

Human body, the temple that greeks and renaissance worshiped



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Greek & Renaissance Attitudes Toward the Human Body

Attitudes of the human body have changed several and many times over the course of history. The Greek view of the human body was intended for the male to be as fit and perfect as possible. The Discobolus of Myron (also known as the Discus Thrower) was a perfect example of what the Greeks thought was the ideal human body. In the later centuries during the Renaissance, marble sculptor Michelangelo created David, the new Christian view on the human body, basking in its nude glory. The attitude toward the human body has changed quite a bit, yet still the art from across the centuries have shown fit, able, and lean individuals as perfect.

The bronze Discus Thrower was a Greek sculpture completed in the 5th century AD, but was lost and the sculpture is known through numerous Roman copies. In the time of the Greeks, many people were athletes who wanted to compete in the Greek Olympics. In the case of the Discus Thrower, he was made to demonstrate the perfect athlete in his sport. Discus throwing was naturally nude, so there's no surprise Discus Thrower was completely nude. In the sculpture's own ways, it was deemed the most beautiful and perfect Greek body, and it was. The sculpture demonstrated perfect balance and the embodiment of the sculpture is so proportioned to the detail of the hand on his knee to the hand on the discus. The Greek view on the body and their perfect sculpture had an influence on their lifestyle. Their lifestyle was based on athletics, devotion to the nation, and religion; with this perfect embodiment, the Greeks must have felt that a lot of people didn't fit up to those standards, which is why they made their art so nearly perfect to show the later centuries the "ways" they lived their lifestyles. Since the original <https://assignbuster.com/human-body-the-temple-that-greeks-and-renaissance-worshipped/>

was lost many ago, the later centuries who discovered the remakes and changes among the copies reflected some different attitudes toward the body. The Greeks appreciated the nude in the arts, which fulfill Aristotle's idea of excellence in exercising. The Romans and the Christians used nudity as a sign of purity, and sacrifice to God, purifying all cynical thoughts from the body.

Michelangelo carved the biblical figure, David, from a marble block in 1501. In Renaissance-esque art, there are a few ideals in which artists like Michelangelo pioneered throughout this era; *terribilità* and *virtù*. *Terribilità* is shown through the idealized body, and *virtù* is shown throughout the muscular body David possesses, which demonstrate his skill that's brought into the battle. However, since Michelangelo created David with his proportions of legs and head larger than his body, the artist wanted to bring more visual attention to those parts. The audience might debate that David was made to demonstrate the harmony, balance, and order; while another audience could say that David used a technique of *contrapposto* to create a more natural, normal feelings in the work. The *Venus of Urbino* is an oil on canvas painting from 1538 by Titian. This painting was created with a lot of Christian sexual undertones, a few of which being that Titian painted creamy skin tones with glowing pinks all washed in a golden light. An audience might feel that the lifestyle was very effected by the change in values and form from Greek and Medieval artworks, being that the more open and sexual artworks bring out a purity from god rather than sin and disgust of the body. In the Medieval times, one might be discern about the change because their ideals of the human body differ greatly than the Christian Renaissance

ideals. The Renaissance audience of the artwork would identify greatly with the pieces alike, with their ideals of the body being highly spiritual and pure.

The attitudes that the Greek, Medieval, and Renaissance eras each had about the human body differ greatly with each view being rather open and modest or shameful and sinful. The Greek view discussed earlier on shows that the Discus Thrower created by Myron was the idealistic portrayal of the perfect athletic man, suiting the athletic and Godly lifestyle the Greeks strived to portray. The Renaissance view on the human body was special in the case of the nude and utterly pure and a sprinkle of Godly; this brings artworks such as Michelangelo's David or Titian's Venus of Urbino. These artworks show perfection in the case of sculpt and artistic detail along with colors that move people. All in all, these artists typically showed what the majority of the people believed were perfection, so much so that the artists pieces are recognized globally as historic and informational. The human body and perfection is such an incredibly difficult theme to pin-point on any single piece of art, human, or entity alone, it's almost impossible to say what's perfect and what's not; maybe that's why none of the people look like the people in the art.