

S.5 FINE ART TERM THREE HOLIDAY WORK

TERM 3 2025

Instruction

Attempt the task that follow

Research, photocopy and attach pictures of major artworks of Renaissance

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Theme: History and Appreciation of Art

I. Introduction: The Renaissance "Rebirth"

Core Definition: A transformative period in European history (c. 1400-1600) marking the transition from the medieval to the modern world. It was characterized by a renewed interest in the classical past (Greco-Roman antiquity) and a new emphasis on human potential.

Beyond Art: While art is its most visible legacy, the Renaissance was also a rebirth in:

- **Literature:** Petrarch, Boccaccio, and later, Shakespeare.
- **Science & Exploration:** Copernicus, Galileo, and the Age of Discovery.
- **Philosophy:** The rise of secularism and critical thought.

Proto-Renaissance (c. 1300-1400) – The Dawn of a New Age

The Proto-Renaissance was not a full-blown movement but a period of groundbreaking innovation that laid the essential groundwork for everything that would follow. It was a time when a few visionary artists began to break decisively from the flat, stylized conventions of Byzantine and Gothic art.

Key Characteristics:

Emotion and Narrative: Artists began to depict biblical figures with human emotions—grief, joy, tenderness—making religious stories more relatable and powerful.

Early Spatial Depth: The first attempts were made to create a sense of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, moving away from flat gold backgrounds.

Naturalism: Figures began to have weight, volume, and solidity, standing more naturally in their environments.

Pioneering Artists and Works:

Giotto di Bondone (1266/7-1337): Considered the first true Renaissance artist. His frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua are his masterpiece. He replaced the iconic, lifeless figures of the past with solid, emotionally charged individuals. His figures occupy a believable space, and their gestures tell the story with unprecedented dramatic force.

Duccio di Buoninsegna (c. 1255-1319): Working in Siena, Duccio blended the elegant lines and gold backgrounds of the Byzantine tradition with a new sense of human narrative and subtle emotion, as seen in his magnificent altarpiece, the *Maestà*.

Why it Ended: The Black Death (1348) devastated Europe, halting artistic progress for decades. However, the seeds planted by Giotto and Duccio would not be forgotten.

2. Early Renaissance (c. 1400-1490) – Florence and the Foundation of Mastery

Centered almost exclusively in **Florence**, fueled by the wealth of powerful banking families like the Medici, the Early Renaissance was a period of intense, systematic study and innovation. Artists and intellectuals sought to recreate the beauty and rationality of the classical world through science and art.

Key Characteristics:

- **Linear Perspective:** The single most important discovery. Filippo Brunelleschi codified the mathematical system of linear perspective, creating a convincing illusion of depth receding to a vanishing point. This gave artists total control over the spatial organization of a painting.
- **Human Anatomy and Idealism:** A scientific interest in the human body led artists to study anatomy through dissection. The goal was not just realism, but an idealized, perfectly proportioned human form, reflecting the harmony of the universe.
- **Classical Influence:** Direct study of Roman ruins and newly discovered Greek and Roman texts inspired architecture, sculpture, and subject matter. Columns, arches, and domes replaced the pointed arches of the Gothic.
- **Chiaroscuro:** The use of strong contrasts between light and shadow to model three-dimensional forms.

Key Figures and Works:

- **Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446):** An architect and engineer, he invented linear perspective and engineered the massive dome of Florence Cathedral, a feat of engineering that became a symbol of the Renaissance spirit.

- **Donatello (c. 1386-1466):** A revolutionary sculptor. His *David* was the first free-standing nude bronze statue since antiquity, celebrating the ideal human form with classical inspiration.
- **Masaccio (1401-1428):** The "father of Renaissance painting." In his fresco *The Holy Trinity* in Santa Maria Novella, he used Brunelleschi's perspective with breathtaking mastery for the first time, creating an architectural space that feels utterly real.
- **Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472):** An architect and theorist who codified the new artistic principles in his treatises, making them accessible to other artists.

