

The middle ages and the renaissance.

[History](#), [Middle Ages](#)



The Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Middle Ages covered a span of approx. 1000 years and have been described as a long period of cultural decline and stagnation. The Middle Ages were marked by the diversification and growth of economy and society and by the subsequent social tension and political and religious conflict. The early era of the middle ages is known as the Dark Ages and covered a time period from 410 A. D. through 1066 A. D. The name the Dark Ages referred to the period of time in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. The art of the dark ages were mainly created for the eastern Orthodox Church and given the name Byzantine Art. Byzantine Art depicts the differences in the development of the Catholic religion in the west and the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine art was restricted to religious art created by monasteries, these works were one dimensional with no shadows, and muted somber tones. There were no portrait paintings and figures that were painted were done only as front facing with long, somber faces with no attempt at realism. The mental condition of the Middle Ages was one of ignorant prostration before the idols of the Church and the mind of man was ignorant of its own treasures and its own capacities. (Guisepi, n. d.). There were few schools established and monasteries were the only place where knowledge survived. It was also thought throughout this period that only certain members of society were in need of being educated such as lawyers and the clergy, this was a time a decline in trading as well as education. A Feudalism form of government was in practice giving way to a fragmented political environment where people were loyal to tribes not to a country. As the Middle Ages progressed artists began to break away from the Byzantine arts influence and developed a visual art style known as the Gothic Arts. As

the Gothic Art style developed the artists worked to achieve realism in their works, this movement culminated into the Renaissance Art period. The Renaissance era followed the Middle Ages in Europe. This period took place at the turn of political stability and was motivated by the soldiers returning home from the Crusades. The period known as Renaissance consisted of widespread educational reform, a rebellion to classic based learning and more liberal religious beliefs. The Renaissance was the liberation of humanity from a dungeon, the double discovery of the outer and inner world. The great achievements of the Renaissance were the discovery of the world as well as the discovery of man (Guiseppi, n. d.). After the Middle Ages form of stiff, lifeless art, the Renaissance brought a new sprit to the arts. The establishment of the Renaissance Art period allowed for the dismissal of the days of one dimensional, somber muted art done my monasteries. Artists began using realistic depictions of items such as the human figure. The use of color, light and shadows gave dimension and the feel of life to their paintings. Science aided artists in understanding the concept of perception where the subject matter was depicted to look like it was seen in real life. Artists began to view the human body as noble and worthy of patience study. (Guiseppi, n. d.). The human body was drawn in every posture and activity with artist invented attitudes and facial expressions. The artists from the Renaissance period came from all aspects of society, it was common for artists to study as apprentice under the artists considered to be the masters. These artists were hired by the middle class where the purchasing of art for their homes was thought to elevate their status in society. Many of the works that were created during this period gave way to domestic themes such as

everyday family life. Religious interpretation depicted through art is one of the very few similarities between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. There are a vast number of differences between the two periods. During the Middle Ages art was very flat with muted colors, somber faces and no emphasis on emotions or realism, whereas the artists of the Renaissance arts period worked with shadowing and light to give their work a feeling of realism. The arts of this period used colors and depicted emotions in its subjects. The artists of the middle Ages were mainly monasteries and did not seek acknowledgment for their work. Unsigned work was very common for this era and art was not purchased by the common man for their homes. The Renaissance era gave way to art pieces being placed in the homes of people to help elevate their social status, artists signed and seek acknowledgement and notoriety for all of their works. The tradition of the Middle Ages should be deviated from in works of art to avoid emotionless depictions of their subjects. The ideals of the Renaissance era are a much more amusing and interesting concept when it comes to works of arts. The painting Christ healing the bleeding women (Anonymous, 300-350) during the Middle Ages. The subjects are not front facing, they depict very little emotion and the colors are muted and somber. The painting Adam and Eve expelled from paradise (Masaccio, 1424-25) during the Renaissance arts period is completed with bright colors, emotion of the subjects, light and shadowing for the feeling of a real life experience. This painting draws the viewer in and their emotions in. the painting from the Renaissance period relates to the Middle Ages through the depiction of religious idols. The Renaissance art period is still influential in today's art world. The

development of emotion, depth and real life depictions that were brought about by the great artists of the Renaissance period are the same concepts artists today rely on when telling their story through art. The breaking away from solely religious subject matter to varied themes such as family and the ability for the public to purchase these works and display them in their homes that was started in the Renaissance have led to our ability today too view, admire and own works of arts. Reference list Masaccio, T. C. (1424-25) Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise. Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria Del Carmine Florence. Retrieved November 28, 2012 from: <http://www.artbible.info/art/large/292.html> Christ healing the bleeding women (300-350 A. D.) Retrieved November 28, 2012 from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:HealBleedingWoman.jpg> Guiseppi, R. A. (n. d.) The Renaissance beginning and the process of the Renaissance. University of California. Retrieved from: <http://historyworld.org/renaissance.htm>