

Formation of the Renaissance

-The guardian role of the merchants of Florence, especially those families such as the Medici, the Pitti, the Rucellai, the Strozzi.

-Bankers to the kings of Europe.

-New Understanding of the Human Being and History

-Medieval vs. Renaissance

-Medieval: a hierarchical structure crowned by God.

Renaissance: human being, his/ her beauty and his/ her genius

-New awareness of the dignity of the human being, the power of the human will and the human intellect

-Progress through the accumulation of knowledge (the ideal-enlightenment)

-Ideal man

“The courtier (Renaissance man) should be agreeable in his manners, graceful, a good causeur, and a good dancer, yet strong and fit, well versed in the pursuits of chivalry, riding, fencing, jousting. At the same time he should read poetry and history, be acquainted with Plato and Aristotle, understand all the arts, and practice music and drawing.”

Vitruvian Man (1487)
(based on Book III of Ten Books on
Architecture by Vitruvius)

Leonardo da Vinci

Accademia

Venice, Italy

Vitruvius, Man at the centre of cosmic geometry

-Leonardo da Vinci

painter, architect, engineer, scientist, and musician

-Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man (Based on Book III of The Ten Books on Architecture by Vitruvius)

-human body as the measure of all proportions.

-human body as the single datum which retains the secrets of cosmic proportion.

“In the human body, the natural center is the navel. If a man lies on his back with hands and feet outstretched and a pair of compasses is centered on his navel, then his fingers and toes will touch the circumference of the circle: In the same way, it is possible to fit the human figure into a square, since the height from the top of the head to the sole of the foot is the same as the width of the outstretched arms. . .”

Relationship bt. the Renaissance and the Classical Period

“The philosophers of Florence founded an academy on Plato’s model, kept Plato’s supposed birthday as a holiday, and preached a semi-Greek, semi-Christian religion in which Christ’s love is mixed up with Plato’s principle of divine love that makes us pine for beauty of soul and body in human beings.”

School of Athens, fresco (1509-11)

Raphael

Vatican Museum, Stanza della Segnatura

Rome, Italy

School of Athens, detail of Plato (*left*) and Aristotle (*right*), (1509-11)

Raphael

Relationship bt. the Renaissance and the Classical Period

-Renaissance's emphasis on man, in contrast with the medieval emphasis on God, did not mean that Renaissance disregarded the past.

-In fact, it took a different period as its model and as its justification: Greek and Roman culture

-Return to ancient culture, revival of its grandeur "Re-nascita" (rebirth)

-Yet, did the Renaissance see their time as inferior to the Classical period?

The Renaissance's relationship with the Greek and Roman period

Duomo, exterior (1420-1436)
Filippo Brunelleschi

Santa Maria del Fiore
Florence, Italy

Duomo, axonometric (1420-1436)

Filippo Brunelleschi

Santa Maria del Fiore

Florence, Italy

Cupola of the Cathedral (Florence)

- Bru. was chosen for the construction of the dome over the pre-existing crossing
- Dome has 8 faces, sitting on an octagonal drum
- Masterpiece in construction and shape, partly inspired by Gothic system of rib vault
- Brunelleschi's confidence in his method: built the dome w/out the benefit of a timber framework. (complete integration of ribs & shell)
- A series of concentric rings converging toward a single center.
- Each ring is supported by a network of ribs, which Brunelleschi learned from the Gothic masters.
- Yet, it was non-Gothic and Roman, in that it relied for its structural solidity on the complete integration b/t ribs and shells and thus brings about the impression of the ancient structures of solid masonry.
- This dome dominates the city w/its 140 ft. diameter and its swelling form clearly supported by buttresses—their white marble cladding system standing out clearly from the red tiled roofs.
- Stands as a living symbol of the cultural & technical supremacy of Florence.

“I recognized in many, but above all in you, Filippo, . . . A genius for every laudable enterprise in no way inferior to any of the ancients who gained fame in these arts. I then realized that the ability to achieve the highest distinction in any meritorious activity lies in our own industry and diligence no less than in the favors of Nature and of the times. I admit that for the ancients, who had many precedents to learn from and to imitate, it was less difficult to master those noble arts which for us today prove arduous; but it follows that our fame should be all the greater if without preceptors and without any model to imitate we discover arts and sciences hitherto unheard of and unseen. What man, however hard of heart or jealous, would not praise Filippo the architect when he sees here such an enormous construction towering above the skies, vast enough to cover the entire Tuscan population with its shadow, and done without the aid of beams or elaborate wooden supports?”

