

WORLD-FAMOUS PICTURE GALLERIES

THE UFFIZI

Colour Slides

1-50

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1. The world-famous Uffizi Gallery was founded by the Medicis, a family of rich Florentine merchants who later became the ruling Dukes of Tuscany. Cosimo de' Medici began collecting works of art as early as the fifteenth century. The picture presented shows a detail of the monumental Uffizi Palace whose building was started by G. Vasari in 1560.

2. In this painting by Botticelli the young man is holding a medallion with the portrait of Duke Cosimo I.

3. The Gallery preserves mainly works of Italian painters from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. The beginning of Italian painting is represented by the large *Madonna Enthroned* by Cimabue (c. 1240–1302). The composition of the picture is still reminiscent of the hieratic pattern of the Middle Ages.

4. The *Madonna Enthroned* by Giotto (c. 1267–1337) was painted around 1310, and is representative of the master's mature period. Both Cimabue and Giotto were Florentine painters and their names mark the rebirth of art in Italy, called the "Renaissance".

5. Giotto's *Madonna and angels* are not spiritualized symbols but plastically rendered solid figures. Under the heavy drapery the form of the body can almost be felt, the faces are fully modelled and evoke already the antique ideals of beauty.

6. The large-size *Annunciation* by Simone Martini (1284–1344) is a masterpiece of Early Renaissance Sienese painting. Before a mat gold background surrounded by an

ornamental Gothic frame the gestures and the draperies of the Virgin and the Angel show a superb interplay of lines.

7. Within the stylized composition of the picture as a whole, the details, as for instance the marble of the pavement, the metal of the vase, the variegated flowers and leaves, reveal an accurate and minute observation of reality.

8. The fascinating atmosphere of fairy-tales, in which the older Gothic tradition and the new realistic tendencies are mingled, pervades the Central-Italian Gentile da Fabriano's (1360–1427) large oil-paintings, like the altarpiece showing the Adoration of the Magi.

9. The springtide landscape of the undulating Tuscan countryside reflects the same magic atmosphere in this small Flight into Egypt from the predella of the altar.

10. Following Giotto, the Florentine painter Masaccio (1401–1428) is the second landmark in Renaissance painting. His Madonna, one of his early works, has a statuesque calm and human dignity about it.

11. Cosimo I commissioned this large panel from the Florentine Paolo Ucello (c. 1396–1475) who painted it between 1455 and 1460, together with two other large battle pieces, now in the Louvre and the National Gallery in London respectively.

12. All three pictures represent The Battle of San Romano of June 2 1432, when the Florentines gained a victory

over the Sieneese. The subject provided the painter with an excellent opportunity of displaying his mastery in painting movement and perspective in a realistic manner.

13. Domenico Veneziano, or Domenico the Venetian, was first mentioned in 1438. He worked in Perugia and Florence. The solid structure of the composition and its unsparing realism are the Florentine elements in his style.

14. The delicacy of the colouring, the light and the softening influence of the atmosphere are all evidences of Domenico's Venetian origin. He painted the altarpiece of the Madonna Enthroned, shown in full in the previous slide, around 1445.

15. The most significant work of the Florentine painter Fra Filippo Lippi (c. 1406–1469) is this altarpiece of The Coronation of the Virgin. The sacred scene imagined by the painter is crowded with realistically portrayed faces and figures. The man kneeling on the right side is in all likelihood a self-portrait of the artist.

16. Domenico Ghirlandaio's (1449–1494) liking for scenes of bourgeois prosperity is also reflected in his rendering of holy subjects. The stable roof in his Adoration of the Magi is supported by carved pilasters and an antique sarcophag. Members of the Vespucci family are portrayed as the Three Magi.

17. The North-Italian Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) treated the figures of his Circumcision of Christ in a detailed linear manner with sharply modelled forms. The setting lacks the piety of a Christian church; the master

applies the architectural elements of antique temples in his composition.

18. Mantegna did not, however, follow the antique example in a servile manner. The heathen spirituality and lively modelling of his works are Renaissance in spirit. In his Adoration of the Magi presented here we can also admire the masterly unity between the figures and the landscape and the splendid spatial solution of the composition.

19. This diptych, commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, shows the Duke and his wife in strict profile. The painter, Piero della Francesca, made no concession to the vanity of his models and by no means idealized them. One panel of the diptych represents the Duke.

20. The other panel shows his wife, Battista Sforza. The figures in the diptych stand out relief-like against the open landscape in the background. The forms are solid: the colour-scheme is harmonious.

21. The Florentine Sandro Botticelli (1444/5–1510) was a member of the humanist circle of the Medici court. The subjects of his paintings were inspired by the poems of Angelo Poliziano and are full of admiration for the beauties of antiquity. He painted The Birth of Venus around 1485.

22. Detail from the large allegoric composition in the previous slide. The painting was made by Botticelli for Lorenzo di Pier Francesco.

23. In this Annunciation by Botticelli the painter's poetic inspiration is expressed in the delicately rhythmic lines and refined presentation of the figures.

24. Botticelli's best known work is the *Primavera*, the allegory of spring. The ethereal figures of Venus, the Three Graces, Flora, and Zephyr are linked to one another by a perfectly elaborated involved linear composition.

25. This detail from Botticelli's *Primavera* shows that his art was far removed from everyday life; he moves in a world of pure ideas; his figures are languid and filled with yearning.