3. High Renaissance (c. 1490-1527) – The Apex of Harmony and Ideal Beauty

The center of patronage shifted from Florence to **Rome**, where ambitious popes (especially Julius II and Leo X) launched massive artistic projects to glorify the Church and their own power. The High Renaissance was a brief, intense period where the experimental discoveries of the previous century were mastered and synthesized into works of unparalleled grandeur, harmony, and psychological depth.

Key Characteristics:

- **Classical Balance and Harmony:** Compositions are perfectly balanced and stable, often based on geometric shapes like the triangle or pyramid.
- **Idealized Beauty:** Artists sought not to portray individuals as they were, but as perfect, idealized types, embodying divine or heroic qualities.
- **Emotional Restraint and Gravitas:** Figures possess a calm, dignified majesty, even in scenes of drama.
- **Technical Mastery:** A culmination of perspective, anatomy, and chiaroscuro, used with such skill that they became invisible in service of the overall effect.
- **The "Trinity" of Masters:**
 - **Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519):** The ultimate "Renaissance Man." He mastered *sfumato*—a subtle, smoky softening of edges—to create mysterious, atmospheric works like the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, which are as notable for their psychological complexity as their technical brilliance.
 - **Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564):** A sculptor, painter, and architect who believed the ideal form was already imprisoned within the marble block. His colossal *David* epitomizes idealized human beauty and power. His Sistine Chapel ceiling is a monumental testament to humanistic and Christian themes.

- **Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520):** Celebrated for his compositions of perfect harmony, clarity, and grace. His *School of Athens* is a masterpiece of perspective and a summation of Renaissance ideals, gathering great classical philosophers in a sublime architectural setting.
- **Why it Ended: The Sack of Rome in 1527** by mercenary armies of the Holy Roman Empire was a catastrophic event that dispersed artists, shattered the sense of optimism and security, and effectively ended the High Renaissance period.

4. Mannerism (c. 1520-1600) – The Stylish Reaction

Mannerism emerged as a direct reaction against the harmonious ideals of the High Renaissance. With the giants Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael having seemingly achieved perfection, how could a younger generation of artists proceed? They chose not to imitate, but to innovate by deliberately subverting the classical rules.

- **Key Characteristics:**
 - **Artificiality over Naturalism:** Mannerists rejected balanced, natural compositions in favor of sophisticated, artificial, and often bizarre elegance.
 - **Elongated Forms:** Human figures are often distorted, with elongated necks, limbs, and fingers, creating a sense of graceful but unnatural elegance.
 - **Unnatural Color:** Palettes are often acidic, clashing, or bizarre (pinks, oranges, lime greens) to create emotional intensity rather than to depict reality.
 - **Complex and Unstable Compositions:** Figures are often arranged in twisting, serpentine poses (*figura serpentinata*) and crowded into compressed, ambiguous spaces, creating a sense of tension and intellectual complexity.
 - **Thematic Strangeness:** Subjects could be obscure, intellectually complex, or overtly erotic.
- **Key Figures and Works:**
 - **Jacopo Pontormo (1494-1557):** In his *Deposition from the Cross*, the figures seem to float in an ambiguous space, their bodies twisted and colors unreal, creating a dreamlike, emotionally charged scene.
 - **Parmigianino (1503-1540):** His *Madonna with the Long Neck* is the quintessential Mannerist work, exaggerating the Virgin's form to an impossible elegance and placing figures in an illogical, compressed space.

- **Bronzino (1503-1572):** Known for his cold, brilliantly executed, and highly intellectual portraits and allegorical paintings, such as *Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time*, which is filled with complex symbolism and erotic undertones.

Mannerism, with its emphasis on self-conscious style and artificiality, paved the way for the dramatic, theatrical, and emotionally intense Baroque period that would follow.

II. Foundational Concepts

Humanism:

Definition: An intellectual movement that shifted focus from the divine and afterlife to human beings, their achievements, capabilities, and place in the natural world.

Key Tenets: *Ad Fontes* ("to the sources")—studying original Greek and Roman texts. They believed in the dignity of man, the importance of civic virtue, and the value of a classical education.

Impact on Art: Art shifted from purely religious didacticism to also explore human emotion, anatomy, classical mythology, and individual portraiture.