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), *On Painting*, p. 34-35

Relationship bt. The Renaissance and the Classical

-The intention was to take up the antique again, not in order to copy it in a servile manner, but to surpass it.

-Inherent dynamic or conflict, if you like

-the past: ideal world

-the future toward which the era runs and progresses

The Renaissance in Architecture

-The return to the ancient culture meant two things

1. Return to the treatise *Ten Books on Architecture* by Vitruvius
2. Ruins of the Greek and Roman periods

The Renaissance in Architecture

1. Return to the treatise *Ten Books on Architecture* by Vitruvius

- written during the 1 century BC.
- the only text on Classical architecture that was available to the architects of the Renaissance period.
- Vitruvianism
- the rules for the design of orders
- the origin of orders and their proportions
- the theory of proportion itself in relationship with the human body
- the types of knowledge that should be sought by architect and so forth.

- theory of decorum
 - Vitruvius' theory of decorum or propriety gave rise to the discourse of decorum in the Renaissance.
 - Vitruvius claimed the Doric as masculine, Ionic as feminine, and the Corinthian as representing the youthful body of the maiden.

The proportion of the Doric and Ionic Orders in relation to the human body
The origin of the Doric and Ionic temples from the timber construction

*From Joseph Rykwert, The Necessity of Artifice,
The Origin of the Corinthian Order*

*Callimachus depicting the Acanthus growing out of
a tomb of a young maiden*

From Joseph Rykwert, The Necessity of Artifice
The Corinthian Order

The Five Orders (1537)

Sebastiano Serlio

The Renaissance in Architecture

2. Ruins of the Greek and Roman periods

- The architects of the Renaissance also studied the ruins of the Greek/Roman period.
- Ancient orders were revived
- the system of superimposed orders was revived
 - The Colosseum and Theatre of Marcellus(arcade of two super-imposed orders
- the ancient methods of vaulting
 - The coffered vaults of ancient baths and temples inspired Alberti and Bramante
 - the vaults they designed for their own churches (Sant' Andrea in Mantua and St. Peter's in Rome)
- the triumphal arches were revived to appear in the facade

***Rome, Colosseum,
amphitheater built under the
Flavian Dynasty, A.D. 72-80***

Thermae of Caracalla, Rome (212-216)

Rome, Arch of Constantine (315)

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472)

- Born & educated in the north of Italy,
- respected writer of comedies
- possessed high level of knowledge in law, geometry, mathematics, art. And he was a great athlete, too.
- In Florence, he befriended Brunelleschi, Donatello, & Masaccio
- He went to Rome in 1432 and entered papal service as a secretary.
- The security of the new job enabled him to write a book on family ethics.
- He also wrote a treatise of architecture in 1443
- His buildings are practical demonstrations intended to reconcile the principles of ancient architecture, as he had deduced them from Vitruvius, w/the ruins he had studied at first hand in Rome
- His buildings can be seen as 3-dimensional demonstrations of his theories

Palazzo Rucellai
(1446-1451)

Leon Battista Alberti

Florence, Italy

(Second floor: piano nobile)

- Superimposed orders of pilasters
- the first full-scale attempt to use the orders to articulate the façade of a palace.
- Imitation of the elevation of Colosseum
- Colosseum's elevation adopts engaged orders in the order of from bottom Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite
- Alberti took the idea of pilasters applied vertically to a wall-surface from the Colosseum, w/its arrangement of Doric, Ionic, & Corinthian 3-quarter columns followed, on the top storey, by Corinthian pilasters.)

-The superimposed orders form the major vertical elements in the facade.

-An ensemble with the horizontal string courses which clearly divide one floor from another.

-The superimposed orders help distinguish b/t the stories – first floor where servants reside, the second floor called *piano nobile*, the main living and civic floor of the palazzo, the top floor – more private dwelling spaces.

