

# Renaissance art: comparing and contrasting paintings



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Abstract The Gothic era has been called an extended overture to the Renaissance. “ The Renaissance marked that moment when Western civilization made its transition from the middle ages to the modern world. ” (Figueroa, 2008) In the following project we are going to mentioned and evaluate three different piece of art from the great Renaissance artists, Leonardo Da Vinci with Mona Lisa, Michelangelo Buonarroti with The Creation of Adam and Sandro Botticelli with The Birth of Venus. After that, we are going “ to compare and contrast all those art works and how they fit into the context of the time period. ” (Figueroa, 2008) Renaissance Art: Comparing and Contrasting Paintings Introduction Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti and Sandro Botticelli are tantamount with fine art during the Renaissance period.

“ The Renaissance marked that moment when Western civilization made its transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world. Renaissance is marked by a proliferation of the arts, the sciences, and the tenets of humanism. In that era, there were three of the most greatest art genius of all times that they marked a landmark in the Renaissance and therefore in the world-wide history of the art: “ Leonardo Da Vinci, whose works of art were considered a significant representation of the concept of “ Renaissance Man” because of the humanist emphasis on the individuals; and Michelangelo Buonarroti, whose ideal was the full realization of the individuality, someone with his work, revealed a deep understanding of humanity and reflects a neo-Platonic philosophy. (Figueroa, 2008) And last but not least, Botticelli that also was one of the great ones at the time of the Renaissance. Leonardo Da Vinci

Little Biography “ Born on April 15th, 1452, even is uncertain the actual location where he born, Vinci claims the title of his birthplace.

His name Leonardo Da Vinci means that Leonardo is from the town of Vinci. Da Vinci, who lived during the Italian Renaissance, was a hugely talented painter, sculptor, engineer, musician, architect, scientist, mathematician and inventor. Never having the possibility to attend any public school but growing up in the home of his father he had access to scholarly text owned by family and friends. Due to his lack of formal learning and his methods of self-education led him down paths which were not common. His apprenticeship as a painter instructed him to be strangely alert to the world surroundings. He was taught through his scrutiny and experimentations.

It was throughout this apprenticeship that he became familiar with the majority of the things that were to form his prospect life, sculpture, painting, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy, even though to the final of his life mechanics was his furthestmost worship. Da Vinci was pioneer of new techniques with his paintings, and investigated notions, for example, drawing in perspective. ” (<http://www.studyenglishtoday.net/leonardo-da-vinci.html>) “ Mona Lisa, (firstly called La Gioconda) is one of Da Vinci’s great achievements, which continue fascinating the world.

Especially enchanting to the mind’s eye of many is the contentious self-portrait Leonardo Da Vinci rough copied in his afterward years. Its structural similarity to the face of the Mona Lisa has long held the curiosity of scientists and artists. To this day no one knows whether the woman in the painting was a real person, or whether it was Leonardo’s vision of himself as women.

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Leonardo seems to have had a particular liking for the picture, for he took it with him on all of his subsequent travels.

" (www. studyenglishtoday. net) Moreover being a clever artist, Da Vinci was otherwise known as a extraordinary discoverer, and a brilliant scientist. On 1519, at the age of 67, whereas living in France, Leonardo Da Vinci died and was buried in the church of Saint-Florentine in Amboise.

" (http://www. studyenglishtoday. net/leonardo-da-vinci. html) Michelangelo Buonarroti Little Biography " Michelangelo Buonarroti was born on March 6, 1475 in Caprese, Italy. At the age of 13, he was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, who at the time was painting a chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Here, the young Michelangelo learned the technique of fresco (painting on fresh plaster before it dries); he would use this technique many years later in his work in the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

At the age of fifteen, Michelangelo began to spend time in the home and in the gardens of Lorenzo de' Medici, where he studied sculpture under Bertoldo Di Giovanni. " " When Michelangelo returned to Florence he began work on the David. Called the " Giant" by his fellow Florentines, this statue was completed in 1504. " (Michelangelo, Biography, n. d. " In 1508, Michelangelo began work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling frescoes, a task that would occupy him until 1512.

Upon completing the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo returned to the work on Julius' tomb, completing the figure of Moses and leaving unfinished two Slaves. " " In 1534, Michelangelo left Florence for Rome, where he was to spend the remainder of his life. He returned to the Sistine Chapel where he <https://assignbuster.com/renaissance-art-comparing-and-contrasting-paintings/>

created the Last Judgment, another fresco, on the end wall. He designed the dome for St.

