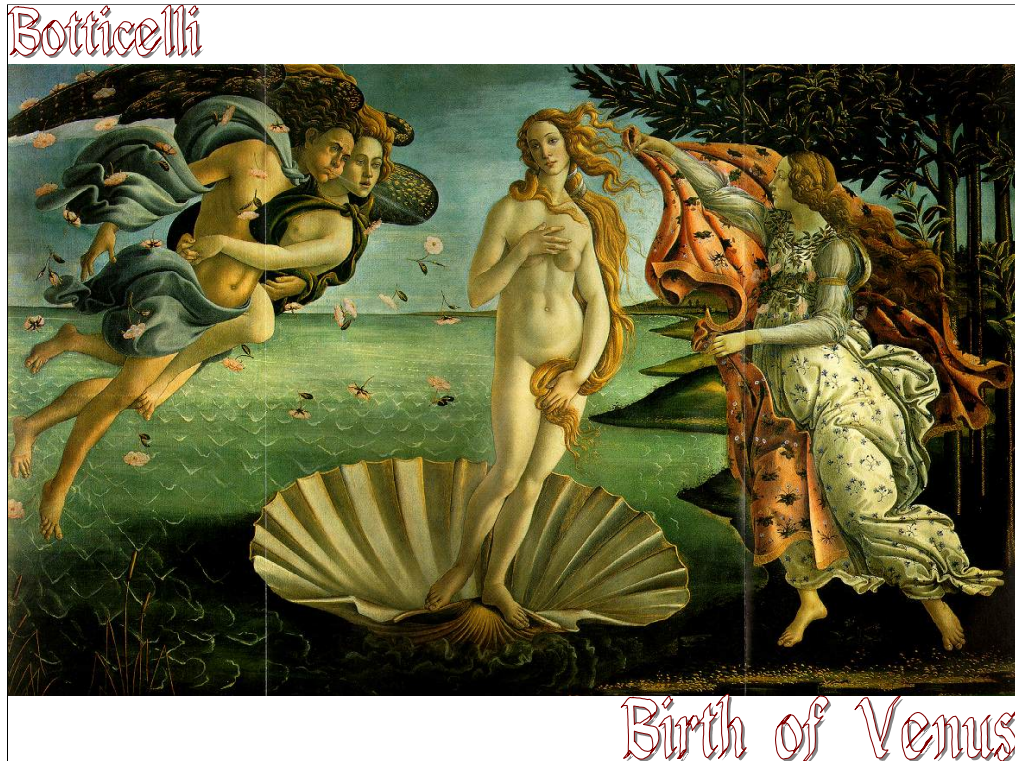




Botticelli

epi





Botticelli was one of the great artists sponsored by the Medici, and a particular favorite of Cosimo with his focus on Platonic thought.

Tempera – clear lines, sharp colors, detail in the foreground

Botticelli was interested in Greek mythology, Platonic thought, and Christianity, and frequently, he crosses all 3. It is important to recognize the elements of symbolism in order to understand the image.

- Zephyr at left
- Venus in center, surrounded by a fall of roses
- Handmaiden at right, ready to cover Venus



Botticelli sought, in his Venus to draw close to the Platonic ideal. His goal was to create a woman whom everyone would agree was beautiful. He wasn't just trying to create an image of reality, he was trying to transcend reality.



The 2 most common forms of painting throughout the ages are oil or tempera.

In every painting, bits of pigment are suspended in some sort of “Stuff” – a medium which lets the pigments be moved around to cover a space and then dries. The two most common are

Oil Paints where the pigment is supported in some sort of oil compound

- Easy to work with – colors combine well and hold true color
- Remains workable for extended periods
- Can be layered for light effects and colors

Tempera paints where the pigment is supported in other mediums, usually high in protein such as egg whites.

- Durable
- Easiest to work with
- Bright, rich colors
- Not as much ease of layering
- Dries fairly quickly
- Clear, sharp lines and bright colors.



La Primavera (spring) is a study in symbolism and mixtures of belief.

The painting may be seen as an **allegory** or story with double meanings.

- Groupings of figures bring order
- Focal points draw the viewer back to the central figure
- Spring = virgin Mary
- Greek myths intertwined with religious symbols



Adoration of the Magi

Commissioned by Piero De Medici, the Adoration of the magi is not only an artistic masterpiece, but also an individualized homage to its patrons.



Cosimo



Piero



Lorenzo

The entire Medici family is portrayed in the painting, along with a few close family friends.



Machiavelli

The Prince

Although not acknowledged in his day, Machiavelli has turned out to be one of the most enduring writers of his time.

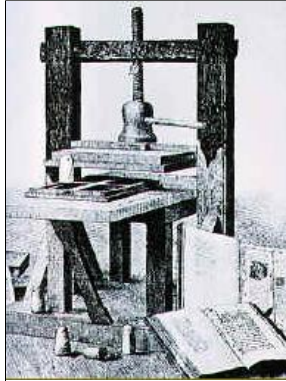
Excommunicated and forced to flee for his views, **The Prince**, Machiavelli's masterwork, describes an extremely practical and pragmatic viewpoint on how to run a country.



In the mid 1400s, Johannes Gutenberg, a German man, invented what may be one of the most significant bits of mechanical know-how to ever come on the scene – the printing press.

- Woodcuts
- Rubbings
- Individual letters
- Depth checks

The first book printed on the press was the Bible.



- Ink rolled on typeset pages
- Pressed rather than rubbed
- Turn screw provided pressure

