

FAH230 MID TERM NOTES

1. Sacrifice of Isaac

Narrative subject: Abraham commanded by God to slay his son as offering, but an angel appeared right before he slayed his son. The angel commanded that he save his son by substituting for a ram.

Work was a trial piece / competition for the bronze doors of the Baptistery of Florence Cathedral

- **Brunelleschi (artist)**
- **Ghiberti (artist)**

Contrasting with Brunelleschi

- poses are controlled and choreographed
- suave and graceful rather than powerful and dramatic
- **Isaac** is not stretched but a fully idealized classical figure (in calm posture)
- **Suave elegance of his figural composition (won the competition)**
- **Cast background and figures as a single piece (stronger, lighter, and less expensive)**
 - Better technique and superiority over Brunelleschi
 - Built a second door "gates of paradise"

2. Medici Palace

- **Michelozzo** → architect
- Austere exterior in keeping with the Florentine political and religious attitudes
- Renaissance style (classically inspired details and harmonious proportions)
- Rustication in classical hierarchy: rough to smooth (bottom up)
- Traditionally placed rooms: around a central courtyard
- square in plan with rooms arranged symmetrically
- sgraffito to enhance the status of owners (appears stable and dignified)
- inaugurated new fashion for monumentality and regularity
- reflected many classical forms
 - modules
 - Corinthian columns
 - Rusticated façade

3. Dome of Florence Cathedral

- **Brunelleschi**
- Solved the technical problem of the dome
- Tall octagonal drum, double shell of masonry
 - Inner and outer shell is linked by a system of arches
 - Self-buttressing
- An oculus in the center of the dome (later crowned → Michelozzo)

4. Foundling Hospital

- **Brunelleschi**
- Portico open to the street – pays homage to traditional form but arcade is supported with light, elegant, smooth columns (his own Corinthian)
- Richly carved capitals
- Pythagorean proportional system to create harmonious arcade and bays
- Terra-cotta medallions that signified the function of the building was added by della Robbia
 - o Shows the renaissance humanism (shows increase sense of social responsibility)

5. San Lorenzo

- Basilican plan (long nave and aisle that open into shallow chapels)
- Mathematically regular plan, based on a square module
- Classical details
 - o Carved in Tuscan sandstone
 - o Corinthian columns + impost blocks carries the arches in the nave
 - o Flattened architectural moldings

6. Orsanmichele – niches of the façade

- Orcagna (architect)
 - o Gothic
 - o Gothic groined vault
- Sculpted images of patron saints in the niches of Orsanmichele
- **Nanni di Banco (artist)**
 - o **Subject: The Four Crowned Martyrs**
 - **Narrative:** Sculptors who refused to make an image of a pagan roman god for the emperor
 - Gothic style setting
 - Solid bodies, heavy form-revealing togas, noble hair and beards, portrait-like = Roman (Classical style) portraiture
 - Contribution to the Florentine revival of interest in antiquity
 - Figures: standing in semi-circle with feet and clothes protruding beyond the niche, creating a 3Dality. → engaging the viewer and inviting pedestrians into their world.
 - Relief Panel on the bottom shows the sculptors at work: solid vigor
- **Donatello (artist)**
 - o Subject: **St. George** (warrior-saint)
 - Standing advertisement for their trade
 - Iconography: [sword in his right hand + (metal?) helmet + sporting scabbard are lost]
 - Solid contrapposto
 - Braced legs and supported armor-heavy torso
 - Alertness, determination and presence, tense focused looking out into the viewer's world
 - Wrinkled brow and fierce expression → worries → complex psychological characterization
 - Low Relief panel: shows St. George slaying a dragon and saving the princess

