

The crucifixion by masaccio theology religion essay



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History has repeated itself over and over again throughout the past 200 years. From the discovery of the planets to the rise of technology, humans have found new methods to change their views and ways of life. Likewise, the Middle Ages that shadowed over the 13th century vanished as a period known as the Early Renaissance arose. This period marked the beginning of humanism, stressing the importance of the human body and the philosophical principles of humanism. One artist who exemplified these characteristics was Masaccio. The Crucifixion by Masaccio represents the shift from the highly stylized and decorative painting that is associated with medieval times to painting emphasizing three dimensional space and solid, realistic human forms, the kind of painting that could be associated with the Italian Renaissance.

The style and subject matter of the Renaissance art period promoted the Christian ideals and scientific values of art during the period. “ Masaccio applied the mathematical laws discovered by Brunelleschi in his paintings and created an illusion of space and distance” (Koeller). He created an illusion by making a system of lines appear to head toward a certain focal point. Masaccio was considered a genius applying the mathematical laws to his art pieces. He is best known for The Holy Trinity with the Virgin and St. John. The constant desire to conform to the doctrines of the church, along with the persistence of religious themes in Renaissance art, is a testament to the continuing importance of the church in Renaissance culture. He also revived a second type of perspective, atmosphere or aerial, based on the Roman tradition. “ Through the use of colors, he created an illusion of depth by subtly diminishing the tones as distance between the eye and object

increased” (Koller). When atmospheric perspective was joined with linear perspective later that century, a greater illusion of reality was achieved.

A chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Pisa commissioned an altarpiece from Masaccio in 1426 for the sum of 80 florins. Payment for the work was recorded on December 26 of that year. The altarpiece was dismantled and dispersed in the 18th century, but an attempted reconstruction was made possible due to a detailed description of the work by Vasari. The Crucifixion by Masaccio is one of the surviving panels connected with the Pisa Altarpiece. It was placed on the central panel of the altarpiece, which represented the Virgin enthroned with the baby Jesus on her lap, flanked by two pairs of angels. Masaccio created an effect of reality by depicting the even from below. The Crucifixion by Masaccio represented the shift from highly stylized The Crucifixion creates a strong horizontal effect with the rather exaggerated extension of the arms of Christ on the cross, but still presents the gilt background for its representation; the atmospheric effects remain hauntingly convincing. “ Masaccio introduced humanism into his art by putting man and the world at the center of his works, rather than at the periphery” (Koeller). Of all the practices of Renaissance Europe, nothing is used as much as Humanism, to distinguish the Renaissance from the Middle Ages, as both a program and a philosophy. Humanist philosophy stressed the dignity of humanity. This is opposite of the theocentric universe of medieval art; his subjects also appear to be drawn from the life he saw around him, rather than from the traditional models he inherited. He tends to try something unique for his paintings as he still illustrates early Renaissance style of art. “ To counter the vertical trust imposed by the arch, Masaccio

creates a strong horizontal effect with the rather exaggerated extension of the arms of Christ on the cross” (Web Gallery). Although Masaccio still uses the gilt background for his representation, the atmospheric effects remain hauntingly convincing.

Masaccio, originally named Tommaso Cassai, was born in San Giovanni Valdarno, near Florence. He joined the painters’ guild in Florence at the age of 21. “ His remarkably individual style owed little to other painters, except possibly the great 14th-century master Giotto” (Web Gallery). He began working on his most important work in 1423: the frescoes on the walls of the Brancacci Chapel of the Santa Maria del Carmine. Masaccio is one of the first to use perspective to suggest depth in a flat surface of the paintings. Giorgio Vasari, an Italian painter who is famous today for his biographies of Renaissance artists, credited Masaccio for introducing humanism in art. As an impact of Masaccio’s introduction, all Florentine painters studied the frescoes of Masaccio to “ learn the precepts and rules for painting well.” He had an eye for the use of light, a talent for expressing moods and forming groups. “ His admirers justly vaunt the noble gravity of his figures, the suppleness and simplicity of his draperies, the harmony of his compositions, and his grasp of light and shadow” (Tommaso). He attempts to tie the viewer to the scenes for every paintings he had created, to make the sacred accessible to ordinary Christians and even to non-Christians.

