

Medieval to Renaissance: Spanish Art from the Meadows Museum



Teacher Workshop
Thursday, April 24, 2008

Table of Contents

3	Background Medieval Spain
4	The Hispano-Flemish Style
5	Altars and Altarpieces

Object Information

7	<i>Saint Blaise</i> , by Martín Bernat
8	<i>Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs</i> , by Francisco Gallego
10	<i>The Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus</i> , by Juan de Borgoña
11	<i>Eve</i> , by Barnaby Fitzgerald

Lessons and Activities

13	<i>Saints, Heroes, and Celebrities</i>
15	<i>Who Made What, and How Do We Know?</i>
17	<i>A Classroom Workshop</i>
19	<i>The Colors of Nature</i>
20	<i>An Altarpiece in Context</i>

Background Medieval Spain

In 711, Islamic invaders conquered Iberia ending Visigothic rule. With some exceptions, Christian and Jews who did not convert to Islam but acknowledged the authority of the new rulers and paid taxes required of non-Muslims, were left free to follow their own religious practices. Christians in the Arab territories were called Mozarabs (from the Arabic *mustarib*, meaning “would-be Arab.” The conquest, and peaceful coexistence, resulted in a rich exchange of artistic influences between Islamic and Christian communities resulting in the adoption of Islamic forms in art and architecture, and creating the style known as Mozarabic.



Islamic Capital from Madinat al-Zahra',
Anonymous Hispano-Islamic Sculptor, ca. 965
Marble
Meadows Museum Purchase, meadows
Foundation Funds, 96.01

By 1085, the Christians in the northern areas of the peninsula joined forces to conquer the Muslim capital and stronghold of Toledo, a center of Islamic and Jewish culture in the Kingdom of Castile. Even with its' conquest, Toledo remained a place where Muslims, Jews, and Christians would peacefully coexist until the early twelfth century. Its scholars played a crucial role in the transmission of classical writings from the ancient world and the Middle East to the rest of Europe.

The Christian reconquest of the peninsula gained ground in the thirteenth century. The unification of the northern kingdoms of León and Castile, and Aragón and Catalonia led to the taking of Muslim held territories. Christian rulers were initially tolerant of the Muslim and Jewish populations, this would later give way to the idea that religious unification would bring further conformity to the territories of what would become Spain, leading to the eventual end of the peaceful coexistence of religions and cultures on the peninsula.

When Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon—the “Catholic Monarchs”—married in 1469, the peninsula was united under one crown. Their Reconquest of Spain was complete with the capture of Granada in 1492. That same year they would seek a unification of the peninsula through religion. In March 1492, the Alhambra decree called for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. It is estimated that around 200,000 people fled the country. Others converted to Christianity, only to later be persecuted under the Inquisition. The Muslims of newly conquered Granada were initially granted religious freedom, but pressure to convert increased (1502, would bring the forced conversion of the Moors was in Iberia.) Finally, 1492 saw Ferdinand and Isabella's investment in Christopher Columbus's venture to bypass the eastward trade routes to the West Indies by sailing west. The decision to fund Columbus's travel would have major implications for Spain and its' position as a world power in the coming centuries.

The Hispano-Flemish Style

Flemish art refers to art made in Flanders, a region that overlaps modern day France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Flemish art is best characterized by the great masters of northern painting, Jan Van Eyck (c 1370/90-1441) and Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399-1464). The art of these masters as well as other major Flemish artists was valued for its complex symbolism, its realism and atmospheric space, its brilliant colors and sensuous textures. Wealthy patrons and well-educated courtiers both inside and outside of Flanders sought the works of these artists. At First, Flemish artists were imported to foreign courts; then many artists from outside Flanders went to study there. The innovation of painting in oils as opposed to tempera began in the north and spread to the south along with the the meticulous style of the Flemish painters. Many Flemish artists and their works traveled to the Iberian Peninsula in the second half of the 15th century due to Queen Isabella's preference of Flemish painting to all other styles. Most appealing to Spanish tastes was the Northern painters' ability to capture realism and emotion in their work.

Panel Painting

Wooden panels were the favored support for artists until the Renaissance, with the introduction of canvas supports for painting. First, the panels were sanded smooth, and coated with a layer of gesso, a fine solution of plaster or chalk, to cover the surface of the wood and make it more uniform. Next, cloth or fine linen was glued over the surface and over the joints on large panels which were often made of two or more pieces of wood. The cloth was then covered again with gesso or chalk. This process could be repeated until the desired surface was achieved to begin painting.

The painting process was usually tempera which was powdered pigments (ground from plant or mineral materials) mixed with a binding material, most often egg yolk was used and at times, glue. Tempera had to be applied very carefully because it dried almost as quickly as it was put down. Shading was created by carefully placed overlaying strokes in varied tones. Until the end of the fifteenth century tempera was the most used paint material, but that was replaced with the rise in popularity of oil paint. Oil, unlike tempera, dried much more slowly and could therefore more easily be corrected if mistakes were made. Oil paint can also be made translucent by applying it in very thin layers called glazes. Light striking an oil painting can penetrate through to the lower layers and reflect back, creating a glow from the paint surface. The rise in Oil painting began in the Northern part of Europe and made its way down to Italy as the preferred medium by the fifteenth century.