- Undercut foreground and barely incised architecture+landscape = **atmospheric perspective** → provide narrative focus
 - Subject: **St. Louis of Toulouse**
 - Niche of Orsanmichele
 - Monumental gilt bronze
 - Original context: Promote links to classical antiquity and promote an image of wealth and power
 - Atmosphere of civic and political
- **Ghiberti (artist)**
 - **Subject: St. John the Baptist**
 - Unnaturalistic and elegant curves hair and drapery (International Gothic influence)
 - Casted in a single piece (bronze statue)
 - Work meant to be seen from below

7. David

- **Donatello (artist)**
- First life-size male nude since antiquity
- Classical tradition of heroic nudity
- Laurel-trimmed shepherd hat
- Homoeroticism → a wing from the helmet caresses the inner thigh
- Angular pose and boyish torso → improbable heroism
- A symbol of the citizens resolve to oppose tyrants regardless of their superior power (maybe the celebration of Florentine triumph over the Milanese → Florence: virtuous republic)

8. Equestrian Statue (horse rider)

- **Donatello**
 - Commemoration of the Paduan general of the Venetian army (Erasmus da Narni)
 - Tough, opportunistic mercenary
 - Iconography:
 - The horse: symbolized animal passions, brute and strength
 - Horsemanship – physical and intellectual control (of self and animal → mind/matter)
 - Sunken cheeks, sagging jaw, roping neck stern and sad expression suggest: a warrior grown old and tired from the constant need for military vigilance

9. Gates of Paradise

- **Ghiberti (artist)**
- Departed from the old scheme → made a set of ten scenes from the Hebrew bible – from the creation to the reign of Solomon
- Composition:
 - set in rectangular fields (like a set of framed paintings)
 - Organized the square reliefs in **linear perspective with obvious orthogonal lines**
 - The series of arches/rocks/trees charting the path into the distance
 - Foreground Figures are grouped in the lower third of each panel
 - Other figures decrease gradually in size to map their positioning in deep space (**Clearly differentiating foreground / background**)

- **Also** used to depict a series of events but separated by narrative time in one frame
- **Story of Jacob and Esau**
 - Coherent and measurable space
 - Idealized figures
 - One point perspective
 - square pavements established receding lines, vanishing point
 - towering arches overlapping and gradually diminish in size
 - story unfolds from the background to foreground
 - Rebecca is warned by god > gave birth to twins > Esau sells his right to Jacob > Rebecca and Jacob plot against Esau
- **The creation of Adam and Eve**
 - Combined four episodes into one harmonious panel
 - Creation at the left, temptation in the background left, right side depicts the couple expulsion from Eden
 - Subtle shifts in the scale of figures → separate episodes

10. The Trinity

- **Masaccio (artist)**, Santa Maria del Novella, Florence
- Illusion of a stone funerary monument and altar table set below a deep aedicule (framed niche) in the wall
- Unusual combination of classical orders (Corinthian pilasters and ionic columns inside the niche)
- God is represented as a man **standing** and supporting the cross
 - No hierarchical separation (even the patrons are the same size according to scale)
- Dove of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus is flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist
 - Mary looks out to the viewer and her hand directs focus to the Holy Trinity
- Donors in red → member of the governing council
- Lenzi member kneels in front of the pilaster (closer to viewer than crucifixion)
- Open sarcophagus (skeleton → reminder of the Christian belief of redemption and sacrifice of Christ)
- Receding orthogonal lines → the coffered vault

11. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise

- **Masaccio (artist)**
- Adam and Eve: monumental nude figures
- Studies of Roman sculptures → does not depict every detail
- Focus on the mass of bodies formed by the underlying bone / muscle structures
- Single light source → creating that tangibility (like sculptures) and shadows
- Focus on the psychological impact (instead of wrongdoings and the fall from grace) → shame is depicted (mourning and protesting as they were cast out of paradise naked)

12. Tribute Money

- **Masaccio**
- Incident from the life of Jesus that highlights St. John
 - Central scene a tax collector asking John if Jesus pays the tribute money (temple tax)

