

Select and fully
identify two paintings
from different art
historical periods
and...

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Prompt: Select and fully identify two paintings from different art historical periods and cultures that depict the same subject or theme. Then discuss how the presentations are a reflection of the culture and style in which it was created. Can be found on pg. 560 in textbook can be found on pg. 600 in textbook The first work is the center panel of the Merode Altarpiece by Robert Campin in 1425. It is titled The Annunciation and is a Flemish painting. The second work is a fresco by Fra Angelico entitled Annunciation. It was made in 1440 in Florence, Italy.

The Merode Altarpiece is considered early fifteenth century Flemish art while Annunciation is considered Early Renaissance art. The subject of both of these paintings is the Annunciation which is when the Virgin Mary was told by the archangel Gabriel that she would miraculously conceive and become the mother of Jesus. In everyday Flemish life it would have been very difficult to avoid anything religion related. Secular and religious lives were intertwined. During this time period religious artwork was beginning to be commissioned not just for public worship sites but for private use as well.

This is the case with the Merode altarpiece. It was much smaller than public religious art so that it could be easily transported around the home. The Merode altarpiece is painted with oil on wood. The Annunciation reflects the style of early Flemish painting because of the deep shadowing and use of light that gives the painting an intense sense of depth and volume. Both the Virgin Mary and Gabriel have weight and solidity. Within the work there is a sense of realism and detail from all the objects that are painted in the room.

Evidence of the Flemish style can also be seen in the drapery in the clothing which is stiff, linear and angular. The Annunciation displays numerous examples of Christian iconography which demonstrates the rising popularity of combining religious life with secular. A few examples of this iconography include the lilies on the table which are a symbol of Mary's virginity and purity, the bible on the table which is opened to Isaiah 7: 14, and the copper basin and towel which represents the cleansing of sin. This work would have been located in a private Flemish home for private worship but it is now located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Annunciation is significant to history because it demonstrated the shift of public worship at a church to private worship in the home. This shift would eventually lead to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The Annunciation, the fresco, clearly demonstrates the focus on religion in the 15th century. The fresco is part of numerous frescos that were commissioned by the abbot of the Dominican monastery of San Marco. The purpose of the fresco was to give religious reminders and instill piety into the monks who were dedicating their lives to prayer.

There is even an inscription at the bottom of the work that reminds the monks to say a Hail Mary when they pass the work. Fra Angelico was greatly influenced by two Gothic artists Gentile da Fabriano and Masaccio. The influence of Fabriano is evident in the drapery and detail of Gabriel's wings which give a decorative style to the fresco. The influence of Masaccio can be seen in the use of realistic depth. The work also uses linear perspective which can be seen in the line between garden and the architecture.

However, the lighting and the proportions of the figures within the architecture are irrational.

It could be said that these artistic 'mistakes' were made on purpose. The purpose of pious religious art was to clearly and simply display the presentation and story of the work, not to marvel at the artistic skill. The work is significant because it greatly reflects the religious influence of the time period. What makes this work unique is that it doesn't include anything related to humanism which was a popular theme of the renaissance. The work is entirely religion based as Fra Angelico focused on serving the Roman Catholic Church.