Peter's and the Capitoline Square. He also worked on the Palazzo Farnese. His last paintings were the frescoes of the Conversion of St. Paul and the Crucifixion of St. Peter in the Pauline Chapel in the Vatican.

Michelangelo died on February 18, 1564. " Michelangelo Buonarroti died in Rome on February 18 of 1564, at 89 years old. Sandro Botticelli Little Biography " Sandro Botticelli, real name Alessandro Di Mariano Filipepi, was one of the leading painters of the Florentine Renaissance. Born in 1445 in the Ognissanti parish in Florence as Alessandro, son of Di Mariano dei Filipepi, Botticelli's health" was always an issue to due to ages of his parents at birth.

" " Botticelli" means " little barrel" and was initially conferred on his older brother. But the name was passed on, and the younger painter brother adopted it. Botticelli's family was successful and in the upper middle class, but some historians of art would lead us to consider otherwise. There are two theories as to why we know Filipepi as Botticelli's.

One theory states that one of Sandro's brothers was obese, and was named " Botticelli" or " keg", or " barrel". Anyone associated with Botticelli also earned the name. " Botticelli's first works followed the current version of the popular style in Florence used by artists such as Andrea Del Verrocchio (1435-1488). This style placed great importance on the human figure rather than on space.

“ “ Botticelli’s major early works are Fortitude (1470) and St. Sebastian (1474). In some of these he changed the appearance of muscular energy and physical action found in Verrocchio’s work. The people in Botticelli’s work are shown as melancholy and thoughtful. These qualities are most evident in Botticelli’s best-known works, Spring and the Birth of Venus, executed for the estate of a cousin of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Lorenzo Di Pierfrancesco de’ Medici.

“ Botticelli became crippled in his later years and failed to receive painting assignments. He may have continued to work on his set of drawings (never finished) illustrating Dante’s (1265–1321) Divine Comedy. By about 1504, when the young Raphael (1483–1520) came to Florence to observe the new styles of Leonardo Da Vinci (1452–1519) and Michelangelo (1475–1564), Botticelli’s art must have seemed old-fashioned, although it had been widely copied in the 1490s. Successful in the 1470s and 1480s, then forgotten at the time of his death in 1510, Botticelli was popular in the nineteenth century, especially in England. (<http://www.>

[notablebiographies.com/Be-Br/Botticelli-Sandro.html](http://www.notablebiographies.com/Be-Br/Botticelli-Sandro.html)) 1. Mona Lisa (AKA La Gioconda) by Leonardo Da Vinci <http://www.monalisapictures.com/> Leonardo Da Vinci painted Mona Lisa with oil on a piece of pine wood on c.

1503 - 1505. Da Vinci used a pyramidal composition which show this mysterious lady originally named La Gioconda. In this paint we can see three points, the pyramid or triangle; “ with a wider base at her arms and her hands forming the front corner and everything is in place to draw the eye up

her body to her eyes and her infamous smile. (What the Mona Lisa can Teach you about Taking Great Portraits, n. d. ).

Additionally, it is amazing how Leonardo Da Vinci can transmit with the quality of the curve lines of this painting, creating a fundamental visual language of beauty and mystery. Da Vinci applies a technique known as “sfumato” (vanished or evaporated). In this technique there are not lines, because it “creates an imperceptible transition “ between light and shade, and sometimes between colors, he blended everything without borders, in the manner of smoke, his brush strokes so subtle as to be invisible to the naked eye. (Leonardo’s Masterful Technique, n.

d. ) This three dimensional shape shown in this painting exhibit a softly curving lines through her face characteristics that they transmit and suggest comfort, quiet and a very discreet sensuality, agreed to those times. With the three quarter length pose opted by the Mona Lisa, Leonardo Da Vinci “filled the frame with his subject who lends itself to an intimate image and little room for distraction by her context. ” ([http://digital-photography-school.](http://digital-photography-school.com)

[com](http://digital-photography-school.com)). Positioning Mona Lisa’s eyes at the same level of the spectator of the painting, , it gives Vinci managed to transmit a intimacy sense towards where it is her face, especially her eyes, as the center of the attention of the spectator, captivating it and avoiding who watches, in first intance to a different place. The shades of the colors conserved through the times, there are not lost the visual effect of this masterpiece. The hue has changed through the times, but it has not misplaced the caused impact, by the excellent combination of them.

