Renaissance (c.1550-1550)

System of Knowledge

Renaissance literally means ‘rebirth’. This Rebirth was of a cultural nature intellectual and artistically rediscover Classical antiquities astatic values, and re liberated them into new artistic forms. Giotto heralded a short poto -renaissance era which eventually developed into a more spectacular renaissance from circa 1400 to mid-16th century. In western Europe, the renaissance started in the early sixteenth century ( ex. in France), and thrived their until the beginning of the 17th century.

Characteristics of renaissance are:

1. Linear (or mathematical) perspective:
   the mastery of this technique in able artist to create the illusion of a three-dimensional space on a flat surface. The first inaccurate attempts were made by Giotto. More accurate results were obtained bye Masaccio, Brunelleschi and Donatello (1286-1486)
2. Aerial (or atmospheric perspective)
   Developed in the late-15th Century by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), aerial perspective suggests dept of field with the change in the intensity of colours used.
3. True representations of nature:
   - Figures and objects have volume
   - Figures portrayed from nature through direct observation, and not portray from memory as in Byzantine art.
4. Idealisation of men and nature on the 1 hand, the renaissance artist was directly inspired by Nature, but on the other he sublimated it (ex. the human figure), thus giving it perfect forms as in Greek Classical art. See pages 58. and 79.
5. A search for an overall harmony of forms through the pursuit:
   - symmetry in artistic composition
   - balanced composition
   - figures encapsulated in perfect geometrical shapes, mainly circles, semi circles, equilateral triangles, squares, rectangles
   - the rationalisation of space and forms
6. These ideas were reflected in the Man-centred and idealistic philosophy of the renaissance for example, Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) claimed that “Man is the measure of all things”, and that “beauty is the harmony and concord of all the parts so that nothing could be added or subtracted except for the worse”.

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