Altars and Altarpieces

The altar in the Christian Church symbolizes both the table of Jesus's Last Supper, and the tombs of Christ and the saints. The altar was most often used to display the relics of a church's patron saint or to hold the objects related to the sacrament. Altarpieces that were made on the Iberian Peninsula are known as **retablos**. The Retablo was made up of an enormous framework - taking up the whole wall behind an altar - and is filled with either painted or carved narrative scenes.



Main Altarpiece of the Church of Santa Maria in Trujillo, ca. 1490
Fernando Gallego and Maestro Bartolomé

Altarpieces are painted or carved constructions placed at the back or on top of the altar in a way that made the altar and altarpiece appear to be visually joined. In museums today, most Altarpieces have been removed from their altar, thus only preserving the painted or sculpted areas of the ensemble. Over time, altarpieces evolved from a low panel to a large and elaborate structure filled with images and protected by moveable wings that functioned like shutters. Most altarpieces have a firm base, called a **predella**, that was decorated with images, usually on panel inserts.

Altarpieces and other objects from churches seen in museums today have been removed from their original context. The interior of medieval cathedrals or churches were dark spaces with filtered light through stained glass windows. Their large cavernous interiors would be filled with the sounds of chant or medieval song. The smoke and smell of incense, the flicker of candles reflecting off of the golden surfaces of the altarpiece, came together with the space of the church and the sounds of the service, to give a sense of connection between the parishioners and the spiritual world. Many altars told the stories of the lives and deeds of the saints, or the lives of Christ or his mother, the Virgin Mary. The visual images were necessary to tell the stories of the Bible through visual language to a largely illiterate population.

Italian Influences in Iberia

Shortly after the rise in popularity of Flemish art new modes of painting came into Iberia, this time from Italy. By the fifteenth century, Italian painting had already accomplished technical superiority in aspects such as perspective and the depiction of the figure based on the classical Greek and Roman tradition. While Spanish painting was very much linked to the northern medieval tradition, this style gave way as new artists travelled to Italy for training. While works in the Hispano-Flemish style employ gold ground, utilize compositions that do not have a perfect sense of perspective, and figures depicted with a lack of real volume, these issues were being addressed by the Italian painters.

A good example of this is the masterpiece by Jaun de Borgoña, the *Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus*, (on the cover of this packet) commissioned by the powerful Cardinal Cisneros during the prosperous reign of Isabella and Ferdinand. Borgoña, who probably undertook a trip to Florence, is able to create good perspective using architecture and monumental idealized figures in the Italian style; however, at the same time, he still utilizes an extensive golden ground behind the enthroned Virgin. In this regard, Borgoña's painting perfectly illustrates the transition from Medieval to Early Renaissance in Spain.

Text above adapted from Art History, by Marilyn Stokstad

Saint Blaise, ca. 1480
Martín Bernat (active 1469-1497)
Oil and gilding on panel
Meadows Museum Purchase
Meadows Foundation Funds 97.01



About the Artwork

The subject of this painting is Saint Blaise, who was an early Christian Bishop. He came from Cappadocia (modern Armenia.) He was martyred around 313 A.C.E. and is shown here with the implement of his martyrdom (also called an attribute), a wool-carder's comb, (used for combing out wool before spinning it into fibers) with which he was flayed before finally being beheaded. The definition of martyrdom is someone who chooses to die rather than renounce his faith or principles. Blaise was of noble birth and became bishop of Sebastia, which is why he is also shown holding a bishop's crozier (the staff-like object he is holding), seated on an elaborate throne. He was persecuted by the pagan emperor Licinius, and while he was in prison is said to have resuscitated a choking boy and for that reason is known as the patron saint of sore throats. Because of the carder's comb he was also the patron saint of various workers such as combers, carders and beaters in the wool industry. Wool was a crucial component in Aragon's economy, and Blaise was very popular there. There are a number of *retablos* dedicated to him in that region.

This was most likely the center panel of a larger altarpiece, much like the *Main Altarpiece of the Church of Santa Maria in Trujillo*. It would have been surrounded by scenes in Blaise's life and at the top would be a scene of Christ on the cross, which was traditional for Argonese *retablos* of this era. Another notable characteristic is the jewel-like colors and the variations in texture which the artist created through punching, incising and picking out patterns in a process called *embutido* and using gesso and gilding to create patterns in high relief.