-*Piano Nobile*: the main living floor of a palazzo

-Alberti uses rich Corinthian on the *piano noblie*, perhaps w/the intention of emphasizing it as the important floor

-The theory of decorum: to emphasize the grandeur of the building since Alberti believed that the grandeur of the house should reflect the status of the owners by employing the classical vocabularies and its compositional system

***Rome, Colosseum,
amphitheater built under the
Flavian Dynasty, A.D. 72-80***

the Temple of Malatestiano, facade (begun 1446)

Leon Battista Alberti

San Francesco

Rimini, Italy

Façade, Rimini, begun by Alberti 1446

-a recasing of an existing church, its western facade, with a monumental elevation to the glory of the tyrant of Rimini, named Sigismondo Malatesta. Sigismondo Malatesta

-achieved this by applying the Roman triumphal arch to the façade, using both the Arch of Augustus in Rimini and the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

-The tombs located on the both ends of the west front came to lie in a triumphal arch., as if it were symbolizing a triumph over death

-First church to adopt triumphal arch motif.

-An interesting combination b/t the religion victory of Jesus and the secular victory of Rome represented by the triumphal arches.

-The medal by Matteo de' Pasti, the acting architect, shows that the original project also included a huge Pantheon-like dome, probably intended to add to the air of glory.

Augustan arch, Rimini, 27 BC

Rome, Arch of Constantine (315)

Sant' Andrea
(begun 1470)

Leon Battista Alberti

Mantua, Italy

Sant' Andrea, interior view (begun 1470)

Leon Battista Alberti

Mantua, Italy

-Alberti's experimentation with the combination of the classical motifs with Christian church

-The facade superimposes the temple front and the triumphal arch into one.

-The temple front is articulated by giant pilasters.

What is ingeniously inserted into this is the triumphal arch.

-Façade and the Interior

-The façade, in particular the triumphal arch, reflects the interior

-Its main arch reflects the scale and shape of the barrel vault inside that forms the nave.

-The disappearance of arches on the two end bays of the triumphal arch also speaks of the fact that there are no side aisles in this church.

-the major arch that forms the section of the barrel vault of the portico and two transverse smaller arches with barrel vaults.

-This unique composition also reflects the interior

- The plan itself is a traditional Latin Cross plan
- interior: abandoned nave/ aisle division; broad nave, no side aisles, the crossing is domed.
- The nave is covered by a vast, longitudinal barrel vault
- To either side of the nave are three smaller domed chapels alternating w/3 larger chapels w/transverse barrel vaults
- A new façade design. At the same time, abandoned nave and aisles type of basilica church which Brunelleschi had used. The effect is this.
- The Latin cross plan is not simply linear.
- The East-West axis of the nave is countered by the cross axis of the alternating bays at the sides

Florence, Italy

Leon Battista Alberti

Santa Maria Novella
(1458-1471)

Alberti faced tissues in remodelling the original church

1. the problem of devising a classical scheme for a church with a tall nave and lower side aisles
2. How to incorporate the beginnings of an earlier façade

Characteristics of the façade of the original church

-Tomb filled niches w/pointed arches

-side portals w/pointed arches (& crocketed gables)

-rose window

Alberti's Solution

- He inserted the main portal w/pilasters supporting the coffered arch, a pair of framing Corinthian half-columns and another pair of Corinthian half-columns to mark the façade's corners
- Conceived the façade in 2 storeys, a wider one at the bottom and a narrower one at the top.
- The facade is arranged so that its total width is equal to its total height.
- Its two storeys are of the same height and its lower storey is twice the width of its upper story.
- The design can also be imagined as fitting neatly into a square.
- The lower one is articulated by the inserted half-columns and corner pilasters. It carries an attic.
- The upper one is articulated by four pilasters and carries a pediment.
- To provide a visual transition from the wider lower story to the narrower upper one, Alberti installed a pair of giant S-shaped scrolls.
- This later has become the standard solution in resolving in facade the contrast between the high nave and the lower side aisles.

Tailoring the façade to the pre-existing medieval structure imposed several difficulties, which Alberti obviated w/consummated skill

-One problem resulted from the edges of the upper part of the façade being situated directly above the side-portals (solid above void rarely found in classical architecture).

-To distract attention from this unfortunate alignment, Alberti decorated the attic of the lower story with a bold pattern of squares that corresponds neither with the architectural articulation above nor with that below.

- Another problem resulted from the location of the presumably pre existing rose-window.
- Situated in an ungainly manner right at the bottom of the upper level.
- Collision of frames considered ugly.
- To make the window less conspicuous, Alberti incorporated other roundels into the design of the giant scrolls at other side.
- At this moment, Alberti centered them at a slightly lower level.

Mannerism

-a complex cultural phenomenon.

