



Speaker: In Italy, it was easy to see the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome. Therefore, in Italy, the Renaissance easily incorporated classical antiquities, such as you would find in Raphael's *The School of Athens*, which depicts great Scholars and philosophers, and thinkers of ancient times, or Botticelli's *La Primavera* or *The Birth of Venus* the focus on mythology from ancient times.

In the northern countries, there was a great heritage from the Gothic era, and the Renaissance in the North reflected its own past more so than Italy's past. One of the most exciting ways that the past was reinvented was visual arts attention to detail. It was mind-boggling. I hope that you get a chance to take a very close look at some of the works in this lesson such as Van Eyck's, Giovanni, Arnolfini, and his wife. The detail is astounding. It's too bad you can't see it in person. It is just amazing, the detail that this work goes into.

The religious strife and upheaval brought about by the Protestant Reformation was tightly woven into the fabric of life in the northern Renaissance. Of course, this impact of the arts. Iconoclasm, which is the systematic destruction of religious icons, was rampant throughout the north.

This destruction was in part from the popular resentment against the church for its practices that were deemed worldly and corrupt. Thank goodness that some people had the foresight to hide some of the great treasures of art like Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, or else it would have been destroyed.

The Protestant Reformation dried-up important funding from the church that artists traditionally relied upon. This led artists towards increased secularism in the arts, and in the northern Renaissance and the visual arts, portraiture became very important, and some of the very first important genre works appeared. You'll find those in the works of Brueghel, whose works focused on common People.

One of the crowning achievements of the northern Renaissance happened in England in the theatrical arts, which flourished there. William Shakespeare is known throughout the world as being one of the greatest playwrights, regardless of the era.

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