About the Artist

The creator of this work, fifteenth century master Martín Bernat, was the head of a large and prolific workshop in the city of Zaragoza. He came from a family who ranked as lower nobility, which can be discerned from documentation referring to the artist as *scudero*, meaning squire or nobleman, or *infanzón*, meaning member of the lower nobility. This was not the norm for artists from this time, but his rank and family did not prevent him from becoming an artisan who was a magnificent craftsman as well as profitable businessman. He is responsible for several large *retablos* for churches in Zaragoza and several surrounding towns.

***Acacius and the 10,000
Martyrs on Mount Ararat***

Francisco Gallego

After 1493

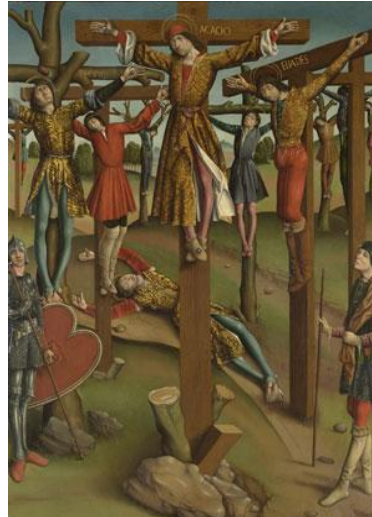
Oil on Panel

60 5/8 x 44 in.

Meadows Museum,

Algur H. Meadows Collection

MM.68.02



About the Artwork

This painting depicts the final scene in the life of the Roman general Acacius and his army of Roman soldiers on Mount Ararat (located in present day Turkey and believed to be the mountain where Noah's ark came to rest after the Great Flood). Acacius's story was very popular in the late Middle Ages, and is thought to have started in Armenia in the twelfth century in the time of the Crusades (the Crusades were Holy Wars between European Christians, Non-Christians, particularly Muslims, and at times Eastern Orthodox Christians. The Crusades began as a quest to rescue Jerusalem and the Holy Land back from the Muslims.) Today, however, accounts of Acacius are understood as pure myth.

The story goes that around 300 A.D. Acacius was sent to the Middle East to settle a rebel uprising between Christians and nonbelievers. During a violent battle, when hope for victory was lost, Acacius and his army were met by an angel of God who blessed them and protected them until the fighting was over and they emerged triumphant. Because of this miraculous encounter, Acacius and his men became believing Christians. When the war was over and they returned to Rome, Acacius and his men refused to deny their new faith. The Roman Emperor thus ordered them to be tortured and crucified.

In the center of the painting is the Roman general Acacius, flanked on either side by his fellow military leaders, Theodorus, on the left, and Eliades, on the right; their names in Spanish are inscribed in gold leaf on their crosses. These three figures are reminiscent of images of the crucified Christ flanked by two thieves.

In addition to Acacius, there are ten other men depicted being crucified. Nine of these men are nailed to crosses made from cut wood, tree braches, and even whole trees, and one is nailed to the ground. Rather than painting all 10,000 soldiers who were martyred, each one of these men are meant to signify 1,000 others who were crucified along with Acacius; an artistic use of symbolic representation. The martyrs are dressed in clothing typical of the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century. Acacius and his generals, in addition to the soldier nailed to the ground, wear gold brocade tunics. All of the martyrs wear crowns of thorns (a detail that associates them not only with the person of Christ, but also refers to their torture before being crucified). In addition, they have haloes, indicating their place in heaven as Christian martyrs.

The many different facial expressions of the men provide a visual story stressing the torture and pain that these men underwent in their commitment to the Christian faith to the point, like Christ, of death. In contrast to the men being crucified, the facial expressions of the two soldiers overseeing the event standing down in the foreground of the painting read as almost lackadaisical.

About the Artist

Since its purchase by Algur H. Meadows in 1968, scholars have debated the artistic attribution of this painting, until recently. Believed first to be painted by Fernando Gallego, the recent research conducted on this panel, in conjunction with the altarpiece from Ciudad Rodrigo by the Meadows Museum and Kimbell Art Museum, points to the painting being made by the hand of Francisco Gallego and his workshop of assisting artists. Not much is known about Francisco, but he was a relative (possibly the son or younger brother) of Fernando. If this is the case it is no surprise that Francisco's artistic style is similar to Fernando's, and while similarities exist between the work of Francisco and Fernando, their work is very much the result of independent artistic minds, as further exemplified by the research.

A deeper understanding of the panel painting process within a multiple-artist workshop setting has come to light through the new technical research involving X-ray analysis that allows for a close examination of the materials and techniques used by the artists as well as being able to identify which artists completed each panel.

The execution of a painted panel within a workshop involved a long and complex process in which, under the direction of a master artist, many assisting artists worked together in union to create a single, harmonious work of art. There were numerous jobs that the supporting artists undertook to assist in the completion of a final panel. Artists were needed to assemble panels, grind pigment, stretch linen across the panel to provide a smooth working surface, apply the undercoat of gesso onto the linen, draw the initial layout of the composition, apply gold leaf, paint trees, paint faces, etc.; all under the close eye and intervening hand of the master artist.

The Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus, 1508-14
Juan de Borgoña (ca. 1470-ca.1534)
Tempera and oil on wood
Meadows Museum
Algur H. Meadows Collection
69.03



About the Artwork

Approximately twenty years after Gallego painted his *Acacius*, Juan de Borgoña painted this masterpiece of perspective. This monumental altarpiece is set apart from its Gothic predecessors by the ordered, architectural setting in one point perspective. The Virgin Mary is bestowing a golden chasuble or bishop's robe in honor of Ildefonsus and his writings in defense of her purity. It is said that she appeared to him in the Cathedral of Toledo in the seventh century A.C.E. The attendants are saints (Saint Catherine can be identified by the sword she carries, which was the instrument of her martyrdom and although it is uncertain, the saint carrying the palm frond and book may be Saint Leocadia whose relics Ildefonsus is said to have revered). The only figure not idealized is the figure of St. Ildefonsus, who is in fact a portrait of a fifteenth century cardinal, Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros. Cisneros had been appointed Confessor to Queen Isabella in 1492, held the role of Regent of the Realm twice, and in 1495 was appointed Archbishop of Toledo, the highest post in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, whose influence often rivaled that of the Pope.

About the Artist

Juan de Borgoña, or John of Burgundy, another transplant artist from north of Spain, brought a new style of painting, this time, not from Flanders, but from Italy. It is thought that Borgoña spent some time studying in Italy, particularly, Florence. In this work, Borgoña skillfully employs scientific perspective, and invention of the Italian Renaissance. It is interesting to note that one of the Renaissance masters of perspective, Michelangelo, began work in 1508 on the Sistine Chapel, the same year that Borgoña may have begun this painting. Borgoña's prominence as a painter and his grasp of Renaissance principals made him the logical choice when the Archbishop commissioned this painting.

Borgoña probably returned from Italy about 1495, and was soon after employed by Cardinal Cisneros, who hired Borgoña and his workshop to decorate the walls of the chapterhouse of Toledo and shortly after, to create an altarpiece for the chapel at the University of Alcalá de Henares, outside of modern day Madrid. Cisneros was a humanist devoted to the Renaissance and the revival of classical learning. This philosophy led him to establish the University which was patterned after the Sorbonne in Paris. When he died in 1517, only the Chapel of Saint Ildefonsus at the University had been completed. Cisneros was buried in front of the altarpiece of which this painting was the center panel.

***Eve*, 2008**

Barnaby Fitzgerald b. 1953.

***Eve*, 2008**

Egg tempera and oil on panel

Lent by Bonnie Wheeler and Jeremy Adams

Barnaby Fitzgerald is a professor of drawing and painting at SMU. He created the painting, *Eve* as part of an interdisciplinary class headed by Dr. Bonnie Wheeler and centered on the Meadows Museum exhibition *Fernando Gallego and His Workshop: The Altarpiece from Ciudad Rodrigo*. The class focused on the culture, religion, and arts of 15th-century Spain. In an effort to explore precisely how an altarpiece was created in the late medieval period, Fitzgerald painstakingly reconstructed the entire process, from preparing a wood panel with layers of gesso to grinding minerals for pigments, creating a preparatory sketch, perforating the surface and transferring the drawing to the finished panel. Once had had the drawing down, he then built up layer by layer of color using egg tempera, and oil paints. The result is a modern medieval masterpiece.



***Cartoon for "Eve,"* 2008**

Barnaby Fitzgerald b. 1953.

***Eve*, 2008**

Charcoal, green colored pencil, and perforations on paper

Lent by Bonnie Wheeler and Jeremy Adams

Fitzgerald often uses figures in his work that refer to literary or classical themes. When working on *Eve*, Fitzgerald was thinking of the panel by Maestro Bartolomé, *The Creation of Eve*, along with the Meadows' own painting, *Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs*. In much the same way that Maestro Bartolomé brought together the stories of the creation of animals along with the creation of Eve in one panel, Fitzgerald also includes animals in his work that make reference to an allegory of spiritual and earthly harmony based on Isaiah 2: 6-9: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." In Fitzgerald's work the lamb and the lion are shown in peaceful coexistence while Eve contemplates the apple and is charmed by the serpent into the inevitable fall of man and birth of original sin. Changes from conception to completion are evident when examining the drawing in relation to the finished panel. There was,

originally, a bird in the top of the tree that has been replaced by the dense foliage in the top of the painting.

Fitzgerald began the panel by preparing the surface with layers of Gesso and linen. A drawing, or cartoon, was first made of the design of the panel. Drawings were often used multiple times in a workshop, or at least aspects of drawings were used again and again, like templates. The conservator working on the altarpiece of Ciudad Rodrigo has noticed that many of the faces of Christ, for example, were made from the same template.