- Stable backdrop formed in a semicircular block by observers and a dynamic diagonals in the posture and gesture of the three main fig → tension
- Left: Peter goes fishing
- Right: peter pays the tax
- Use of both linear and atmospheric perspective to integrate architecture, figures and landscape
 - Atmospheric: colors gets lighter for landscape, looser sketch in the back
 - Landscape recedes naturally, trees diminish and peter at left is smaller
 - Linear perspective on Building
- Bold highlights and shadow → volumetric solidity
- Illumination: one light source from the right (as if lit by the chapel's window) + sculptural definition
- Tone and hues → sophisticated shading

13. The delivery of Keys to St. Peter

- **Perugino** (Artist)
- Study in linear perspective
- The paving stones provides a network of orthogonal and horizontal lines for the measured placement of the figures
- Vertical composition: divided by the open space between Christ and Peter and the symmetry (central axis) of the Church
- Horizontal composition: the foreground frieze of people and Background widely spread buildings (depicting Alberti's ideal city (church in the middle of an open space, unobstructed view))

14. The Arnolfini Portrait

- **Jan van Eyck** (artist)
- Giovanni's face Individualized -> conspicuous clarity
- Surrounded by luxury objects (carpet, chandelier, oranges, bed hanging)
- Crystal beads → couple's piety and the mirror → all seeing eye of God
- Dog is symbol for fidelity or funerary association but also wealth (oriental breed)
- St. Margaret – protector of women in childbirth
- Or wedding/betrothal → JVE's inscription "JVE was here" instead of made this → witness
- Convex mirror reflects two visitors standing in the doorway

15. Merope Altarpiece

- **Master of Flemalle** (Artists)
- Possible made for small chapel → relatively small size
- Central panel: Annunciation
 - Set in Flemish home, many household object → symbolic religious meaning
 - Majolica → Represent Mary's virginity
 - Hanging waterpot → Mary's purity and role as vessel
 - Possibly a Jewish praying towel
 - Narrative: moment immediately following Mary's acceptance of her destiny
 - Flame (God's divinity) distinguish as he reincarnated (wind → book riffled)
- Left wing: donors in an enclosed garden (symbol of Mary's virginity)
 - Donors appear in the same space, time and scale as religious figures

- Right: Joseph is working in his workshop
 - o Mousetrap: Christ as the bait in a trap to catch Satan
 - o Drilling holes: (drainboard for making wine → Eucharist and Christ's passion)
- Consistent light, strongest illumination → upper light of picture plane, windows

16. Portrait of a Man in a Red Turban

- **Van Eyck**
- Strong sense of personality, perhaps a self-portrait (also his personal motto and anagram)
- Stubble of a day's growth in chin and cheeks
- Carefully described wrinkles around his eyes
- Illuminated from the viewer's space → is he looking at viewer or viewer seeing the reflection in a mirror

17. The Ghent Altarpiece

- **Van Eyck (artist)**
- Three dimensional mass of the figures, surface realism, luminous details of textures
- Closed: donors depicted kneeling to face painted statue of SS
- Annunciation: somber color scheme, coordinates with the panel below
 - o Words that issue from Gabriel and Mary's mouth appear on the painting
 - Mary's upside down → directed to god (the dove)
- Prophets and sibyls at the top, unfurling scrolls recording their predictions of Christ's coming
- Open: not muted, color and sound
 - o Enthroned figure of God, wearing triple papal crown and earthly crown at his feet
 - o Flanked by Mary and John the Baptist each hold a book
 - o sides: first angel then Adam and Eve
 - o lower panel: continuous horizon unified field and vast landscape with array of saints, apostle, judges, warriors etc to adore the lamb of god

18. Deposition

- **Rogier van Weyden (artist)**
- Ten solid three dimensional figures (near life-size rendering) forceful expression of heartrending grief
- Contemporary dress and portrait like faces → tangibly real
- United by sorrow but mourning figures react in personal ways
- The complexity of Joseph's brocade and Mary Magdalene's vivid dress to counter the pictorial weight of the left
- White accents focus the viewer's attention on the main subjects

