

# reading notes 1

---

## fifteenth-century renaissance art in florence

- florence is a place in italy
  - it is one of the most documented eras in art history
- what is renaissance?
  - emerged in the mid 1400s
  - after the middle ages
  - perceived as "rebirth"
  - better understanding of color and accuracy in art
  - realism
- what is naturalism?
  - italy in the 1500s
  - artists preferring scientific observation over idealization
- giorgio vasari
  - wrote a collection of artist biographies
  - favored florentine artists from his era

## patronage and civic virtue in florence

- what is humanism?
  - how humans can better themselves as a society by education and moral code
  - ushered in a new interest in sciences and arts
    - grammar
    - geometry
    - music
    - astronomy
- the medici family
  - established the medici bank
    - supported by pope martin V
  - eventually, pope gave them control of the papal banks
  - commissioned the medici palace
    - somewhat of a communal area
    - shops were rented out on the bottom floor

## perspective and the viewer

- Filippo brunelleschi
  - interest in classical architecture
  - built the dome of the florence cathedral
    - self-supporting rib-vaulted dome
    - used a reversible hoist powered by oxen
      - could be reversed on the fly without re-hitching the oxen
  - interest in perspective drawing
    - developed a new technique for perspective art

- one-point linear perspective
- lines point towards vanishing point
- donatello
  - was commissioned to carve a marble sculpture of saint mark
    - carved the sculpture with technically incorrect proportions
      - larger head
      - longer torso
    - sculpture was rejected at first for this, but ended up looking good in its intended position
    - proportions were modified due to the perspective of the viewers
- lorenzo ghiberti
  - relief sculpture
    - high relief used in the foreground
    - low relief used in the background
      - for the impression of distance
  - made bronze doors for the baptistery of san giovanni
  - hired in 1425 to create another set
  - used perspective technique with arches that recede backwards, getting smaller and smaller
    - still towards a vanishing point

## color and light

- renaissance artists usually had a goal to use visually accurate colors comparable to what is seen in real life
- massaccio
  - linear perspective
  - atmospheric perspective
    - using size and color to convey things being farther away
    - in the case of tribute money, the mountains become less saturated in color as they get farther away
  - tribute money
    - tells a story of st. peter
    - story shows 3 parts all in one perspective
    - viewers eyes are guided through the story by elements in the painting
    - massaccio used a color made from a stone called lapis lazuli
- gentile da fabriano
  - shows the effects of light on color
  - adoration of the magi
    - shows reflection and refraction within the artwork
    - painted on top of sort of a wooden canvas
      - canvas had not really existed yet
    - lots of gold leaf, greatly increased the cost of the work

## the language of classicism

- revival of classicism
- brunelleschi, the old sacristy
  - dome set on top of a cube

- domestic, non religious art
- donatello, david
  - bronze
  - lost wax casting
    - figure carved out of wax, mould made around figure, bronze poured into mold, wax gets vaporized, out comes bronze copy of wax figure. (i think)
- zanobi de domenico, nerli cassone
  - a wooden marriage chest called a cassone
  - made of carved wood with gold leaf
  - documentation of it's original ownership still exists, along with its backboard being intact
- antonio del pollaiuolo, hercules and antaeus
  - bronze sculpture
  - 18 inches tall
  - shows movement in the human body
  - depicts a wrestling match between antaeus and hercules
  - sculpture is meant to be looked at from multiple vantage points
    - also meant to be picked up and looked at
- sandro botticelli, birth of venus
  - mythological painting
  - canvas painting
  - scene from a poem written by angelo poliziano
  - shows a nude woman, venus standing on a large shell
  - venus is the goddess of love