Once the drawing was complete all of the lines of the initial drawing were rolled over with a spur-like instrument called a rotellino. This would allow for the drawing to be perforated. The cartoon is then attached to the panel and is sprinkled, or “pounced” by striking the cartoon with a small bag filled with a charcoal powder. Fitzgerald then used glair (egg white used as a binding agent) and Carbon to make sure that the underdrawing was adhered to the panel’s surface. At this point, a more refined underdrawing was made directly onto the panel. Fitzgerald then used natural pigments, and mixing them achieved a range of hues which he used to build up the surface of the painting. Close examination of the upper right and lower left corners will reveal the process of layering, as Fitzgerald left these areas less finished than the majority of the painting’s surface.

Class Discussion and Writing Activity

Saints, Heroes, and Celebrities

Featured Artwork:

Saint Blaise ca.1480 by Martin Bernat



1. The saints in medieval times were used as intercessors in people's lives for different needs. Saints lives were very much like our modern heroes. Just as they gave up their lives for their beliefs and religion, so too we look to important people in our modern culture who give their lives to a particular cause. Have the students begin by discussing the popularity of a Saint like Blaise.
2. Discuss the concept of a saint with your students. Convey their importance to the people of the fifteenth century and how most people were familiar with their image and could identify them. In this way they were a connecting point for the people. Recall with students how Blaise was imprisoned for his beliefs, he is said to have resuscitated a choking boy and for that reason is known as the patron saint of sore throats. Because of his martyrdom by the carder's comb he was also the patron saint of various workers such as combers, carders and beaters in the wool industry.
3. Discuss attributes, what do they mean and what do they communicate in this work? What is the important information the artist wanted us to know about Blaise and why?
4. Talk about the message of body language. What kind of information can we gain from Blaise's pose? (Words like powerful, regal, leader, or king might come up.)
5. Ask the students in the class to assume various poses which could convey information about them. Talk also about clothing, facial expression, and other props that might be included in the painting. This is all a part of the larger issue of portraiture.
6. As a class, discuss who in modern history might be considered a saint today? (the most recent person actually up for Sainthood is Mother Theresa, who gave her life over to helping the poor in India.) Other figures who have given up much for what they believed in might also be good candidates. Might there be any celebrities who fight for causes that might also be good to discuss?
7. The story about the saint's life is known as their vita or vitae. You could possibly provide the students with a traditional saint's vita (a search on Google with the words saint's vita will bring up numerous examples) and ask them to write the vita of someone they admire living today. As a twist on this, they could also write their own vita, incorporating stories that represent who they are.
8. Have students choose attributes that would represent the person they chose to write about (or themselves) if they were to be depicted in a portrait. You could ask the students to create a portrait of their person that they look up to, or themselves

including attributes. In addition, have them incorporate some sort of texture to the work in the way that the Portrait by Martin Bernat incorporated both punched and raised designs.

9. Once students are finished with their portraits, have them share with the class the person (or themselves) and describe why they looked up to that person, and why they chose to show the person (or themselves) with a particular attribute and how that represents their life story.

Extension

The Panel painting of Saint Blaise was the center piece of an Altar that would have included more panels surrounding it and showing scenes of the life of the Saint. What other scenes from your modern heroes' life could you create to tell more about him or her visually? Create a drawing that would show what a full altar to your modern hero might look like.

Discuss the term "hero worship" as a class. Define as a group what this term means. How is this term applicable to our culture today? Do you think the term applies to the images of saints in the fifteenth century? Why or why not?

Class Discussion on Attribution

Who Made What, and How Do We Know?

Featured Artwork:

Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs, after 1493,
by Francico Gallego

Last Judgment from the Altarpiece of Ciudad Rodrigo

Fernando Gallego, Francisco Gallego and workshop Assistants



The recent technical research done on the *Acacius* panel in conjunction with the panels from *The Altarpiece from Ciudad Rodrigo* has shed new light on the definite attribution of this work to Francisco Gallego, a younger relative to Fernando Gallego. Within the twenty-six panels from Ciudad Rodrigo, there is one panel, *The Last Judgment*, which has been identified as having had the assistance of Francisco Gallego in its creation.

Using the known attribution of the *Acacius* panel to Francisco, examine both paintings and the corresponding underdrawing of the *Acacius* panel and *The Last Judgment* panel and write a comparison that supports the attribution of Francisco as having been one of the artists that worked on *The Last Judgment* panel.

- Look first at the panel paintings themselves. What similarities in the painting style of each panel can you see (such as between facial expressions, body gestures, color, and overall style) that serve as arguments to connect them both to the same artist?
- Next, look at the infrared printout of the underdrawing of each panel. What similarities in the drawing style of each panel can you see (such as visibility of handwritten color notes, the presence of short, thick, and choppy drawing marks) that serve as arguments to connect them both to the same artist?
- Examine the slide showing the similar faces in *Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs*, by Francico Gallego and the *Last Judgment from the Altarpiece of Ciudad Rodrigo* by Fernando Gallego, Francisco Gallego and workshop Assistants to notice further similarities.