Classicism (The Aesthetic Model):

Definition: The emulation of principles from Ancient Greek and Roman art and architecture.

Key Principles:

Harmony & Balance: Mathematical proportions (the Golden Ratio).

Idealized Beauty: Representing subjects not as they are, but as perfect, idealized forms.

Rational Order: Clear, logical compositions.

Architectural Elements: Rounded arches, domes, columns (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), symmetry, and pediments.

Patronage (The Economic Fuel):

- **The System:** Art was commissioned by powerful patrons who funded artists for specific projects. This system dictated subject matter, materials, and scale.
- **Major Patrons:**
 - **The Church:** The Papacy (e.g., Pope Julius II) commissioned works to glorify God and demonstrate the power of the Church.

- **Wealthy Families:** The Medici in Florence, the Sforza in Milan. Art was a status symbol, a display of wealth, culture, and power.
- **Civic Governments:** Commissions for public squares to promote civic pride and republican values (e.g., Michelangelo's *David*).

III. Artistic Techniques & Styles

Linear Perspective: A mathematical system for creating the illusion of depth on a flat surface.

One-Point Perspective: All parallel lines converge at a single vanishing point on the horizon. Creates a "stage-like" depth.

Atmospheric Perspective: Uses color and clarity to suggest depth. Distant objects are lighter, bluer, and less distinct.

Chiaroscuro (from Italian *chiaro*, "light," and *scuro*, "dark"):

The use of strong contrasts between light and dark to model three-dimensional forms and create dramatic, emotional intensity. (Caravaggio, though later, is the ultimate master).

Sfumato (from Italian *fumo*, "smoke"):

A technique of softening outlines and blending tones and colors so subtly that they melt into one another without any perceptible transitions. Creates a hazy, atmospheric, and mysterious effect.

Contrapposto (Italian for "counterpose"):

A pose where the weight of the body rests on one leg, causing the shoulders and arms to twist off-axis from the hips and legs. This creates a natural, relaxed stance and a dynamic, serpentine line through the body.

Fresco: The technique of painting on fresh, wet lime plaster. The pigment bonds with the plaster as it dries, making the artwork incredibly durable but requiring rapid, confident execution.

- **Buon Fresco:** "True fresco," on wet plaster.
- **Fresco Secco:** On dry plaster, less durable.

IV. Major Artists & Works

A. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) – The Renaissance Scientist-Artist

Leonardo was born in Vinci, Italy, the illegitimate son of a notary and a peasant woman. His early talent secured him an apprenticeship in Florence with the renowned artist Andrea del Verrocchio, where he trained in painting, sculpture, and the technical-mechanical arts. He spent much of his career in the service of powerful patrons, including Ludovico Sforza in Milan

(where he painted *The Last Supper*), Cesare Borgia as a military engineer, and finally King Francis I of France, in whose court he died.

Leonardo was the quintessential "Renaissance Man" (a *Uomo Universale*). His intellectual curiosity was boundless, encompassing anatomy, geology, botany, hydraulics, flight, and architecture. He filled thousands of pages with detailed notes and sketches, pursuing knowledge for its own sake. However, this relentless curiosity often led him to leave projects unfinished.

- **Core Philosophy:** Believed art was a science (*scienza*). He used meticulous observation of nature (anatomy, botany, geology) to achieve ultimate realism.

***Mona Lisa* (c. 1503–1506)**

- **The Smile & Gaze:** The *sfumato*-softened smile and direct engagement with the viewer create unparalleled psychological depth. She is not a static icon but a thinking, feeling individual.
- **Pyramidal Composition:** Her folded arms form a stable, pyramidal base, conveying calm and permanence.
- **Linked Worlds:** The idealized, atmospheric landscape is not just a backdrop; its winding rivers and eroded rocks mirror the organic, flowing forms of her hair and clothing, symbolizing the connection between humanity and nature.

***The Last Supper* (1495–1498)**

- **Dramatic Moment:** Captures the psychological explosion after Jesus says, "One of you will betray me."
- **Perspective as Theology:** The vanishing point is directly behind Christ's head, making him the architectural, compositional, and spiritual center of the piece.
- **Narrative Groups:** The disciples are organized into four dynamic groups of three, each reacting with unique gestures and expressions, a masterclass in depicting human emotion.

B. Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) – The Divine Sculptor.

Life:

Michelangelo was born in Caprese, Italy, and raised in Florence. Defying his father's wishes, he apprenticed with the painter Domenico Ghirlandaio before being taken under the wing of the powerful Lorenzo de' Medici, where he studied classical sculpture in his garden. This early exposure to the Medici circle and classical art shaped his entire career. A deeply religious and temperamental man, he worked fiercely for popes and princes across Italy, primarily in

Florence and Rome. He considered himself first and foremost a sculptor, even when forced to paint.

Artistic Style and Major Works:

Michelangelo's style is defined by a heroic, muscular idealization of the human form, dynamic movement, and emotional intensity. His key characteristics include:

- C. ***Terribilità***: An Italian term implying a sense of awe-inspiring power, sublimity, and dramatic force.
- D. **Mastery of the Human Figure**: His figures are monumental, with a profound understanding of anatomy that makes them seem capable of bursting with life and energy.
- E. **The "Unfinished" (*Non Finito*)**: Many of his sculptures appear unfinished, with figures struggling to emerge from the stone, which he believed housed the spirit of the sculpture waiting to be released.

F.

- **Core Philosophy**: Believed his role was to liberate the ideal, pre-existing form trapped within the marble block. His art is characterized by *terribilità*—a sense of awe-inspiring power and sublime grandeur.
- **David (1501–1504)**
 - **Contrapposto & Tension**: While in *contrapposto*, the figure is not relaxed. The tense neck, bulging veins, and focused gaze capture the moment *before* the action—of intense concentration and psychological readiness.
 - **Political Symbol**: A colossal, defiant nude representing the small but powerful Republic of Florence standing against its larger "Goliath" enemies.
 - **Idealized Anatomy**: Not a realistic teenager, but an idealized, heroic fusion of youthful strength and mature power.
- **Sistine Chapel Ceiling (1508–1512)**
 - **Architectural Illusion**: Michelangelo painted unreal architectural elements (cornices, pedestals) to frame the narratives, creating a breathtaking illusion of depth.
 - **The Creation of Adam**: The central image. The near-touch of the fingers symbolizes the transmission of the divine spark of life, making it an ultimate symbol of Humanism—the moment God empowers humanity.

C. Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520) – The Master of Synthesis

Raphael was born in Urbino, where he received his early training from his father, a court painter. He later studied in Perugia before moving to Florence around 1504. There, he eagerly learned from the works of Leonardo and Michelangelo, assimilating their advances in composition, grace, and power. In 1508, he was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II and became the star of the papal court, running a large and efficient workshop. Unlike the solitary and tormented Michelangelo, Raphael was charming, diplomatic, and successful in his social and professional life. His career was meteoric but cut short when he died of a sudden illness on his 37th birthday.

Artistic Style and Major Works:

Raphael's art is celebrated for its clarity of composition, harmonious balance, and idealized beauty. He synthesized the best qualities of his predecessors into a perfectly accessible and graceful style.

- **Classical Harmony and Grace:** His compositions are perfectly balanced and easy to read, often based on geometric principles.
- **Idealized Beauty:** He sought a universal, perfected beauty that was more approachable than Michelangelo's heroic intensity.
- **Lucidity and Order:** His work embodies the High Renaissance ideal of serene, rational order.

- **Core Philosophy:** Synthesized the strengths of his predecessors: Leonardo's pyramidal composition and *sfumato*, and Michelangelo's anatomical power and drama, into a style of perfect harmony, grace, and clarity.
- **The School of Athens (1509–1511)**
 - **A Summit of Human Thought:** Represents Philosophy, with Plato (pointing to the heavens, idealism) and Aristotle (gesturing to the earth, empiricism) at the center.
 - **Portrait Gallery:** Features likenesses of Renaissance artists: Plato is Leonardo, Heraclitus is Michelangelo, and Euclid is Bramante. It equates the modern "genius" with the ancient sages.
 - **Perfect Perspective:** The grand, classical architecture, rendered in flawless one-point perspective, embodies the Renaissance ideals of order, reason, and balance.

