



Seeing History Through Artists' Eyes

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Wednesday, February 12, 2025 - 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. ET

Session 2: Reformation and Counter-Reformation: Artists Take Up the Cause

- I. **Chronology of the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reformation (Counter-Reformation)**
 - a. Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in 1517 to the Council of Trent, 1545-1563
- II. **Luther's case against Pope and Church & Cranach's "reform" of Christian art**
 - a. Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), Martin Luther as Augustinian Monk, 1520
 - b. Cranach illustrates Luther's "Passional Christi und Antichristi," 1521
 - c. Cranach, Law and Gospel, 1529
 - i. Wittenberg Altarpiece, 1547 (cf. Catholic altarpieces)
 - ii. Crucifixion (with Martin Luther), 1555
 - d. Hartenfels Castle Chapel, Torgau dedicated by Martin Luther in 1544
- III. **Iconoclasm:** breaking of religious images considered idolatrous (especially by Calvinists; rejected by Luther) "Beeldenstorm" in 1566
- IV. **What's an artist to do? Portraiture, landscape, genre**
 - a. Hans Holbein the Younger, Luther vs. Pope Leo X, 1521
 - i. Hans Holbein portraiture: Erasmus, 1523 (in Basel); Sir Thomas More, 1527; King Henry VIII
 - b. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hunters in the Snow, 1565
 - i. The Census at Bethlehem, 1566
 - c. Rembrandt, Apostle Paul, 1657
 - d. Vermeer, The Milkmaid, 1660
 - e. Jacob van Ruisdael, Windmill at Wijk bij Duurstede, 1670



V. The Catholic Church responds and reaffirms Catholic belief and practices: Baroque art

- a. Bernini, St. Peter's Basilica
 - i. Colonnade, 1656-67
 - ii. Baldacchino & "Cathedra Petri" (throne of St. Peter), 1666
- b. Il Gesu (Jesuit Order), Rome, 1565 –
 - i. Gaulli, Triumph of the Name of Jesus in vault, 1661
- c. Caravaggio, Life of St. Matthew, Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi Francesi, Rome, 1600
- d. Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, Belgium: 1566 iconoclasm; 1581 under Protestants; 1585 restored to Catholic Church
 - i. Peter Paul Rubens, Assumption of the Virgin, 1626

VI. Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" (1536-41) "the most spectacular pictorial casualty of the Counter-Reformation." How? Why?

VII. Reconsider: Seeing History Through Artists' Eyes

Further Reading:

- Joseph Leo Koerner, The Reformation of the Image, Chicago, 2008
- Marcia Hall, ed., Michelangelo's Last Judgment, Cambridge U. Press, 2005
- R. Po-Chia Hsia, The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770, Cambridge U. Press, 1998
- Ulinka Rublack, Reformation Europe, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 2017