

5

RENAISSANCE



225en05

MODULE - 2

Introduction of Western Art



Notes

Renaissance is a word which means “Re-Birth”. Thus it stands to depict the revival of Art, Architecture and Literature in 14th to 17th century. **Renaissance** began with the revival of interest in ancient classical culture of **Greeks** and **Romans**. This period was known for new experiments, power of reasoning, laws and discoveries. Thus it was called the “**Age of Enlightenment**”. **Renaissance** had spread from **Early Renaissance** to **High Renaissance** and finally to **Mannerism and Baroque**.

Though, 14th century **Renaissance** with prominent Artists like **Duccio** and **Masaccio** had more gothic method of narration and less anatomy knowledge, yet they show sense of scientific proportion and observation in their painting. 15th Century **Renaissance** gave enough stress to balance and harmony in Art and Nature. The use of light, shadow, foreshortening and perspective had been perfected. The most famous painters of this period are **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Raphael** and **Michael Angelo**. **Mannerist Artists** extended the principles of **High Renaissance** and tend to represent elongated figures in illogical spaces. Here, the emphasis was given more to show human soul with anatomically corrected human body.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, the learner should be able to:

- explain the evolution of **Renaissance**;
- describe the development of this period;
- write about the Artists and their working style;
- identify the enlisted Art works.



BIRTH OF VENUS



Notes

5.1 BIRTH OF VENUS

Title	–	Birth of Venus
Artist	–	Sandro Botticelli
Medium	–	Tempera on canvas
Period	–	1485-1486
Style	–	Renaissance
Collection	–	Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Sandro Botticelli painted **Birth of Venus** in about 1486. This painting shows one of the best examples of rebirth of classical motifs inspired by 2nd century ancient Greek masterpieces. The painting depicts the classical goddess '**Venus**' emerging from the water on shell. The nude goddess is a representation not of earthly but spiritual love. She arrives as a full grown woman, symbolizing beauty and truth. She is joined by one of the goddesses of seasons, who offer her cloth embroidered with flowers to cover her body. On the other side emerges wind god like angels free flowing in air. Venus stands in the centre with modest pose which recalls ancient Gothic's sculptures. The anatomy of Venus does not display the strict classical realism, as she is shown with elongated neck and her left shoulder slopes at unusual angle. She bears slim and long limbs. The cool artificial light adds soft harmonious beauty to the painting.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.1

- What is shown in the picture "**Birth of Venus**" by **Botticelli**?
- What does **Venus** symbolize in this painting?
- What is the nature of the anatomy of **Venus**?
- What is the nature of light in this painting?

5.2 MONA LISA

Title	–	Mona Lisa
Artist	–	Leonardo da Vinci
Medium	–	Oil on Poplar Wood
Period	–	16 th century
Style	–	Renaissance
Collection	–	Louvre Museum, Paris



Notes



MONA LISA



Notes

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was an Italian painter. He was regarded both as scientist and artist. Among many famous paintings, ‘**The Last supper**’, ‘**The Virgin of the Rocks**’ and ‘**Mona Lisa**’ stand for ever universal fame. **Mona Lisa** was painted in 16th century on poplar wood in oil colours. It depicts a woman sitting with a mysterious smile which seems to welcome the observer. **Leonardo** used a pyramid design, where her folded hands form the base. There is a dramatic contrast of light and dark. The brightly lit face is framed with various elements like hair, veil, and shadows. In the portrait of **Mona Lisa** there is no visible facial hair, even eyebrows and eyelashes are shown missing; still the smile on the woman’s face depicted more striking when looking at the portrait’s eye than when looking at the mouth itself. There is a vast landscape behind the portrait. It depicts icy mountain, valley and curved river. The representation of the painting **Mona Lisa** reflects **Leonardo**’s vision to connect humanity with nature.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.2

- Write on the different areas in which **Vinci** contributed.
- Why is **Mona Lisa** appreciated so much?
- What is the background of this painting?
- What is the medium of painting **Mona Lisa**?

