

Jan van eyck madonna in the church

Profession, Singers



Madonna in a Church is a small oil panel on oak by Flemish painter Jan van Eyck. Madonna in a Church was made between c. 1438-1440. Van Eyck has been traditionally credited with the invention of painting in oils, and, although this is incorrect, there is no doubt that he was the real master of the technique. The use of oil paints is very significant in this artwork's luminescent quality and presentation of space. The artist creates a new relationship between the viewer and the picture.

There is an illusion of a modern, tattered medieval scene and through this new more attractive, lifelike approach, the viewer becomes connected to the painting, not just in physical terms, but socially, spiritually and emotionally as well. "The minute we look at it the shimmering quality of the art stands out. Being only 12.25" x 5.5" it's clear why its elaboration is so astonishing. The painting is very long compared to its width, emphasizing the size of the Madonna and the tall structure of the church that it portrays.

The artwork has brilliant intense warm colors, dominating brown and red and the light illustrated with light yellow. On Madonna in a Church, the artist represents a variety of subjects with striking realism in microscopic detail. The pigment was suspended in a layer of oil that also trapped light, this way Van Eyck created a jewel-like medium. On the Madonna's crown and jewelry we see shiny precious metals and gems and also, with the help of this technique he could give a life-like impression to light. The colors are so luminous that the passage of five hundred years has barely diminished them.

There are so many details and elements to discover on the painting that the eye has a constant exercise inside the picture. From the first view we can tell

that the artwork is narrative and descriptive. Van Eyck had a sharp edged look of the world but he put this look into a fictional environment. The painting was stolen in 1877 and the frame was not found. Despite this absence we still have an impression of a frame because the cathedral interior is viewed at an angle. From this perspective the doorway has a frame effect to the painting.

The shape of the doorway is round, following the ceiling and with this circle effect leading our eyes to the main figure, Mary. " Van Eyck has followed traditional theology; his realist art displayed in iconic and allusive forms the Church's teachings and popular piety. Yet at the same time, he played with symbolism, which is evidently present in the artwork. The Madonna's size is surreal, very big in proportion to the interior of the exceptionally beautiful church. This is a symbolic niche, giving her all the importance. Byzantine painters used this method for the same purpose.

In the background, angels appear to be singing from hymn books or saying Mass before her altar. " The image of light has a heavy vision, the rays of the sun come supernaturally from the north to strike through the glass and hit the floor with breathtaking realism. Two pools of sunlight on the floor in front of Mary come from a direction that defies natural law. Therefore the light is mystical, a symbol of God. We can see it penetrating the church just as the Holy Ghost entered and impregnated the body of the Virgin, in direct opposition to the laws of flesh.

The perspective and lighting seem to be so natural, until we think about it we don't see that it's unnatural, and that it is actually a sacred light. Maybe this

is a way to express that what is religious was incorporated into everyday life, that even a Heavenly light had to become like daylight under Jan Van Eyck's paintbrush. The virgin takes her place in the center, gently swaying, she seems to follow her own gaze. Her hair is red; throughout the ages red-haired women have had significance in the arts. They are viewed as unique and mystical, just like Mary.

She has a beautiful tracery behind her: wooden carving, the stories of her life. It is especially important in the Northern Renaissance, because they used the juxtaposition of the presented sacred character and then an object or artwork of the exact same personage on the picture, referring to Biblical times. We see a sculpture of Christ behind her, while the baby Jesus is in her arms. She is presented in the everyday life of those people living in the 15th century and part of their modern culture. The church is richly decorated, in the Gothic style.

Jan Van Eyck pays attention to detail in his painting of architectural interiors, done with unrelenting accuracy. The church is an important symbol of Mary's chastity. It's an ideal church, Jan Van Eyck's fantasy of a perfect interior to enthrone Mary. This is a way to represent the heavenly sphere in an environment that the people of the time period can recognize. Concluding from the small size of the painting, it was not a painting designed for a huge Gothic church where most paintings were much bigger in proportion. It was probably made for a wealthy man at the time.

In the Renaissance it was common for wealthy people to collect artworks, it had a social significance. Above this, religious paintings and prayer books

were manifestations of commitment to prayer. The Flemish didn't limit their demonstration of piety to the public realm, the individuals commissioned artworks for private use in their homes as well. " Ideology of the time also influenced the painting. The Madonna is holding the child that is supposed to be Christ. Her face is turned away from the child, achieving a less engaged look. The scene is all about her.

In Van Cock's painting, the child is a realistic baby; emphasizing the humanity of Christ. The interpretation of this can be the fact that Mary was a human, and in the Renaissance, humanism had a very big impact. After the neglected human dimension of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance brings humanity in focus again with the development of art, technology, and inventions. " Van Check gives Mary three roles: Mother of Christ, the personification of the Christian Church and Queen of Heaven, the latter apparent from her Jewel-studded crown.

The painting is majestic and luminous, it lights up like a dream. But at the same time the message is both worldly and devout, the artist set out to satisfy both demands, but in a form of realism that contained within itself a playful, even ironic attitude towards the relations existing between individuals, society and religion. Sources: Graham, Jenny. *Inventing van Check: the remaking of an artist for the modern age*. Oxford: Berg, 2007. Print. Harrison, Craig. *Jan van Check: the play of realism*. London: Reaction Books ;, 1991. 188. Print.