

# Example of bramante and aesthetics of high renaissance essay

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



## **Abstract**

The essay examines the importance of the architecture of Bramante and evaluates how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance. The essay first discusses Bramante's developing style, through a discussion of the Tempietto and then moves on to discuss his work on the Constantine Basilica in St. Peters. The essay then discusses how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance, referring to the work of Vasari, finding that Bramante was the father of the High Renaissance movement in architecture.

## **Introduction**

This essay examines the importance of the architecture of Bramante and evaluates how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance. The essay will first discuss Bramante's developing style, through a discussion of the Tempietto and will then move on to discuss his work on the Constantine Basilica in St. Peters. The essay then discusses how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance, referring to the work of Vasari.

## **Bramante and the Aesthetics of High Renaissance**

As Honour and Fleming (1995) state, the quest for the perfect Christian Church obsessed Renaissance architects, as it was not known how architecture could reconcile Christian and humanist ideals. Bramante's Tempietto was an attempt at solving the problem that this posed architects, with Bramante using a variety of techniques and details in his Tempietto in

his quest to achieve a “ complete Christian-humanist” fusion (Honour and Fleming, 1995). His use of the Roman Doric column, the keys of St. Peter realised in stone and the use of the circular form of the Christian martyria were all testament to the desire to provide a suitable place for worship (Honour and Fleming, 1995). He used the circular form for the building, for example, as he noticed the frequent occurrence of circles in Nature and wanted to replicate Nature’s brilliance in stone. Following Vitruvius’ code of human proportions, Bramante made sure the Tempietto was visually pleasing, leading to a symmetrical configuration effect in the

design of the Tempietto. His understanding of proportion and the importance of detail, and looking back to classical architecture, made Bramante a much sought after Renaissance architect.

Following an open competition, Bramante, Renaissance architect extraordinaire, was selected by Pope Julius II to design a new chapel to replace the Constantine Basilica in St. Peters (Tansev et al., 1995). As Sebastian Serlio stated, “ Bramante is a man of such gifts in architecture that, with the aid and authority given him by the Pope, one may say that he revived true architecture, which had been buried from the ancients down to that time” (as quoted in Ackerman, 1966). Bramante’s designs were revolutionary in the Renaissance, incorporating, as they did, considerations of spatial volume, illusions created by playing with perspective and three-dimensional massing techniques. Bramante was a genius at incorporating different shapes in his designs, from cylinders and cubes, and he also liked to design his buildings using empty voids to provide space for great works of

art, such as paintings, within his buildings.

His love, and use, of ancient designs as a basis for his own buildings led to him developing a whole new form of architecture at this period in the Renaissance. It is argued that his designs form the basis of all modern architecture (Bruschi, 1977). Bramante's importance came about not only because of his own architectural genius but because he was also involved in planning collaborations with other great patrons, architects and artists. Bramante, for example, was involved with the planning of many of the great structures in the Vatican, including the Tempietto de San Pietro, the Santa Maria della Pace and the Belvedere. His influence, through both his own architectural genius, as reflected in his own buildings, and his skill at aiding with planning, is undeniable.

In terms of how Bramante's style represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance, the High Renaissance is the period in which the ideals of the Renaissance reached their peak. During this period, the flourishing of the arts in Italy led to a great variety of artists and architects working together to manifest their cultural and intellectual achievements. As Vasari states, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Renaissance styles were clearly different, with Vasari arguing that the earlier art, "lacked that spontaneity which, although based on correct measurement, goes beyond it without conflicting with order and stylistic purity. This spontaneity enables the artist to enhance his work by adding innumerable inventive details". Essentially, Vasari argues that the earlier artists had missed the finer points in their creations, ignoring the charm of suggestion in favour of direct

presentation, failing to provide sufficient depth to hold the interest of the viewer. Under this understanding of the development of art in the Renaissance, it can be argued that Bramante is an ideal representative of the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance. Bramante is, as has been discussed, a master of detail, a producer of buildings that hold great depth, not only because of his own mastery of proportion and style but because of the spaces he specifically left, within his buildings, to add further details in the form of paintings and sculptures.

St. Peter's Basilica, for example, was redesigned completely by Bramante, using considerations of the historical design of the Basilica and Bramante's ideals for how such an important building should look and feel. The Basilica was redesigned as a bigger, grander, version of the Tempietto, based on the Greek cross. The design was meant to represent the ancient Roman tradition of domed temples and round martyria, in a similar vein to the Florence Cathedral design of Brunelleschi. Bramante, again

influenced by Nature and his vision of God, believed this symmetrical design symbolised God's perfection. Bramante, always paying attention to detail, left space for many paintings and sculptures, these features being, for Bramante, an integral part of the design and aesthetic of the Basilica. It is clear, from his design for this building, that Bramante worked in the aesthetic of the High Renaissance: his deep thinking about form and function and how design was an integral part of this is fundamental to his great success as a Renaissance architect, a fathering founder of the High Renaissance movement.

## Conclusion

The essay has examined the importance of the architecture of Bramante and has evaluated how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance. The essay first discussed Bramante's developing style, through a discussion of the Tempietto, finding that Bramante's use of detail and consideration of the holistic impact of a building set him apart from his peers. The essay then moved on to discuss his work on the Constantine Basilica in St. Peters, finding that the detail embodied in this building was revolutionary. The essay then discussed how his architecture represents the attitudes and aesthetics of the High Renaissance, referring to the work of Vasari, and the fact that as the Renaissance progressed, works of art became more consumed in the detail. It has been argued that, because of his great interest in detail and his obsession with all the details in a building being perfect and contributing to the harmony of the whole, Bramante was a pioneer of the High Renaissance style, representing, completely, the attitudes and aesthetics of this era in the history of art.

## References

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