

Renaissance Art

Renaissance art is generally comprised of sculptures, decorative arts, and paintings. This kind of art stems from classical antiquity and has been deemed to be the noblest among ancient artistic traditions. It marks a period of transition in Europe into the Early Modern Age from the medieval era (Efland, 2017 p. 2). The medieval period's outlook was distinguished by the monuments that represented the Christian faith, like the great cathedrals of the Gothic era; which were products of a joint effort among the laity, churchmen, and rulers who facilitated their completion by about 1400. Furthermore, extensive changes in the social and economic setting catalyzed the evolution into the Modern Age as the fourteenth century ended, giving way to a manufacturing-based economy. City dwellers became members of the middle class, with those in upper levels enjoying the perks of disposable income, leisure, and literacy. Hence, members of the middle class became highly influential in the society and their cultural significance increased; a transformation that had major effects on the European culture, ~~including~~ the development of visual arts (Janson & Davies, 2007, p. 469). *1 sent*

*This is
Dumont
Criminal*

Additionally, Renaissance art in Germany falls under the category of Northern Renaissance. The era was characterized by the artists' needs to attain higher aesthetic value rather than perfecting their craft. This era of art in Germany was influenced by the Italian Renaissance, which the Germans sought to assimilate as fast as possible. This form of art mainly developed because religious art was no longer on demand and the artists had to find new means of generating income. Thus, they turned to landscape painting and portrait art that was sold to the bourgeoisie and noble within the society (Gardener et al., 1975). Evidently, Renaissance art revolutionized art as it was known in previous eras, giving rise to a new, elaborate and interesting form of expression.

The aspect of Renaissance in focus is self-portrait. A "self-portrait" is an artistic representation that is presented as a drawing, painting, photograph or sculpture. This form of art existed since the earliest ages, but it was during the early Renaissance period that artists frequently used themselves as the main subjects of their art or important characters of the same. Self-portraiture was considered vulnerable until the Renaissance when people had become wealthier and they were more interested in individuals as art subjects; a factor that facilitated its popularity (Martin, 2002 p. 208).

^{Jan}
~~Jack~~ van Eyck has been deemed to be the artist whose work in self-portraiture was the earliest to be known through his Portrait of a Man in a Turban created in 1433 (Campbell, 1998 p. 212-217). This portrait, like other single portraits painted by ^{Jan van Eyck}~~Jack~~, unveils a new human approach that is characterized by modest posing of both the shoulders and the head. The ^{subject}sitter of the painting, thought to be van Eyck himself, is expressed entirely as himself, with a face that is intensely scrutinized to create a silverpoint drawing that is vividly delicate. The details in the painting are harmonized through the relation of the ^{explain}items featured. Seemingly, the secret behind the excellence of Jack van Eyck's self-portraiture is the subtle and flexible realization of light, an aspect that was realized for the first time through the refinement of the oil medium (Piper & Rawson p. 93).¹⁹⁹⁵

Another artist that was renowned for his work in self-portraiture during the Northern Renaissance was Albrecht Durer. He had outstanding capabilities in painting and printmaking and was also considered a prodigy in drawing when he was still a child. His art was enhanced by his extensive curiosity and versatility, which allowed him to incorporate the realistic details of Netherlandish Renaissance art with "fine art drawing," while integrating the rules of beauty suggested by the Florentine Renaissance between 1400 and 1500. His art piece, Self-Portrait with Fur Collar, is a panel painting that he created around 1500. It is considered a personal statement

from the artist mainly because he showcases that German painting traditions can compete with the Italian Renaissance. Durer's choice of portrait art allowed him to flaunt his impeccable observational skills and his technical genius of detailing textures of humanistic features, like the beard, fur and hair, and the structure of the eyes and hands. In this piece, he indulges the viewer in mystical symbolism that is depicted in placing his initials, AD, next to the date, 1500, which appears to be an imitation of the abbreviation "Anno Domini." He painted the portrait at the age of 28, which was considered a transitional age from youth to maturity during the medieval era. Resultantly, the painting marks a significant point in the artist's life and the commencement of a new millennium (Boeckeler, 2012 p. 31-32).

Additionally, Durer painted himself in a fur coat in a manner that made the painting appear as if it was a work of art created by a Renaissance artist and not mere Northern craftsman. He achieves this through the creation of a strong resemblance between Christ and himself in a non-blasphemous manner that instead seeks to show off his creativity. Furthermore, he fingers the fur with his right hand as an indication that his skills with his marten paintbrush explicitly express his incomparable brilliance that is God-given. Durer evidences his humanism by making a man, who resembles Christ, the focal point of his painting (Boeckeler, 2012 p. 34).

From a different viewpoint, Durer seems to attempt to remodel his self-portrait into a religious artwork as a means of raising the debate on artists' status, himself included, onto a platform that is higher. After all, religious artwork seemed to elicit extra respect from spectators. In the Self-Portrait with Fur Collar, Durer's frontal pose with his hands positioned as if he was giving a blessing resembles that which is depicted in the iconic painting Christ Pantokrator. This is coupled with the Christ-like appearance of the beard on Durer's face, his stare and his long hair (Boeckeler, 2012 p. 37).

Lucas Cranach was also another artist whose art was recognized during the Northern Renaissance. He painted the self-portrait of Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1550, when he was about ~~78~~ ^{seventy-eight} years old, ~~on an oil board with dimensions of 64 by 49 cm.~~ This painting epitomizes the ideals of a man in the Renaissance era, depicting a printmaker, painter, politician, and entrepreneur. The painting is characterized by the application of bright colors and features a sitter whose proportions and anatomy appear to be mannered. ^{properly proportioned} Unlike Italian Renaissance art, this painting focuses more on mannered proportions and beauty instead of ^(LC) Classical Antiquity. Like Durer, Cranach introduces a religious aspect to his self-portraiture by portraying himself as an elder, possibly of the Protestant church. This aspect of the painting synchronizes with events in the painter's life as a friend to the German ^{preacher} ~~priest~~, Martin Luther, otherwise referred to as the father of Protestantism (Heydenreich, 2007 p. 311-312). Importantly, ^{Christos} Joachimides and the rest of the authors express that the real self-portraits are those that are created in the form of drawings, watercolors, and paintings. Photographs may also qualify to be termed as real-self-portraits in cases where they are close-ups and have surrealistic characteristics (Joachimides et al., 1985 p. 464). Thus, according to these authors the self-portraits created by ^{Van Dyck} ~~Jack~~, Durer and Cranach can all be considered real self-portraits.

~~In conclusion,~~ ^I it is undeniable that Renaissance art gave the artistic genre in Germany a whole new outlook. The self-portrait, especially, allowed artists to synchronize components of their life with those of their work thus, giving their productions a wholesome characteristic that made them intriguing. It formed the base for further advancements in art by embracing photography as part of artistic expression, leading to modern day artistry that is mainly centered on photography.