

Visual art was popular in Renaissance Italy as it was considered a symbolic language. It was seen as a medium of communication with social, spiritual and political values. During the Renaissance it possessed an inner power and became a matter of civic pride. The exterior of the urban centres came to be measured in artistic terms. According to Peter Burke, the arts between 1350 and 1550 were transformed in two ways — through a return to nature and through a return to antiquity. The former influenced the field of painting while the latter determined the trends in architecture.

Humanism as a cultural movement had great impact in creating interest in art, architecture and music. The aim of humanism was to perfect all forms of arts and scholarship. The emancipation of man and the focus on the dignity of man created an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and individual expression. Humanists believed that the mind could transcend human nature and come to understand these eternal ideas. The artist could reproduce the beauty of soul through imagination and in doing so, reach out to God. To Dante, art was "the grandchild of God." For Michelangelo, beauty "lifts to heaven hearts that truly know."

Artists sought to achieve the representation of beauty in a realistic way by using the proportions created by God in the universe. ~~It was the~~ During the Renaissance, nature ceased to be mere background. Painters now faithfully depicted the beauty of mountains, rocks, and gardens for their own sake. Objects of everyday life increasingly appeared in paintings reflecting a greater preoccupation with realistic depiction. Beauty could be ~~poorly~~ portrayed with extraordinary richness. The memorable figures of the frescoes of Giotto di Bondone of Florence (c. 1267-1337) in the chapel of Holy Cross Church in Florence, particularly their