19. St. Luke Drawing the Virgin and Child

- **Van Weyden**
- Narrative: based on a legend (6th century Byzantium) that virgin and child appeared miraculously to Luke so he could record their appearance and pass on his authentic witness to followers
- Carefully defined interior space that opens onto a garden
- Familiar gesture of the baby and mother

20. St. Peter Healing with his Shadow

- **Masaccio and Masolino**
- Linear perspective is used to create depth vanishing point is out of the painting

- Contemporary bldgs. And naturalistic Indscap ... typical Florentine
- Horizontal plane ... figures on the right
- Sick people's gaze direct focus on St. Peter
- Solid forms

21. Portinari Altarpiece

- **Van der Goes (Artist)**
- Patron family (Tammaso, wife and three children) are depicted
 - o Their Name Saints stands behind the children who are depicted larger than life size
- Subject: Adoration of the Newborn → Christ in the center
 - o Depicted subjects are Christ, Mary, Joseph, Angels and Shepherds
- Atmospheric perspective → Landscape and meadows
- Figure sizes are scaled to for emphasis
- Light, gesture and gaze of figures draws attention to the Incarnation at the center
- Iconography: Foreground: Wheatsheaf → location at Bethlehem
 - o Vines and grapes → eucharis flowers → purity (White) royalty (purple)
- Detailed, personalized and emotional depiction of common people and children

22. A Gold Smith in His Shop

- **Christus (artist)**
- Hope for health and wellbeing iconography: brooches, beads, pearls, gemstone rings ...
- Process of procuring rings for their upcoming marriage
- Scale in public → prevent dishonesty → last judgment scale : tips to right = righteous
- Convex mirror → expand viewer's field of vision (sees customers coming into the shop)
- Vocational portrait

23. Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove

- **Memling (Artist)**
- Virgin and Child presented frontally
 - o Strong sense of likeness
 - o Holds apple → reference to Adam and Eve (redemption)
 - o Background → strong association with Maarten's Family motto, devices etc
 - o Looking through two window into one rectangular room
 - Shadow casted by Pillow and Mary's mantle → intensify illusion and connects the space
 - Convex mirror shows both Maarten and Mary's back
 - Powerful representation of the apparition of Mary and Child
 - o Domestic setting → powerful fictional encounter

24. Portrait of a Lady

- **Van Der weyden**
- Story unknown
- Staring downward with her hands clasped tightly in front
- Very detailed clothing → red belt, pinned veiled, glistening rings
- Illumination: from top

25. Madonna in the Church

- **Van Eyck**
- Set in a gothic cathedral
- Madonna presented as Queen of heaven → jewel studded crown
- Recalls eleusa icon

- Monumental Mary → unrealistically large compared to her surroundings
- Beam of light coming through the cathedral windows → alluding to her virginal purity and God Presence

26. The Madonna with Cannon George van der Paele

- **Van Eyck**
- Optical concepts and effect → the shadow of the specs on the book and distorted text
- Van der paele kneeling in front of virgin and child → looks like the moment before he stopped reading
- Flanked by St. George and St. Donatian
- Illumination form a light in front of painting → dark background
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27. Crucifixion (Brunelleschi)

- Idealized and measured
- Mathematical perfection of form → imitating Vitruvius' ideal man (ie: armspan is the height)
- Rational theological and order → classical forms

28. Crucifixion (Donatello)

- Exaggerated naturalism

The Temptation

- Masolino
- Serene and innocent compared to Masaccio
- Idealized snake
- No sharp angles but soft and embracing figures

Linear Perspective :

- developed by 15th century Italian artists
- representation of 3D on 2D surface
- one point : a flat plane that intersects the viewer's field of vision at right angles

atmospheric perspective :

- simulation of spatial recession in color and clarity

intuitive perspective :

- system by diminishing their size as they recede into the distance