Italian masters: educational project

Museum of Modern Art

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The Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.
Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian died four hundred years ago in Italy but their names are known today to millions of Americans. Through their painting and sculpture these artists are still so much alive that the Museum of Modern Art is delighted to be able to show their work, even though the Museum is first of all interested in the arts of our own time—houses, furniture, movies, photographs, as well as painting and sculpture. An exhibition of “Modern Masters” is in fact being shown on another floor of the Museum at the same time as the Italian Masters, while movies of historic importance are shown in the auditorium.

Next to this column is a historical chart showing where and when the artists in the exhibition lived and how the older artists passed on their ideas to their followers so that traditions were formed which have come right down through the years to us today. For instance, Picasso, the most famous living artist, was influenced by Ingres, Ingres by Raphael, (no. xx in “Italian Masters”), Raphael by Leonardo da Vinci, Leonardo by Verrocchio, (no. xx), and Verrocchio by Donatello (no. xx).

In the EARLY RENAISSANCE, about 1400 to 1500, artists were excited by new scientific researches in anatomy and movement (Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio), the expression of character (Donatello), of drama (Masaccio), detailed realism (the landscape in Mantegna’s St. George). They were also deeply interested in new discoveries in Greek and Roman art and legend (Pollaiuolo, Botticelli).

During the HIGH RENAISSANCE, about 1510, detailed realism and youthful enthusiasm gave way to a new sense of maturity and grandeur such as we find in the work of Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian and Palma Vecchio. But the classic dignity, self-confidence and perfection of the High Renaissance “Grand Style” soon lost its balance and fell to pieces in a number of interesting ways which, taken together, are called MANNERISM. The intimate portraits of Lotto and Parmigianino, the elongated and twisted figures of Tintoretto show two very different aspects of Mannerist art.

A little before 1600 Caravaggio staged a one-man revolution in painting. He was hardboiled both in his art and his life. He painted sensationaly realistic pictures with melodramatic lighting and pretended to despise the classic art of both the Greeks and the Renaissance. He was the first great painter of the BAROQUE period, 1600-1750, and greatly influenced the Italians, Cavallino, Guercino, Gentileschi, (nos. xx, xx, xx) as well as far more famous foreign artists such as Rubens, Rembrandt and Velasquez. The foremost Baroque sculptor was the Italian Bernini (no. xx).

Italian Baroque Art died out in the 18th century but the great Italian traditions are carried on today by many of the best living artists, both European and American.
ITALIAN MASTERS
EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

1. DONATELLO
Florentine, 1386-1466. BUST OF A YOUNG MAN, about 1440. Marble, height 16% inches. Beautiful modeling, large planes and details, especially Facial features. The subject is the model himself, a young Florentine, 1440.

2. FRA ANGELICO
Florentine, 1386-1455. THE ANNUNCIATION, about 1440. Panel 70 x 35% inches. The masterpiece of Fra Angelico, this work was painted for the Dominican monastery of San Marco. The style is pure, the colors are harmonious, and the composition is masterful.

3. MASACCIO
(One of the great Italian sculptors before Michelangelo. Beautiful modeling, large planes and details, especially Facial features. The subject is the model himself, a young Florentine, 1440.

4. POLLAIUOLO
(One of the great Italian sculptors before Michelangelo. Beautiful modeling, large planes and details, especially Facial features. The subject is the model himself, a young Florentine, 1440.

5. Michelangelo
(Biographies of the artists, chronological charts and an introductory reading list. For more complete data about the Italian Masters, see the official catalog (50c at the Museum). The narrative cards in the exhibition are enclosed in parentheses. The narration of the events in the exhibition is outside the official catalog.