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The light in this painting; it is amazing how the light falls upon the subject. Da Vinci uses light as a hook highlighting the face and the hands in order to balance the image the image nicely by placing hands and face in positions that counter one another. The shadows are used to add deepness and length to different characteristics of the image like the ripples on her dress and the area around her neck. The way that Da Vinci uses the light, the darkness and the “sfumato” through the skin of the Mona Lisa, the textile design, and the background create an illusion of the texture of this painting that transmit smoothness, gentleness and peace that also captivated the viewer.

The painting was one of the first portraits to depict the sitter before an imaginary landscape. The enigmatic woman is portrayed seated in what appears to be an open loggia with dark pillar bases on either side. Behind her a vast landscape recedes to icy mountains. Winding paths and a distant bridge give only the slightest indications of human presence.

The sensuous curves of the woman’s hair and clothing, created through sfumato, are echoed in the undulating imaginary valleys and rivers behind her. The blurred outlines, graceful figure, dramatic contrasts of light and dark and overall feeling of calm are characteristic of Leonardo’s style. Due to the expressive synthesis that Leonardo achieved between sitter and the landscape it is arguable whether Mona Lisa should be considered as a portrait, for it represents rather an ideal than a real woman. The sense of overall harmony achieved in the painting especially apparent in the sitter’s faint smile reflects Leonardo’s idea of the cosmic link connecting humanity and nature, making this painting an enduring record of Leonardo’s vision and genius.

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” Let’s take a look to the principles of the design; therefore we will make reference to the balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis and unity. Balance: Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting conveys a visual equilibrium through the symmetry of each body part of the Lady. The axis is vertical, that focus the eyes as the top of the pyramid and the hands as the base of it, provide a physical sense of balance. Proportion: Even the women proportions have vary through the years, because the styles and sense of beauty has change with the years, we can determine and identify the excellent proportions shown in this masterpiece.

Rhythm: This type of painting does not show any specific rhythm due to the rhythm depends “ upon the elements of pattern and movement to achieve its effects,” and we did not identify and specific pattern in this piece of art.

Emphasis: Through previous comments we have mentioned the main point of focus of the Mona Lisa, her eyes and her hands, marking the location as the most strongly draw the viewers’ attention. We have identified the eyes as the main point of emphasis and the hands as the secondary emphasis of the painting. Unity: This masterpiece has coherence in the whole painting creating a harmony that transmits the mystery that has transcended through the years.

There are some questions that have been asked for most of the viewers, like: Who is the women? Why is she smiling? And, what is the background? The painting of the Mona Lisa was not yet well known until the middle of the 19th century. By describing the painting as a mythic embodiment of eternal femininity she has been dead many of times and learned the secrets of the

grave. 2. The Creation of Man by Michelangelo Buonarroti <http://www.https://assignbuster.com/renaissance-art-comparing-and-contrasting-paintings/>

lobalgallery. com/enlarge/018-21551/ Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam " Michelangelo's most famous panel from the Sistine Chapel Ceiling illustrates the picture of The Creation of Adam. This is a powerful diagonal composition based on the parallel positions of God and Adam. If we " enter" the composition of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam at the upper left, and scan towards the right, our gaze meets the figure of God zooming towards us.

The implied lines of the composition support Michelangelo's belief in an active, dynamic power Creator. Michelangelo believed that a beautiful body was the ideal reflection of a perfect moral character. And, of course, he believed that God and His first creation embodied divine perfection. Crossing the active diagonal thrust of the composition is God's outstretched arm, which reaches towards Adam to give him the divine spark of life.

" ([http://www. csun. edu/art/05/faculty/Art&MassMedia/Media03-Renaissance. pdf](http://www.csun.edu/art/05/faculty/Art&MassMedia/Media03-Renaissance.pdf)). The lines of which this painting is composed are in themselves of a lot of power. The lines of god come into the picture like rushing wind.

It's astounding to realize that this whole painting is a play on one line. The detentions it this painting are that of the two dimensional art form but yet Michelangelo makes you see his creation in almost three dimensional look. In the background of the creator the figures and shapes almost look as a like an anatomically correct picture of a human brain which also to me shows that Michelangelo wanted people to also see that he was especially smart besides creative. 3.

The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli [http://www. artchive.](http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/botticelli/venus.jpg.html)

[com/artchive/B/botticelli/venus. jpg. html](http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/botticelli/venus.jpg.html) The Birth of Venus is one of the most recognizable images in the history of art.

The painting was created in 1482, during the early Renaissance period. The magnificent tempera on canvas, measuring 172. 5 x 278. 5 cm; is now in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence.