For further discussion on attribution, consider the following questions:

- Is it important to know who the artist was when looking at a work of art?
- Does the value of a painting lie more in who the artist is and what he/she is able to create, or is the story that being “told” in the painting more important?
- When considering a painting workshop, in which many different artists are working together to create a single work of art, how does the role and/or importance of the artist change in comparison to the final product and overall message of the painting?

Before the emergence of the Renaissance artists, even master artists such as Francisco and Fernando Gallego, did not work on projects alone and did not single-handedly create all of the works of art that they were commissioned to make. They worked in workshops with the assistance of many people to get the job done. During the Renaissance the value of the individual artist emerged art was looked at considering the skills, the ideas, and the compositions of that particular artist.

- How is the process of workshop painting different from the way we think of artists today?
- Are there examples of workshop or guild practices in art production today? (Examples can be found in the decorative arts such as glass blowing where teams of artisans work alongside a master artist or designer.)

A modern example of a type of workshop setting where many artist art working together to made a single work of art is the famous glass artist Dale Chihuly's work, which can be seen at the Dallas Museum of Art in the form of beautiful glass flower-like sculptures, as well as many other venues.

Class Art Project

A Classroom Workshop

Featured Artwork:

Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs, after 1493,
by Francico Gallego

Images from the *Altarpiece of Ciudad Rodrigo*



When Fernando Gallego went about creating the Altarpiece of Ciudad Rodrigo, he hired in the help of another master artist, known as Maestro Bartolomé. In addition we know he employed his younger relative Francisco Gallego, and other assistants from his large workshop in the town of Salamanca. Look at some of the images provided in the materials in this packet. Choose an image such as the *Raising of Lazarus*, by Fernando Gallego and the *Temptations of Christ* by Maestro Bartolomé to compare.

- How do they depict certain characters that are shown in many panels in a similar way so that we know who they are?
- What differences do you notice in the way they depict the same characters?
- Pay special attention to their clothing. Do you see any differences in the costuming of the figures? What might these differences tell us about the artists?
- How do the facial expressions of the figures help tell the stories of the panels? Do you notice any significant differences in the way the faces are painted?

Remember: Fernando and Francisco Gallego, along with Maestro Bartolome, and numerous others in the workshop created at least twenty-six (and probably more) panels that were combined together in a large retablo and communicated a unified story to the public through visual images.

1. Use literature as the basis for group work on creating illustrations from a single story in a manner that replicates how a medieval workshop worked.
2. Choose a story that the class is reading, or based on literature that is popular with your students (depending on student's age level.) Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a different scene or part of the story which they will then illustrate working collectively as a group.
3. First, before dividing into groups and beginning work, have the whole class meet together and decide how they will depict the main characters using similar features, and similar colors so that they will be clearly read in all of the panels.
4. Have different students in each group take on different tasks, such as creating pigments (or at least being responsible for preparation and clean up of the paints used. Others in the group will create the drawings, or cartoons for the scene the group will illustrate. Most participants in the group will take part in the actual application of paint to the design once it is created. Note: If you are going to have the students attempt to create their own pigments, using natural materials, designate some students help in grinding pigments.

5. Have each group set to work by beginning with a drawing and then having them transfer their drawing to the surface of their panel (they could use poster board, or an actual wood panel as the surface.) Once they have the drawing down, have the rest of the group begin the process of filling in the colors of the panel they create.
6. Once the students have finished their panels, have them put them together in a frame that joins the works to tell the story the class was illustrating.
7. Discuss as a class how successful the groups were in creating a multi-panel work that communicates a story. Were the groups successful at keeping important characters from the story identifiable?

Class experiment on pigments found in nature

The Colors of Nature

Featured Artwork:

Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs after 1493

By Francisco Gallego



1. Collect non-toxic materials such as clay, stone, flowers, grass or parsley, carrots, beets, saffron, etc.
2. Discuss and hypothesize with students what color their plant or mineral will produce.
3. Next, have the students grind their plant or mineral material using a mortar and pestle (you could also use a blender to extract the juices) until the material has been ground very finely.
4. Next, use a medium that the medieval painters might have use such as linseed oil to bind the pigment and apply it to paper. Another binder that was used was egg glair. To make glair, beat egg whites until frothy and then let the mixture rest for at least 10 minutes. The liquid that settles to the bottom is the glair.
5. Discuss with students their hypothesis and whether or not their assumptions were correct.
6. Have them continue to observe their color samples and see if the colors change over time.
7. If the results are good, have students try painting with their pigments.
8. For younger ages, use as a motivation for this activity, *Marguerite Makes a Book*, by Bruce Robertson and Illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt.