LENT TO THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 WEST 53rd STREET, NEW YORK, BY THE ROYAL ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

JAN. - MAR. WEEKDAYS, 10 A.M. - 10 P.M.; SUNDAYS, NOON TO 10 P.M.
REGARDING GROUP ADMISSION CALL MR. GRAHAM, Circle 5-8900
STUDENTS' GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION OF ITALIAN MASTERS

ITALIAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, 1500-1800

FLORENTINE, 1435-1494. MADONNA AND CHILD, about 1450. Circled opaque relief, 38% inches in diameter. Mother and child roughly compose a pyramid within a circle. Shapely angles of seated body, shown and kept contrast with surrounding curves of the drapery and child's body. Compare with softly rounding forms of Raphael's Madonna of the Chair. Compare, too, the sadness and pride of Michelangelo's Madonnas with Raphael's obvious sweetness. The surface is completely finished and you can see the meat of the Child, do you think hisSpells the beauty of the work?

9. MICHELANGELO
(Biographies of the artists, chronological charts and an introductory reading list. For more complete data about the Italian Masters, see the official catalog (50c at the Museum). The narrative cards in the exhibition are enclosed in parentheses. The narration of the events in the exhibition is outside the official catalog.

10. RAPHAEL
(Biographies of the artists, chronological charts and an introductory reading list. For more complete data about the Italian Masters, see the official catalog (50c at the Museum). The narrative cards in the exhibition are enclosed in parentheses. The narration of the events in the exhibition is outside the official catalog.

15. CORREGGIO
(Giulio Romano), North Italian, 1494-1534. MADONNA AND CHILD, about 1520. Opaque opaque, 40 x 28 inches. The little figure of the Child is seen as an adoration of Mary, in her heart is the beauty of life.

14. LUINI
(Ennio Quirico), North Italian, about 1476-1531. THE BODY OF ST. CATHERINE BORNE BY ANGELS, about 1525. Opaque opaque, 40 x 28 inches. The little figure of the Child is seen as an adoration of Mary, in her heart is the beauty of life.

18. LOTTO
North Italian, 1480-1556. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN, about 1527. Opaque opaque, 40 x 28 inches. Study the differences in spirit and feeling as well as in composition. Which do you prefer?
5. VERROCCHIO

6. LAURANA
(sovarese). 1430-1515. BOTTICELLI
(Manco). Florence, 1464-1469. BIRTH OF VENUS. Painted about 1473-1480. Tempera on canvas. 150 x 120 inches. Delicate, poetic, emotionally idealized conception of the goddess as a serene and beautiful woman. Figures of Venus and Adonis are treated with a slight emotion. The central figure is a perfect example of Botticelli's technical execution. Which do you like more?

7. BOTTICELLI
(Bottachio). Florence, 1444-1510. BIRTH OF VENUS. Painted about 1485-1487. Tempera on canvas. 150 x 120 inches. Delicate, poetic, emotionally idealized conception of the goddess as a serene and beautiful woman. Figures of Venus and Adonis are treated with a slight emotion. The central figure is a perfect example of Botticelli's technical execution. Which do you like more?

8. ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA

9. CARAVAGGIO
(Caravaggio). Florence, 1571-1610. BOST ON THE BUS. Painted about 1622. Oil on canvas. 80 x 66 inches. Vivid detail and active sense of form expressed through dramatic lighting, bold design, and rich color. Figures of the Virgin and Child form a triangle within the composition. Do you like this Madonna as well as Raphael's? Correggio's?

10. GIOVANNI BELLINI
(Bernardo Bellini). Vincent, about 1446-1497. MADONNA WITH ST. CATHERINE AND ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. Painted about 1480. Oil on canvas. 21 x 30 inches. Color plate in Catalog. Figure is a lyrical treatment of golden light. Simple yet emotional. Early Renaissance composition. Figures are in an illusionistic space, the thrones and draperies providing a fine example of Bellini's treatment of the same subject by Palma.

11. TINTORETTO
(Tintoretto). Venetian, 1585-1645. ST. AUGUSTINE HEALING THE PLAGUE. Painted about 1625. Oil on canvas. 21 x 30 inches. Vivid detail and active sense of form expressed through dramatic lighting, bold design, and rich color. Figures of the Virgin and Child have a lyricism within the composition. Do you like this Madonna as well as Raphael's? Correggio's?