Leonardo da Vinci is well known for many genres of art including: painting, sculpting, architectural design, engineering, and his fascinating representations of the human body. During the years 1503 to 1506, da Vinci created one of the most celebrated portraits ever painted, the Mona Lisa, <https://assignbuster.com/the-crucifixion-by-masaccio-theology-religion-essay/>

which illustrates the final gathering of Jesus Christ and his disciples. One of the most celebrated portraits ever painted, the Mona Lisa, which one can observe the mismatch between the left and right backgrounds which creates the illusion of perspective and depth. “ A viewer can note that all these edges of the new rectangles come to intersect the focal points of Mona Lisa: chin, eye, nose, and upturned corner of her mouth” (Bogomolny). Leonardo purposefully made the painting line up with Golden Rectangles in the fashion in order to combine mathematics into art. Just like Masaccio applied the mathematical laws in paintings to create an illusion of space and distance. In Crucifixion, Masaccio proportionally illustrated the people around Jesus and the cross. Also, the proportional circular background emphasizes the focal points of Jesus on the cross.

Another comparable art piece is one of Masaccio's own, Crucifixion of St. Peter. The context of the art is explaining the crucifixion of St. Peter, and it is significant that he is crucified upside down. “ This painting is one of predella panels of the Pisa Altarpiece. This subject had presented difficulties for artists because St Peter, to avoid irreverent comparison with Christ, had insisted on being crucified upside down.” (Web Gallery). St. Peter found himself unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus Christ had been. Both paintings have realistic human forms with detailed illustrations. In Crucifixion of St. Peter, Masaccio illustrated the detail in the human perspective as where you can see his calve muscles as well as his shin bones. His facial expressions are very clear that he is in an extreme pain. All the guards behind St. Peter are well proportioned with the appropriate perspective. “ Between the pyramids, the cross is locked into the

composition.” (Web Gallery). Within the small remaining space the executioners loom toward us with tremendous force as they hammer in the nails. Peter’s halo, upside down, is shown in perfect foreshortening.

The traits evidenced by the Crucifixion have significant bearing on the reception of a contemporary Expressionism and New Objectivity, were it ever to make its way back into theatrical practice. “ And just as he used his brush to depict the dead and tormented body of Christ, he used it on another panel to convey its transfiguration at the Resurrection into an unearthly apparition of heavenly light. It is difficult to describe this picture because, once more, so much depends on its colors” (Grünewald’s). The Crucifixion by Grünewald also depicts crucifixion of Jesus. It is showing a harrowingly detailed, twisted, and bloody figure of Christ on the cross in the center flanked, on the left, by the mourning Madonna being comforted by John the Apostle, and Mary Magdalene kneeling with hands clasped in prayer, and, on the right, by a standing John the Baptist pointing to the dying Savior. Grünewald illustrated the painting very mournful by expressing it with his ability to create dazzling light effects.

Michelangelo was an Italian Renaissance artist who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western Art. His art piece, Crucifixion, emphasizes three dimensional space and solid, just as Masaccio illustrated. Jesus is illustrated with the pose that is shown from different perspective. It is not a straight view, Jesus forms tilted body parts. It truly illustrates three dimensional space and solid. “ Michelangelo has endowed Christ with the muscular strength typical of his sculptures, while concentrating a sense of deep anguish in Christ’s head, which twists upward
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as if pleading for humanity's redemption" (Ruehring). " Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, ' They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.' These things therefore the soldiers did" (John 19: 23). Present is the spear wound inflicted into Jesus' side by a Roman soldier. His blood is seen here dripping from the wound on his right side. It is one of the art pieces that depict the verse of the Bible well with all the people depicted in the painting.

Documentation suggests that Masaccio left Florence for Rome, where he died about 1428. His career was unfortunately short, lasting only about six years. He left neither a workshop nor any pupils to carry on his style, but his paintings, though few in number and done for patrons and locations of only middling rank, made an immediate impact on Florence, influencing future generations of important artists. Masaccio's weighty, dignified treatment of the human figure and his clear and orderly depiction of space, atmosphere, and light renewed the idiom of the early 14th-century Florentine painter Giotto. Masaccio's weighty, dignified treatment of the human figure and his clear and orderly depiction of space, atmosphere, and light renewed the idiom of the early 14th-century Florentine painter Giotto, whose monumental art had been followed but not equaled by the succeeding generations of painters. Masaccio carried Giotto's more realistic human forms and three dimensional space and solid.