

The lamentation, by giotto di bondone



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The Lamentation One of the early and truly trailblazing works of art in the early Renaissance was The Lamentation, created by Giotto di Bondone, who has been called the father of Renaissance art. Giotto was one of the first to portray the illusions of real life, using techniques that were lost in the Middle Ages. His paintings give illusions of depth, while also using realism to show emotion. As can be seen in The Lamentation Giotto still used some of the medieval style of painting but it is also drastically improving in depth and realism in his painting. In this way, he strayed from the formula that had been used for typical religious paintings of Byzantine style.

What is even more remarkable about the Lamentation and all of Giotto's works for that matter, is the fact that he was so ahead of his time, painting with typical Renaissance style almost a century before others. The Lamentation is actually just one part of a many faceted work of art, the fresco inside Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, painted circa 1305. The painting is a depiction of Christ just after being taken off of the cross. Giotto masterfully shows the expressions and depth of space, and draws the viewer's eye to focal several points, as well as making the piece esthetically pleasing by creating a moving work of art. The Lamentation is a painting, which is actually somewhat different for chapels at the time, when mosaics were the preferred type of decoration. Instead of mosaic, Giotto used something that would be able to stick to the wall, like fresco.

After finishing the city was so proud of him that they wanted him to design the steeple for a cathedral as well (Gombrich, 218). When compared with works other of the same time period it is notable that The Lamentation is not as symmetrical as the earlier Byzantine style. The main focus of the painting

is Mary, who is grieving the loss of her son. The rock outcropping is used to direct the viewer's focus directly to their faces. Giotto is incredibly successful in giving the viewer an insight into how the people in the painting feel. As the art critics Hugh Honour and John Fleming state, Giotto cared about inner states of mind as much as outward appearances (Honour, Fleming, 164). This work is as much about the feelings of the people, as it is about the telling of the story to the viewer.

This is something that had eluded the medieval artists, Giotto's new interpretation would continue on into the future. He was successful at forming an emotional attachment between the characters and the viewers. This attachment makes the work as emotionally moving as it is aesthetically pleasing to view. Another critic, Francesca Flores d'Arcais, describes the work as "one of the most auditory scenes in the chapel." Stating that "The mourners' wails reverberate through the landscape, mingling with the cries of the distorted angels in the sky" (Flores). This vivid description shows that Giotto was able to portray the emotions, thoughts and anguishes of the people in the painting.

The viewer is truly able to sense their grief. It is almost tangible simply through their positioning and their expressions. Giotto was a revolutionary painter and a masterful artist. Sometimes called the "father of western pictorial art" (Laura MacLeod) Works like The Lamentation were groundbreaking both in painting style and in interpretation of the actual subject matter of the painting. The Lamentation is an exceptional piece, for its aesthetic appeal and for marking the beginning of Renaissance art,

depicting depth, emotion, and realism once again. DArcais, Francesca Flores. Mystudios.

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