In this timeless masterpiece, Venus, the classical goddess of love and beauty, is vividly brought to life as a fully grown woman. Venus is standing on a huge shell and is drifted to shore by a classical wind god. She is greeted by the goddess of Seasons. According to the Greek myth Aphrodite (or Venus, as her Roman name) was born when Uranus's severed genitals fell into the sea and fertilized it. Aphrodite (Venus) was born from the foam, and was taken to shore by a giant cockle.

This Painting symbolizes the birth of love on earth. Venus is the center of the work of art. The viewers eyes start at the naval, to the elegant hands, the ridiculously long golden hair, used to cover a section of her nakedness, and finally to her face. Botticelli's use of line has the viewers' eyes constantly moving and exploring new areas of the painting.

This use of lines and shape create movement within the painting. For example, Venus's golden hair seems to be blowing in the breeze personified by the wind god, Zephyrus. In reality, wind goes unseen, but Botticelli lets the viewer see the breeze coming from Zephyrus. The draperies around the wind god are flowing as if they are caught in the breeze. The dress, hair, and

the tapestry in the goddess of season's hands, are all moved by the breeze, as well.

The wind is delivering Venus to shore in her huge shell or cockle. The line forms in the water make it look as the waves are assisting the wind god. The branches on the trees seem to sway, as if slow dancing with the pink roses to the wind. Lines are used to make the cheek shapes on Zephyrus as he is causing the breeze to safely deliver Venus ashore.

The viewer could see it as Zephyrus delivery love to the world. The colors in the painting help the viewer fall in love with this work of art. For instance, the color pink helps the viewer relax and have even the toughest critic weakened by the calm ([www.colormatters.com/body\\_pink.html](http://www.colormatters.com/body_pink.html)).

The roses are pink, but there are also pink tones through the painting, especially on the bodies of the subjects. It is said that the color green is the most restful color on the human eye.

This painting is full of green in the trees, the water, the sky has hues of green, and there is green in all the tapestries. The wind god's wings are green. During the 15th -century, green was a symbol of fertility. By the 20th century, the color began to signify a state of heightened sexuality, in the American culture.

This painting is to symbolize the birth of love to the world; both views of green can be identified in this situation. White is a symbol of purity, and is a great color for the birth of Venus. White is the color of the tie back in Venus's hair. White lines are used throughout the painting. Such as, the lines on the

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leaves and that form the waves in the water. A new technique for modeling forms in paintings arrived during the Renaissance.

Shadows were used to bring lighter areas from the darker, producing almost a 3D effect. The subjects in the Birth of Venus seem to be pasted on a decorated background. A feeling of actually touching the subjects occurs with this new technique. The shell that carries Venus looks as if it is coming out of the water, and can be picked up by the viewer. The curvature lines assist in this feeling.

Mona Lisa vs. Creation of Adam vs. Birth of Venus Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Botticelli are three very famous artists from their time; we can say that they continuing possessing some of the most famous pieces of art. To abbreviate the complete names of each of this masterpieces, we are going to refer The Creation of Adam (AKA Man) as Adam and The Birth of Venus as Venus and Mona Lisa will keep the whole name. In order to begin the contrast and comparison that we are going to make in first instance we will mention the elements of design as Point, Line, Form, Three Dimensional Form, Movement, Color, Pattern and Texture. Point: While we found that the Mona Lisa's point is the eyes of her, in Adam is the tip of both fingers (God's and Adam's), and in Venus is the center of the oyster where Venus birth.

The point of each painting catches immediately the attention of the spectator. Line: The lines in all those paintings are not an artificial creation of each of the mentioned artist, due to these exist in the nature as the border or outline of the face in Mona Lisa and of the bodies showed in Adam and Venus. As the horizontal line in Adam suggest a feeling of comfort and rest,

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for Venus the diagonal lines transmit a sensation of direction or movement; while Mona Lisa, quiet, showing a vertical line that communicate a sensation of arrogance with spirituality and feminine gentleness. Form: Adam, Mona Lisa and Venus have a three dimensional shapes gave mainly by the depth as well as height and width of each body painted in Adam and Venus, and regarding Mona Lisa mainly gave by her face, arms and dress. These paintings show symmetry in their forms.