Research project

An Altarpiece in Context

Featured Artwork:

The Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus, 1508-14
by Juan de Borgoña



1. Begin by examining the Altarpiece, *The Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus*, by Juan de Borgoña.
2. What do students notice first when they look at the painting?
3. Ask them to describe what draws their attention to that object as they look at this work.
4. What is happening in this scene?
 - The Virgin Mary is bestowing a golden chasuble or bishop's robe in honor of St. Ildefonsus and his writings in defense of her purity. It is said that she appeared to him in the Cathedral of Toledo in the seventh century A.C.E.
5. What role might the other people in this scene play? Why do you think they are there?
 - The attendants are saints. Saint Catherine can be identified by the sword she carries, which was the instrument of her martyrdom. Although it is uncertain, the saint carrying the palm frond and book may be Saint Leocadia whose relics Ildefonsus was said to have revered.
6. Have students describe the looks on the faces of the attendants in the painting. Many of the faces are idealized in a way that makes them look similar to one another.
7. Which faces stand out from the others in this work and why?
 - The only figure not idealized is the figure of St. Ildefonsus, who is in fact a portrait of a fifteenth century cardinal, Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros. Cisneros had been appointed Confessor to Queen Isabella in 1492, held the role of Regent of the Realm twice, and in 1495 was appointed Archbishop of Toledo, the highest post in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, whose influence often rivaled the Pope.
8. Divide the class into four groups. Have each group research the following different topics.

- The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella
 - Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros
 - Juan de Borgoña
 - The final group will develop a time line of important events in relation to Spanish and world history from 1480 -1520.
9. Have each group report back their findings to the class, using visuals when necessary.
 10. Once all of the groups have reported their findings, discuss as a class how the new knowledge they have acquired affects their perception of the work of art.
 11. Has it changed from when they first examined it? If so, in what way?

Medieval to Renaissance: Spanish Art from the Meadows Museum

Curriculum Alignment with TEKS

Texas State Standards	Saints, Heroes, and Celebrities	Who Made What and How do We Know?	A Classroom Workshop	The Colors of Nature	An Altarpiece in Context
Social Studies					
World History					
Grade 6					
1 B	X		X		X
13 A	X				
15 A	X	X	X		X
15 B	X	X	X		X
16 A	X				X
16 B	X				X
18 A	X	X	X		X
18 B	X				
18 C	X	X	X		X
18 D	X	X	X		X
19 A	X	X			X
19 B					
21 B	X				X
21 C					X
21 E	X	X			X
22 C	X		X		X
22 D	X		X		X
22 E					X
High School					
2 A	X				
19 B	X				X
20 A	X	X	X		X
20 B	X	X	X		X
20 C	X	X	X		X
25 C	X	X			X
25 D					X
25 H	X				X
26 B					X
26 C					X
Visual Arts					
Kindergarten					
1 A				X	
1 B	X	X	X	X	X
2 A	X		X	X	X
2 B	X		X	X	X
2 C	X		X	X	X
3 A	X	X	X		X
3 B	X	X	X		X
3 C	X	X	X		X
Grade 1					
1 A	X	X	X		X
1 B	X	X	X		X

2 A	X		X		
2 B	X		X		
2 C	X		X	X	
3 A	X	X	X		X
3 C	X	X	X		X
4 A	X	X			X
4 B	X	X	X		
Grade 2					
1 A	X	X	X	X	X
1 B		X	X		
2 A	X		X		X
2 B	X		X		
2 C	X		X	X	
3 A	X	X	X		X
3 C		X	X	X	
4 A	X		X		
4 B	X	X	X		X
Grade 3					
1 A	X		X		X
2 A	X		X	X	
2 B	X		X		
2 C	X		X	X	
3 A	X	X	X		X
3 C		X	X		
4 A	X		X		
4 B	X		X		X
Grade 4					
1 A	X		X		
1 B		X	X		X
2 A	X		X		
2 B			X		
3 A	X	X		X	X
3 C	X				
4 A	X		X		
4 B	X		X		
Grade 5					
1 B	X	X	X		X
2 A	X		X		
2 B	X	X	X		
2 C	X		X		
3 C	X	X	X	X	X
4 A	X		X		
4 B	X		X		
Grade 6					
1 A	X		X		
1 B	X	X	X		X
2 A	X		X		
2 B	X	X	X		X
2 C	X		X		
3 A	X	X	X		X
4 A	X		X		
4 B	X	X	X		X
Grade 7					
1 A	X		X		
2 A	X		X		
2 B	X		X		