26. In his *Adoration of the Magi*, painted around 1475, Botticelli depicted himself on the right side of the composition. The king kneeling before the Child wears the features of Cosimo the Elder, the young king, standing in the foreground on the left, is the young Lorenzo, called the Magnificent.

27. From the 1470's Botticelli was overwhelmed with commissions by the Medici family and their circle of friends. It was around this time that he painted his work based on the story of Judith and Holofernes.

28. From among his many Madonna pictures the Uffizi Gallery preserves the *Madonna Enthroned* presented here.

29. Luca Signorelli of Cortona (1441–1523) painted this *Madonna and Child*. He uses massive forms and simplified outlines in his compositions.

30. The meaning of this allegoric scene painted by Giovanni Bellini around 1488 has not been elucidated so far. It is not known whom the musing figures before the apparently boundless landscape are meant to symbolize.

31. The Trial of Moses was for a long time attributed to Giovanni Bellini, and it was only in the 19th century that it was first ascribed to his pupil, Giorgione. It is very probable that only the group at the left was in fact painted by the latter master.

32. Giorgione (c. 1477–1510) was one of the great masters of the Venetian Renaissance. He created the new style of Venetian painting employing soft shades and gradations of tone from light to dark. This Portrait of a Knight of Malta was painted in his last period. Some recent research works attribute the picture to Titian.

33. Verocchio, the Florentine painter, sculptor and goldsmith (c. 1435–1488) was the sculptor of the famous equestrian monument to Colleoni in Venice. His paintings, as in this Baptism of Christ, are dominated by his strong sense of plasticity. The young Leonardo da Vinci was a pupil in his workshop.

34. According to an old tradition, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) is supposed to have painted the angel on the furthest left in Verocchio's picture. It is a fact that this face is modelled more softly, and the delicate chiaroscuro applied makes it different from the rest of the figures in the painting.

35. Michelangelo (1475–1564) is the second great genius of the Renaissance closely connected with Florentine art. He painted this Holy Family in 1504 for the marriage of Agnolo Doni and Maddalena Strozzi. He was first and foremost a sculptor; colour in his painting is of secondary importance and only serves to emphasize the drama and the plasticity of the figures.

36. The third great representative of the Italian High-Renaissance was Raphael (1483–1520), born in Urbino, who mastered and made his own the achievements of Leonardo such as the pyramid-shaped composition and the soft modelling seen in this painting. The Madonna of the Goldfinch, as it is known, was painted by him for the Florentine, Lorenzo Nasi.

37. The Portrait of Pope Leo X in the company of Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi was painted by Raphael in Rome. He portrayed these worldly-minded, typical Renaissance church dignitaries with a superb sense of characterization.

38. Titian (c. 1490–1576) was a pupil of Giorgione. He fulfilled and completed his master's way, the turn to High-Renaissance in Venetian painting. His Venus of Urbino is probably a portrait of the Duke of Urbino's mistress.

39. Flora represents Titian's ideal of feminine beauty. The ripe form of the mythological goddess is bathed in a golden radiance and glows with all the richness of the sensuous world. The picture was painted around 1515.

40. Titian's *The Magdalen* which exerted a great influence on later European painting also glorifies the beauty of the naked female body. (This picture is, however, preserved in another world-famous collection in Florence, the Pitti Gallery.)

41. Tintoretto (1518–1594), the Venetian master of the Late Renaissance, painted this *Portrait of the Sculptor Jacopo Sansovino* around 1560. The simplicity of the robe and the background sets off the animated face and hands. The deeply set eyes bear witness to the lively spirit of the aged sculptor.

42. This *Portrait of Eleonora of Toledo*, wife of Duke Cosimo, with her son Giovanni, is the work of their court-painter, the Florentine Agnolo Bronzino (1502–1572). The rigid and decorative splendour is remarkable, stressed still further by the cold enamel blue of the colouring. The emphasis on noble status here becomes more important than the human characteristics of the sitters.

43. Correggio was one of the first great painters to master the effects of direct and reflected light. The *Adoration of the Child* is a good example of his work.

44. The North-Italian Parmigianino (1503–1540) is another typical master of Late Renaissance. His ideal of beauty is delicate, refined and sophisticated. His *Madonna of the Long Neck*, as she is known, is a remarkable composition with its bizarre forms, porcelain brilliance and the unusual relation between foreground and background.

45. Moses defending the Daughters of Jethro by Rosso Fiorentino (1494–1541) is a strikingly composed work. The dynamic movements in the fighting figures and the heap of massacred bodies are highly dramatic in effect.

46. The Young Bacchus is one of the earliest known works of Caravaggio (1573–1610), the painter of Lombard origin famous also for the romantic legends clustered around his name. The picture was painted in Rome around 1588 and already reveals his dislike of idealization and his strong feeling for crude realism.

47. An outstanding masterpiece of non-Italian art in the Uffizi is The Portinari Altarpiece painted by the Flemish master Hugo van der Goes. (c. 1440–1482) in Ghent, about 1473/75. Commissioned by Tommaso Portinari, the Medici's banking agent at Bruges.

48. Albrecht Dürer (1473–1528) was the great master of the German Renaissance. Greatly influenced by the Italians, he successfully freed himself from the formulas of medieval painting. His Adoration of the Magi, dated 1504, was painted in Nuremberg between his two Italian journeys.

49. Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1400–1464) was one of the greatest painters of the fifteenth century. Unaffected by the achievements of Italian art, he preserved the independence of the traditional Gothic style in the Netherlands, as this appears also from his Entombment of Christ.

50. The End

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