

Review Questions: Artists and Leaders - 2/19/2003

We have looked at various examples of works of art during the past six weeks and have seen the effects leaders have had on art and culture; art has often been used as a tool by various leaders for various purposes; comment on the following:

1. How was the Virgin Mary perceived in the city of Siena in the 14th century, and what influences did the Virgin have on the city of Siena and the art produced at the time? Mention specific artists and their works.

2. What were some of the qualities of mind and character displayed in works of art relative to the following leaders:

- St. Francis of Assisi
- Lionardo Bruni, Chancellor of Florence (d. 1444)
- Lorenzo de' Medici (Il Magnifico) in Florence
- Pope Julius II in Rome during the High Renaissance period in the early 16th century.

3. Certain leaders have earned the contempt of artists, and thus works of art have sometimes become, in reference to a particular leader or situation, a form of criticism, ridicule, sarcasm, or even scorn. For each of the following, describe the situation and a work of art where this might have been case:

- King Philip II of Spain and the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the Netherlands
- Popes: Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation; artist Lucas Crannach the Elder
- the situation in France prior to the 1789 Revolution; the work of Fragonard
- Marie Antoinette, Queen of France and the work of Jacques-Louis David
- King Chares IV and Queen Maria Luisa and the work of Francesco Goya in Spain.

4. Leaders have been influenced and inspired by venerable historical traditions which seem to provide or create the kind of mythology or strong pedigree, which can be very useful in establishing the authority by which they lead. Comment on the historical sources that shaped the ideas and imagery of leaders and how those sources influenced the artists they patronized:

- Italian humanists during the 15th century in Florence
- Popes of the Roman Catholic Church
- King Louis XIV (Roi Soleil - the Sun King) in France
- Jacques-Louis David and the Neoclassical style of the French Revolution.

5. It seems that in certain circumstances, it is the artist or the work of art that becomes the leader. Works of art have often carried strong political or inspiring messages. Comment on the following and in doing so, discuss an example of an artist's work which functioned, in effect, as leader:

- Brunelleschi in Florence in the 15th century [Dome on the Florence Cathedral]
- Michelangelo's David, 1501-1504 and the situation of Florence at the time

- the art of Albrecht Durer/Lucas Cranach during the early Protestant Reformation; [Durer's Last Supper, 1523; Cranach's Allegory of Law and Grace, 1530, "painter of the Reformation"]
- doctrine (teachings) of the Catholic Church celebrated in the art of El Greco [The Burial of Count Orgaz, 1586]
- Bernini at St. Peter's in Rome
- Velazquez and King Philip IV of Spain: [Las Meninas, 1656]
- Versailles and Louis XIV in France [c. 1669-majority to 1715-death]
- Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii, 1784
- Georges Seurat, A Sunday on La Grande Jatte, 1884-1886.

6. In certain situations, various leaders have used art as a tool to masquerade or conceal their political intentions. Artists, therefore, in certain circumstances, have created works of art that are really "public relations" -- myths, idealizations, aggrandizements of a leader, which, in fact, are not born out by contemporary critics, or historical circumstances or facts. Note the following:

- Art produced for Lorenzo de' Medici and criticized by Savonarola . . .
- Julius II and the art of the High Renaissance: Raphael, Michelangelo, Bramante: creating myths about the papacy which did not match the reality of the era:
- Luther, Guicciardini, Michelangelo, Sack of Rome by Charles V, etc. . . .
- Rubens and the myth of Marie de' Medici, Queen of France, early 17th century . . .
- Jacques-Louis David and his images of Napoleon . . .
- Napoleon III and Georges-Eugene Haussmann creating myths during the Second Empire in France (1850-1870), harshly criticized by Daumier, Manet and Cezanne . . . and discussed in K. Marx's and F. Engels' Communist Manifesto.