

# Nevertheless botticelli as a true renaissance master

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The early 13th century saw the beginning of a movement characterised by the flourishing of scientific and artistic activities. This movement, later to be known as the 'Renaissance' or rebirth, can be interpreted in two ways, namely, the " rediscovery of ancient classical texts and their application in the arts and sciences" and a " revitalization of European culture in general" (Renaissance). One of the earliest exponents of this movement was Alessandro di Mariano Filepepi, better known as Sandro Botticelli, who worked for most of his life in Florence, finding patronage among the Florentine elite.

One of the masterpieces created by Sandro Botticelli is the 'Madonna and Child with Adoring Angel' (c 1465-67, Tempera on panel, Norton Simon Art Foundation). This painting is one among a series of paintings with a similar theme, such as 'Madonna of the Magificat'(c 1483-85, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), 'Madonna and Child with an Angel'(c 1465-67, Musee Fesch, Ajaccio) and the 'Madonna with Child and Two Angels'(c 1468-70, Galleria Nazionale di capodimonte, Naples). All these paintings exhibit Botticelli's highly personal style resulting in images that " appeal to both the mind and spirit" (Portrait of the Artist Sandro Botticelli). The same can also be said of the painting under discussion which captures all the ingredients of Boticelli's unique style.

Born in Florence, Botticelli owes much of his style to Fra Filippo Lippi to whom he was apprenticed as a child. " Lippo Lippi's synthesis of the new control of three-dimensional forms, tender expressiveness in face and gesture, and decorative details inherited from the late Gothic style were the strongest influences on Botticelli" (Sandro Botticelli [1]). These very features

are to be seen in the 'Madonna and Child with Adoring Angel'. Worth noting are the 'decorative details' in the painting as seen in the panels and arches which also aid in giving depth and perspective to the painting. The details with which the artist has draped the subjects showing each and every fold in the clothing is also an example of detail, which also gives the subjects a wholesome appearance. The depiction of divine love and the expressions on the faces of the subjects; contentment, trust, and adoration, set in idyllic surroundings generates an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in the viewer. It is this effect that the artist has been able to generate that makes this painting truly appealing.

The composition of the painting is also worth noting for it draws the viewer to the background which depicts a tranquil pastoral landscape. Similar compositions are to be found in many of Botticelli's paintings, including those mentioned earlier, and is perhaps an allusion to 'mother nature' and 'neo-platonism', the fusion of pagan and Christian themes which tried to "reconcile classical and Christian views"(Sandro Botticelli [2], by combining "Christian faith with ancient mythology, rather than merely relating them" (Sandro Botticelli [3]). This painting thus, is Botticelli's contribution to Renaissance art, based on "myth and partly inspired by contemporary poetry and literature" and on his interpretation of Greek and Roman mythology (Portrait of the Artist Sandro Botticelli). His fusion of these two aspects is one of the most special characteristics of Botticelli's work. Overall, the subject matter, composition, and fine detail and colour, makes this work of art truly timeless.

In his time, Botticelli was the acknowledged authority of line who brought the

linear tradition to its pinnacle, soon to be replaced by the high classical style of Leonardo da Vinci. Nevertheless Botticelli is still recalled for his works and for being a true renaissance master.

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