3 A	X	X	X	X	X	X
3 B	X	X	X	X	X	X
4 A	X		X	X		
4 B	X	X	X			X
Grade 8						
1 A	X		X			
2 A	X		X			
2 B	X		X			
3 B	X	X	X			X
4 A	X		X			
4 B	X	X	X			X
High School						
Art Level 1						
1 A	X	X			X	X
1 B		X			X	X
2 A	X		X		X	
2 B	X				X	
2 C	X		X		X	
3 A		X				X
4 A	X					
4 B	X				X	X
High School						
Art Level 2						
1 B	X	X	X		X	X
2 A	X				X	
2 B	X		X		X	
2 C	X		X		X	
3 A	X	X	X		X	X
4 B	X	X			X	X
High School						
Art Level 3						
1 B	X	X			X	X
2 A	X				X	
2 B	X				X	
2 C	X		X		X	
3 A	X	X	X		X	X
4 A	X					
4 B	X	X			X	X
High School						
Art Level 4						
1 A	X					
1 B		X			X	X
3 B	X	X			X	X
English						
Language						
Arts and						
Reading						
Kindergarten						
1 B	X	X	X		X	X
1 C	X	X	X			
2 B	X		X			
9 C			X			X
Grade 1						
1 B	X	X	X		X	X
1 C	X	X	X			

2 B	X			X		
9 C				X		X
Grade 2						
1 B	X	X		X	X	X
1 C	X	X		X		
2 B	X			X		
9 C				X		X
Grade 3						
1 B	X	X		X	X	X
1 C	X	X		X		
2 B	X			X		
9 C				X		X
Grade 4						
1 B	X	X		X	X	X
1 C	X	X		X		
2 B	X			X		
9 C				X		X
Grade 5						
1 B	X	X		X	X	X
1 C	X	X		X		
2 B	X			X		
9 C				X		X
21 D						X
25 A	X					
Grade 6						
1 D	X	X				X
4 A	X	X		X		X
10 G						X
10 H						X
13 E						X
13 G						X
13 I						X
Grade 7						
1 D	X	X				X
4 A	X	X		X		X
10 G						X
10 H						X
13 E						X
13 G						X
13 I						X
1 D	X	X				X
Grade 8						
2 B	X	X		X	X	X
2 C	X	X		X	X	X
2 D	X	X		X	X	X
2 E	X	X		X	X	X
2 F	X	X		X	X	X
4 A	X	X		X		X
5 F	X	X		X	X	X
10 A	X					X
10 F	X					X
10 G	X					X
10 H	X					X
10 L						X
13 A						X
13 D						X

13 E						X
13 F						X
13 G						X
14 A	X	X	X			X
22 A	X	X	X	X		X
23 A	X	X	X	X		X
24 A	X		X			
High School						
Level 1						
1 A	X					X
1 B	X					X
1 C	X					X
2 A	X					X
2 B	X					X
4 A	X		X			X
4 B	X		X			X
4 D			X			X
4 E	X		X	X		X
7 B	X					X
7 H	X					X
9 B	X					X
13 A						X
13 C						X
13 E						X
14 D	X	X	X	X		X
16 A	X	X	X			X
16 C	X	X	X			X
16 E	X	X	X			X
16 F	X	X	X			X
19 A	X	X	X			X
19 B	X	X	X			X
High School						
Level 2						
1 A	X					X
1 B	X					X
1 C	X					X
2 A						X
4 A						X
4 B						X
4 D						X
7 B	X		X			X
7 F	X		X			X
7 G	X		X			X
9 B	X					X
13 A						X
13 D						X
13 E						X
16 C	X	X	X	X		X
16 E	X	X	X	X		X
16 F	X	X	X	X		X
17 A		X	X	X		X
17 C		X	X	X		X
19 A	X	X	X			X
19 B	X	X	X			X
High School						
Level 3						

1 B	X					X
1 C	X					X
4 B	X					X
4 D						X
4 F						X
7 A	X	X		X		X
7 B	X	X		X		X
7 G						X
9 B	X	X		X		X
13 D						X
13 E						X
14 A	X	X		X		X
14 C	X	X		X		X
14 D	X	X		X		X
14 E	X	X		X		X
15 A	X	X		X	X	X
15 C	X	X		X	X	X
15 E	X	X		X	X	X
15 F	X	X		X	X	X
17 A	X	X		X	X	X
17 C	X	X		X	X	X
19 A	X	X		X		X
19 B	X	X		X		X
20 A	X	X		X		X
20 C	X	X		X		X
High School						
Level 4						
4 A	X					X
4 D						X
4 E						X
4 G						X
4 H	X					X
8 A	X			X		X
8 B	X			X		X
8 G						X
10 B	X			X		X
10 C	X			X		X
12 F	X					X
14 A						X
14 G						X
15 A	X	X		X	X	X
15 D	X	X		X	X	X
15 E	X	X		X	X	X
16 A	X	X		X	X	X
16 B	X	X		X	X	X
16 C	X	X		X	X	X
16 E	X	X		X	X	X
16 F	X	X		X	X	X
16 G	X	X		X	X	X
17 A	X	X		X	X	X
17 C	X	X		X	X	X
19 A	X	X		X	X	X
20 A	X	X		X		X
20 B	X	X		X		X
20 C	X	X		X		X
21 A	X	X		X		X

21 C

X