5.3 PIETA

Title	–	Pieta
Artist	–	Michael Angelo
Medium	–	Marble sculpture
Period	–	1498-1499
Style	–	Renaissance
Collection	–	St. Peter’s, Rome

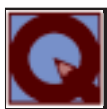
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Pieta is a sculpture made by **Michael Angelo** in 1498-1499. It is created from a single slab of marble. This famous work shows ‘**Virgin Mary**’ holding the dead body of **Christ** in her hands. The mother sits while Christ rests dead on her lap. The interpretation of his works balanced the Renaissance ideals of classical beauty and



PIETA

artist's own creative expressions. The structure of this sculpture is pyramidal in shape. Here he depicts **Madonna** much younger than her son, the Christ to express her purity. This is the most highly finished work of **Michael Angelo**. The sculpture has unique drapery movements and strong anatomy details. The other famous works of art created by **Michael Angelo** are the sculpture of '**David**', '**Moses**' and the **Frescoes** on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel in Rome.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.3

- What is the theme of '**Pieta**'?
- How many figures are used in the sculpture '**Pieta**'? Name the characters in this sculpture.
- Write the basic structure of '**Pieta**'.

5.4 THE NIGHT WATCH

Title	–	The Night Watch
Artist	–	Rembrandt
Medium	–	Oil on Canvas
Period	–	1642
Style	–	Renaissance (Baroque)
Collection	–	Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Rembrandt was a Dutch painter. He was a realist. In most of his paintings, we see the mysteries in the play of light and shade. This tends to highlight the 'soul' of the painting. **Rembrandt** painted '**Night Watch**' between 1640-1642. For a long time the painting was kept coated with a dark varnish which gave the incorrect impression that the painting depicted a night scene but when the varnish was removed in 1940 it was discovered to represent broad day light.

This painting illustrates the young captain giving order to his lieutenant to march his Company civilians. The painting shows effective use of light and shadows. The captain is dressed in black with a red sash. The lieutenant and a small girl are shown wearing yellow dress which also symbolizes the colour of victory. There is also a white dead chicken hanging from the girl's belt shown to represent defeated enemy. In the background stands a drummer to energize the march. The painting shows the mastery to depict the traditional-military portraits with expression.

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Notes



Notes



THE NIGHT WATCH



INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.4

- (a) Mention the characteristic features of **Rembrandt's** painting.
- (b) Write on the theme of “**The Night Watch**” by **Rembrandt**.
- (c) What does this painting illustrate?
- (d) When was the varnish removed from the surface of this painting?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Renaissance means ‘rebirth’, thus it stands to depict revival of ancient classical culture. It spread from **Early Renaissance**, **High Renaissance** to **Baroque**. Renaissance gave more stress to anatomical corrected human body with perspective, foreshortening and pyramidal composition and play of dramatic light became the common feature of this period. The most famous artist of this period are **Masaccio**, **Botticelli**, **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Raphael**, **Michael Angelo**, **Rembrandt** and **Rubens**.



TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you mean by the word ‘**Renaissance**’? Explain the main features of this period?
2. How ‘**Venus**’ is being represented in the painting ‘**Birth of Venus**’?
3. Describe the painting ‘**Mona Lisa**’?
4. Write a short note on the sculpture ‘**Pieta**’?
5. Describe the painting ‘**Night Watch**’?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

1. (a) Venus emerging from the water on shell.
- (b) Venus symbolizes beauty and truth.
- (c) It does not follow classical realism, rather it is elongated.
- (d) Cool, artificial light.



Notes



Notes

2. (a) Painter, scientist.
(b) A mysterious smile which seems to welcome the observer.
(c) Landscape with mountain, valley and river.
(d) Oil on poplar wood.
3. (a) **Virgin Mary** holding the dead body of **Jesus**.
(b) Two, **Mary** and **Jesus**.
(c) Pyramidal
4. (a) Mysteries in the play of light and shade.
(b) Not a night scene but a day scene.
(c) The young captain giving order to his lieutenant to march his company.
(d) 1940

GLOSSARY

1. **Anatomy** – Science of body structure.
2. **Cloak** – Over garment hanging loosely from shoulders
3. **Dramatic** – Play of exciting or emotional event
4. **Elongated** – Stretched out
5. **Frescoes** – Wall painting done in watercolour/tempera
6. **Foreshortening** – Showing a object shortening at distance due to perspective
7. **Humanity** – Human race
8. **Interpretation** – Explanation
9. **Mannerism** – Style of same 16th Italian painters who exaggerated the formulae of design of High Renaissance painters.
10. **Narration** – Depicting the concerned event
11. **Spiritual** – Religious
12. **Pyramidal** – Structure with square base and sloping sides meeting at centre.