Color: We found a similarity between Botticelli and Michelangelo regarding the colors showed in their paintings. While Michelangelo's and Botticelli's paintings are full of color which is bright, distinctive with a lot of light, Da Vinci's colors are ochre, passive, and docile are merged together. Texture: The way that Da Vinci uses the light in Mona Lisa, the darkness and the "sfumato" through the skin of the Mona Lisa, the texture of her dress, and the background transmit an illusion of smoothness in her skin and dress. Michelangelo in Adam's painting it transmits muscular force, through the skins of Adam and God, naked.

Botticelli, through Venus' skin and the fabric of the dress, remind us the silk's softness that we have touched. In second and last instance, we are going take a look to the principles of the design: balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis and unity. Balance: Da Vinci's painting express a visual equilibrium through the smooth Mona Lisa factions and the entire symmetry of the portrait. Michelangelo with that light touch of the tips of the finger, generate a center that permit a complete balance of the whole painting.

Botticelli with his Venus transmits the balance through an approximate symmetry given by the different bodies show in the painting which diagonal lines (the angels) converge in Venus superior part of her body, her head providing a physical sense of balance. Proportion: Even the women proportions have changed during the different ages, the proportions of Mona Lisa's face and part of her body are in agreement with nowadays sense of proportions, while Venus is showing proportions different that we are used to. Adam proportions are more in accordance with our current formal balance. Emphasis: Mona Lisa's main points of focus are her eyes and her hands.

In Adam is the "touch" as the transmission of power and in Botticelli's Venus the purity, beauty and perfection of the feminine body. Unity: These paintings, Mona Lisa, Adam and Venus have a great consistency and coherence transmitted by Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Botticelli respectively in each art work, achieving a common result, the harmony of all parts developed by these masterpieces. How those Works fit in the Renaissance? "During the Renaissance, European society came together around a festivity of the realism, values of individualism, and love of technology. These values led to intensified idolization in manifestations of the human form.

" (<http://www.csun.edu/art/05/faculty/Art&MassMedia/Media03-Renaissance.pdf>) The Mona Lisa in three-quarters view, Leonardo's famed portrait can be compared with other images of women from the Renaissance.

" Leonardo presented through art a view of the female sex that was culturally abnormal in the patriarchy of his day: woman understood

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individually as an intelligent being, biologically as an equal half of the human species, and philosophically as the ascendant principle in the cosmos.

Further, he did so “ in a period when women were neither politically nor socially empowered to make such a case for themselves. ” 13 The fact that Renaissance women were socially disempowered makes the accomplishments to other women artists who were famous ion the Renaissance after Leonardo’s Mona Lisa portrait. “ Renaissance, time when the Humanism, a philosophy that emphasized the unique value of each person; time where the birth of Christ had ushered in an age of faith, which had blinded the world of learning and thus condemned it to dark”. Sayre, (2007) Michelangelo’s most famous section from the Sistine Chapel Ceiling illustrates the picture of The Creation of Adam.

“ The whole ceiling completes the chapel decoration by representing life on earth before the Law: representing the Life of Moses, and the Life of Christ. The whole conception owes much to the Neo-Platonist philosophy current in Michelangelo’s youth in Florence, perhaps most in the idea of the Ignudi (perfect human beauty), on the level below the Divine story. The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo Buonarroti is a complete representation that fit in the context of that time period. The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli is a superb tempera on canvas. The canvas was preferred over wooden surfaces for non-religious and pagan subjects in 15th- century Italy.

The Birth of Venus is not a Christian legend but a classical myth. Therefore this painting was created on canvas to fit into the context of this time period.

. Conclusion To sum up, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti and Sandro Botticelli were the great within the greatest, because their artistic <https://assignbuster.com/renaissance-art-comparing-and-contrasting-paintings/>



works marked a landmark in the history of the art at the Renaissance time. Da Vinci, not only a talented painter, also was a sculptor, engineer, musician architect, scientist, mathematician and inventor. Who through all their work served as model to be followed by many other artists like Michelangelo, who at some time, felt the weight to be under the shade of Da Vinci, but who definitively, knew very well how to impose his style of all paintings and sculptures that made him shine with his own light.

Fresh and tempera two of the techniques used in the Renaissance; techniques that were developed and used by these three great artists, who were pioneering of many more techniques, which served as a basic for that a lot of artists are using nowadays. Their style, their compositions, their idealism, the knowledge of the human body, their symbolism and allegory, made them gain the title of masters and geniuses of the Renaissance. Reference AIU Online. (Ed) (2008) ART 205-0804B-25 - Art Appreciation- Unit 3, Group Project. Retrieved on October 20th, 2008, from AIU Online.

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