

15th century Northern Renaissance

- Rebirth – humanity, realism, naturalism
- making art look real, trusting unique vision

- I. Limbourg Brothers- February, from the Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry - 1415
 - a. Hand illuminates manuscript
 - b. Drew and embodied the monastic hours of the day
 - i. Allowed ordinary people to have access to the prayers of monks
 - ii. Personalized and made for the rich
 - c. Made for the brother of the king of France
 - d. Accompanies the calendar for the church of February
 - e. First snow scene in the history of art
 - i. Very hard to paint in shades of white and gray
 - ii. Looking at real world and representing snow, weather, real people. Real things- paint what they see
 1. Humanity of world, making it real
- II. Jan Van Eyck – Ghent Alter Piece – 1432
 - a. Interested in minute detail- eyes like cameras
 - b. First N. Renaissance piece of art – made for the city of Ghent, Belgium
 - c. Polytich- many paintings put together to make one
 - i. Panels fold in and out
 - d. Naturalism and realism; perfect the use of oil paint
 - e. Atmospheric perspective- farther in distance, bluer it gets
 - f. Oil paint on panel
 - g. Exterior- the donors (Yotukis and wife) and the annunciation
 - i. Blue of interior is shown when closed; originally made for a gigantic architectural frame
 - ii. Destruction and loss due to warfare
 - h. Everything is different shapes and sizes, doesn't fit well together
 - i. All the Saints at the bottom – open every day of the year
 - j. Uses lenses to magnify the detail of the crown
 - k. Richness, detail, richness reflects the environment of his patrons
 - l. Photographic realism never before seen in art- sciences in art
- III. Jan Van Eyck- Man in Turban – 1433
 - a. paint layer of oil glaze to make red turban
 - b. glaze, varnish
 - i. appear to glow from within
 - c. Northern Renaissance style of $\frac{3}{4}$ face portrait
 - d. Every little detail, everything else in shadow
 - e. Direct gaze- features look out at you and engage with you – brings viewer into space and brings it into communications
 - f. Signs his paintings

- IV. Amolfini Marriage Portrait – Jan Van Eyck – 1434
 - a. Italian dealer in luxury goods
 - b. Portrait of him and wife- first marriage portrait of specific people in real life
 - c. Iconography and Symbolism in Painting
 - i. Marriage as sacrament, marriage in daily life
 - ii. One candle lit – all seeing eye of God
 - iii. Giovanni's shoes- active life of man
 - iv. Women's shoes- cloistered life of women in home
 - v. Little dog- fidelity, faithfulness
 - 1. Standing between two, only feature looking straight out at us – establishing communication between us and painting
 - vi. Apples- adam and eve – first marriage
 - d. Jan Van Eyck is witness to this marriage, as so are we
 - i. Mirror in background – backs of Amolfini and two people (the viewers) standing, looking at the painting
 - ii. Everyone who views this is a witness
 - e. Women is not pregnant, under expectation of child she might have
 - i. Fashionable for women to have big stomachs at the time
- V. Robert Campin – Merode Altarpiece, 1435
 - a. Not controlled by a fiefdom – governed by elected mayor and city council
 - b. Cloister collection at MET in NYC
 - c. Merode family owned it for the longest period
 - d. Scene of annunciation, two patrons, Joseph as a working man – carpenter
 - e. Oil paintings, realistic, naturalistic, photographic eye
 - f. w/o jewels and riches, painted for middle class, softer, plainer
 - g. many in middle class home – bringing subjects from the bible into their time – more humanistic
 - i. sits on floor – Madonna of humility
 - ii. women must be pure and humble
 - h. through window, on beams of light, comes Jesus – spirit of the Lord, passed through her flesh and didn't break her – in like light through a glass
 - i. vase has Hebrew writings
 - i. 3 lilies = trinity ; Jesus is a bud, yet to be conceived, shingle on window = mousetrap – mice symbolizing the devil, sex, lust, sin
 - j. Joseph's role as protector, snatcher of sin
- VI. Rogier Van der Weyden – Deposition of Christ – 1435
 - a. Christ taken from cross- moving
 - b. Bodies of Mary and Jesus in the same pose – shows Mary as the sad mother- new position in the church
 - i. Dual power as forgiving sin
 - c. First tears shown in art
 - d. Two hands placed together in center of composition

- VII. Hugo van der Goes – Portinari Altar Piece – 1475
 - a. Commissioned for Italian
 - b. Extremely intense iconography
 - i. Meant to be studied by viewers and learn from them
 - c. Daughters of patrons, patrons themselves
 - d. Center- nativity scene
 - i. Symbol of humility – peasants and shepherds to venerate Ernst – pure at heart, Jesus on the ground in a blanket
 - e. Flowers- components of Eucharist – wheat and wine vase
 - i. Christ assuming human body
 - f. Language of flowers
 - i. Wild flowers
 - ii. 3 iris – trinity
 - iii. blue iris – Florence
 - iv. red lilies – blood of Christ
 - v. carnations- 3 nails of Christ on cross
 - vi. 7 blue columbines – represent sorrow (blue is the color of sorrow)
 - vii. 15 violets – one for each angel and human being
 - g. painted actual objects – vase
 - h. symbols:
 - i. ox/cow – new faith of Christianity
 - ii. donkey/ass – old faith of Judaism
 - iii. ruined building – old Judaic Faith