

# 15th and 16th cent. Northern Renaissance

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- Modern European art emerges from an interaction with cultures on a global scale.
- Prior studies highlighted a more narrow geographic or chronological approach.
- There is an interest in returning to classical ideals in the fifteenth century, with a greater emphasis on formal education and artistic training.
- The Reformation and Counter-Reformation caused a rift in Christian art of the Western Europe. In Northern Europe there was an emphasis on non-religious subjects, like portraits, genre paintings, and still lifes. In Southern Europe there was an emphasis on religious subjects with much more active and dynamic compositions.

## ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- Western Europe and the American colonies are at the center of Renaissance and Baroque studies.
- Europe and the Americas are brought into closer alignment with this new course of study. One is not considered more important than the other.
- Europeans brought good and culture to the Western hemisphere with their trade and conquest.
- Europeans began to collect and organize knowledge from their various expansions around the globe. European influence is on the rise at home and abroad.
- There is a greater exploration of the formal elements of painting, like perspective, composition, and color.
- Artistic training is enhanced by the birth of academies.
- The display of artwork often meant a glorification of the patron. In Northern Europe there was an emphasis on non-religious subjects, like portraits, genre paintings, and still lifes. In Southern Europe there was an emphasis on religious subjects with much more active and dynamic compositions.

## IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

1. The popularity and meaning of symbols used in Northern Renaissance triptychs.
2. The rules of linear perspective.
3. The stylistic differences between northern and southern Renaissance painting.
4. The International Gothic style dominates Northern European painting in the early fifteenth-century.
5. Flemish painting is characterized by symbolically rich layers of meaning applied to crowded compositions with high horizon lines.
6. The introduction of printmaking, the first mass-produced art form, radically transforms art history.
7. The revitalization of classical ideals in literature, history, and philosophy had its impact on the fine arts.
8. The content (iconography) of the Merode Altarpiece.
9. The ways in which the Arnolfini portrait depicts the status of the patron.
10. The artistic decisions made by Grunewald that increased the emotional impact of the Isenheim altarpiece.
11. How artists leave evidence of a Protestant agenda.
12. The patronage of fine art in a Northern European economy.
13. The International Gothic style dominates Northern European painting in the early fifteenth-century.
14. Flemish painting features symbolically rich layers of meaning applied to crowded compositions with high horizon lines.
15. The introduction of printmaking, the first mass-produced art form, radically transforms art history.

## VOCABULARY

Altarpiece  
Annunciation  
Donor  
Engraving  
Etching  
Oil Paint  
Polyptych  
Triptych  
Woodcut

## RESOURCES

XTC Music Video:  
<https://youtu.be/z1Sx4GJWtUQ>  
The Garden of Earthly Delights:  
<https://tuinderlusten-jheronimusbosch.ntr.nl/en>  
Sister Wendy: Northern European Art  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vH8h4hm2TI>  
Isenheim Altarpiece  
<http://www.artinsociety.com/the-isenheim-altarpiece-pt-1-pestilence-and-the-concert-of-angels.html>  
Isenheim Altarpiece model  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN2VvXtjki>

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## JOURNAL

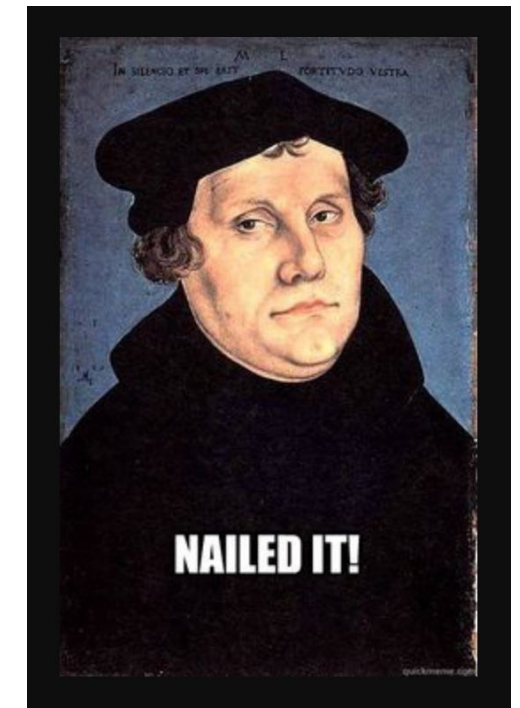
*The Merode Altarpiece (Annunciation) (3.1, 1.4, 3.2)*  
*Isenheim Altarpiece (3.1, 1.3, 3.3)*

## CONTEXT

The prosperous commercial and mercantile interests in the affluent trading towns of Flanders stimulated interest in the arts. Emerging capitalism was visible everywhere, from the first stock exchange established in Antwerp in 1460 to the marketing and trading of works of art. Cities vied with one another for the most sumptuously designed cathedrals, town halls, and altarpieces—in short, the best Europe had to offer.

Political and religious turmoil began with the reformation, which is traditionally dated to 1517, when a German monk and scholar named Martin Luther nailed a list of his complaints to the doors of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Perhaps unknowingly, he began one of the greatest upheavals in European history, causing a split in the Christian faith and political turmoil that would last for centuries. Those countries that were Christian the shortest period of time, (Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands) became Protestant. Those with longer Christian traditions (Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Poland) remained Catholic.

With a Protestant wave of anti-Catholic feeling came an iconoclastic movement attacking paintings and sculptures of holy figures, which only a short while before were considered sacred. Calvinists, in particular, were staunchly opposed to what they saw as blasphemous and idolatrous images; they spearheaded the iconoclastic movement.



**NAILED IT!**

## WORKS OF ART

- *Workshop of Robert Campin, Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece) 1427-1432*
- *Jan Van Eyck, Arnolfini Portrait 1434*
- *Albrecht Durer, Adam and Eve 1504*
- *Matthais Grunewald, Isenheim altarpiece 1512-1516*
- *Lucas Cranach the Elder, Allegory of Law and Grace 1530*
- *Pieter Breugel the Elder, Hunters in the Snow 1565*

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Gardner's pages 555-579 and 675-699
- Complete homework packet
- Write journal
- Fill in flashcards

**HOMEWORK DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_