-It occurred not only in the 16th century Italy, but it also has further resonance even in the contemporary period.

-We use this term mannerism very often

-What do we indicate by this term? When we say his work has become manneristic, what do we mean by that?

Mannerism

-Two perspectives

1. mannerism as an aesthetic formal phenomenon

-Aesthetically speaking, mannerism reflects one's desire to escape from repetitive exercise of the same syntactics and vocabularies of a pre-established system.

-Seeking a break from the norm, while not creating a new formal system (system of artistic language).

-Mannerism breaks the norm rather by disrupting its logic, not by again creating a new formal system.

-A mannerist architect and artist is a master of form.

-he or she knows how the established system works and how to play with it.

-In fact, he or she is so confident in playing with formal vocabularies.

Palazzo del Te, exterior views: loggia, garden façade and court (1526-1534)

Mantua, Italy

Giulio Romano

-a Doric triglyph which appears to have slipped down into the zone below
-a good example of the mannerist play, or if you like, mannerist debasement, of the logic of the classical architecture.

Giulio Romano: Mantua

Palazzo Ducale

House of Giulio Romano (mid 16th c.)

Giulio Romano

Mantua, Italy

-Mannerism as an aesthetic and formal phenomenon reflects a constant human tendency.

-For example, a contemporary architect named Robert Venturi expressed his formal penchant this way:

“I like elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure,’ compromising rather than ‘clean,’ distorted rather than ‘straightforward,’ ambiguous rather than ‘articulated,’ perverse as well as impersonal . . . “

Robert Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*

-Psychological Interpretations of Mannerism

-mannerism is the symptom of self-indulgence, boredom and melancholy.

“I am bored with doing the same thing over and over again. But, I do not know how to do things differently. So, I am going to disrupt what has been established.”

-a fundamental dilemma

-This dilemma is that the abnormal should be based upon the acknowledgement of the normal and vice versa.

-Renaissance architects played within norms, or within established formal systems and vocabularies. In contrast, mannerist architects destruct the system, yet still bound to norm for its licenses to be recognized.

-In other words, mannerism draws its inspiration from other styles

Michelangelo, Studies for the Sistine
Ceiling and the Tomb of Julius II.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

Vitruvian Man (1487)

Leonardo da Vinci

Michelangelo, Studies for the Sistine
Ceiling and the Tomb of Julius II.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

Da Vinci's body vs. Michelangelo's body

-Da Vinci's body

- A body in calmness

- body fitting within a proportional system.

- body in harmony

- This body does not seem to know pains, agonies of human life.

- The body is rather flat

-Michelangelo's body

- body in movement

- body caught in different directions, or forces.

- body that is alive

- body that feels different, even opposing dynamics of human life.

“The movement from a view of life as essentially simple and orderly to a view of life as complex and ironic is what individual passes through in becoming mature. But certain epochs encourage this development, in them the paradoxical or dramatic outlook colours the whole intellectual scene . . . Then equilibrium must be created out of opposites. Such inner peace as men gain must represent a tension among contradictions and uncertainties . . . A feeling for paradox allows seemingly dissimilar things to exist side by side, their very incongruity suggesting a kind of truth.” August Heckscher

As quoted by Robert Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, p.24

- Mannerism in this sense emerges from the reflection of reality in which irreconcilable opposites are joined together.
- Life is in such shape. Man is being of desire yet in awareness of its emptiness, of finitude yet in awareness of infinity, of temporality yet in awareness of eternity).
- The posture of the body, the pose of the body in this mannerism appears not in a calm proportional system, but in action and constant change.
- The body is put to action, action as the negation of contemplative consciousness.
- Mannerism understood this way talks about an attainment of maturity in life
- It is about the one who realizes how convoluted reality is, how complex human affairs are.

Villa Madama, plan (begun 1516)

Giulio Romano

Rome, Italy

Villa Madama, interior and exterior from garden (begun 1516)

Giulio Romano

Rome, Italy

- Originally the plan was prepared by Raphael
- With Raphael's death, Giulio Romano took the project
- A full-scale attempt to recreate a classical villa complete with a circular court, a grand loggia overlooking a garden
- Two interesting moments
 1. facade
 - designed in such a way that symmetry and asymmetry are combined together.
 - It shows the trace of classical symmetry, yet the symmetry
 2. plan
 - governed not by the compositional clarity, but by the style of life, the close relationship bt. the members of the family, the guests and even the servants