D. Donatello (1386–1466) – The Pioneer of the Early Renaissance

- **David (c. 1440s)**
 - **Radical Sensuality:** The first free-standing, life-sized nude since antiquity is strikingly androgynous and sensual, with a relaxed, intimate contrapposto.
 - **Psychological Complexity:** David's dreamy, almost coy expression, standing over the head of Goliath, introduces a new level of psychological ambiguity into sculpture.

V. Influence on Ugandan Art

- **Formal Art Education:** The curriculum in Ugandan art schools and universities (like Makerere University) is heavily based on the Western academic tradition, which is rooted in Renaissance principles.
- **Painting:**
 - **Realism & Portraiture:** Artists like **Ignatius Serulyo** and **Taga Nuwagaba** employ chiaroscuro, realistic anatomy, and psychological depth directly descended from Renaissance portraiture.
 - **Narrative Composition:** The use of balanced, multi-figure compositions to tell social or political stories mirrors Renaissance narrative frescoes.
- **Sculpture:**
 - **Monumental Public Statues:** The tradition of bronze or stone statues of national heroes (e.g., the Independence Monument in Kampala) follows the Renaissance (and ultimately classical) tradition of civic sculpture, as seen in Donatello's *Gattamelata*.
- **Architecture:**
 - **Institutional Authority:** Buildings like the **Uganda Parliament** and the **Uganda Museum** incorporate classical columns, domes, and symmetrical facades, using Renaissance-derived language to convey stability, tradition, and authority.

How to critic/ Analyze/ Appreciate an Artwork

1. **Identification:** Title, Artist, Date, Medium, Location, Patron.
2. **Formal Analysis:** Describe what you see.
 - **Composition** (balance, symmetry, focal point).
 - **Line, Color, and Light** (use of chiaroscuro, sfumato).

- **Space** (use of linear and atmospheric perspective).
3. **Stylistic Analysis:** Place it in context.
 - What Renaissance style/period does it belong to?
 - How does it use key techniques?
 4. **Iconographic Analysis:** Decoding the subject and symbols.
 - What is the narrative or subject?
 - Are there hidden symbols (e.g., lilies for purity, skulls for mortality)?
 5. **Contextual Analysis:** The "why."
 - **Historical/Social Context:** Why was it made? What was happening at the time?
 - **Patron's Intent:** What was the patron trying to communicate?
 6. **Synthesis & Interpretation:** Your conclusion.
 - What is the overall meaning or message of the work?
 - How does it exemplify Renaissance values?
 - What is its significance in the artist's oeuvre and art history?

Scenario

You should visit **one of the many Art Galleries in Kampala or neighbouring areas** during the holiday. Some of the recommended galleries include **Nommo Gallery, Afriart Gallery, Umoja Art Gallery, AKA Gallery, or any other recognized art space** of your choice.

The purpose of this visit is to help you experience **art appreciation beyond the classroom** by observing and learning from real artworks displayed in a professional environment. While at the gallery, you are encouraged to carefully observe how artists express their ideas, emotions, and cultural identity through their works, and how artworks are arranged, presented, and preserved.

What You Are Required to Do

1. **Visit an art gallery** of your choice within Kampala or a nearby area.
2. **Take at least three clear photographs** as evidence of your visit:
 - One showing you at the gallery (inside or outside).
 - One showing a general view of the gallery.
 - One showing the artwork you have chosen to analyse.
3. **Select one artwork** that interests you most and write a short **analysis report** including:
 - Title of the artwork
 - Name of the artist (if available)
 - Medium and materials used
 - Subject matter or theme
 - Description of what you see in the artwork
 - Use of elements and principles of art (e.g. line, colour, texture, balance, emphasis, etc.)
 - Message or meaning of the artwork
 - Your personal interpretation and reaction
 - The relevance of the artwork to contemporary society
4. **Attach your photographs** as proof of the gallery visit.
5. Present your work neatly on **A4 sheets** with clear headings and well-organized on reporting.