

Overall, the responses for this lecture were quite good. Below are examples of what you could have written.

**RESPONSE QUESTION 1/3: How do these two works of art compare? Write a paragraph comparing these two works of art.** Hint: think about naturalism/abstraction, how the figures look, and how space is depicted.

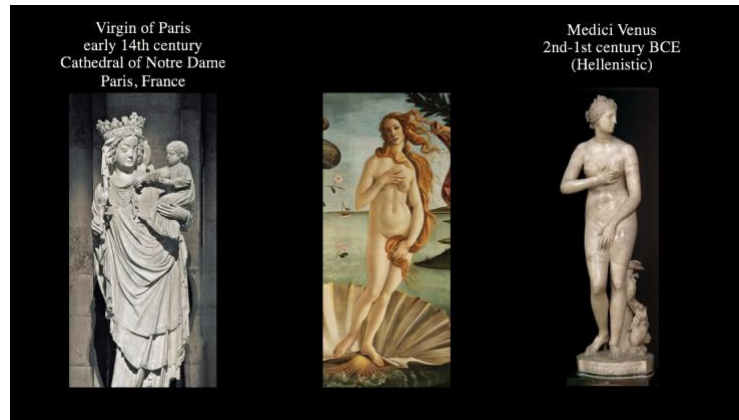


Giotto and Cimabue both depict the Virgin Mary enthroned with the Christ Child on lap, surrounded by angels. While both Mary's are set against an abstracted gold background, Giotto's depiction is more naturalistic and depicts space more realistically. Cimabue's figures are much flatter because he uses less variation in color. Giotto's use of shading gives volume to his figures. This is particularly clear in Mary's dress. Both Mary's wear blue robes that have lines to show drapery, but Cimabue's drapery is more stylized. The garment falls naturalistically in Giotto's depiction, with the garment rendered in highlights and shadows as if it is actually falling over Mary's body.

Another major difference is the depiction of space. Cimabue's composition is much flatter; there is a sense of the angels of being one behind the other, but this is achieved through stacking. The angels farthest back are highest in the composition with only their heads visible, while the angels closest to the viewer are full length and lowest in the composition. Space doesn't recede. There is spatial recession in Giotto's composition. A similar technique is used, but the angels in the Ognissanti Madonna are layered not just vertically, but also horizontally. This gives a sense of crowding, rather than just stacking, which makes the grouping feel more realistic. The lines of Mary's throne in Giotto's composition also seem to extend back into space, amplifying this sense of depth.

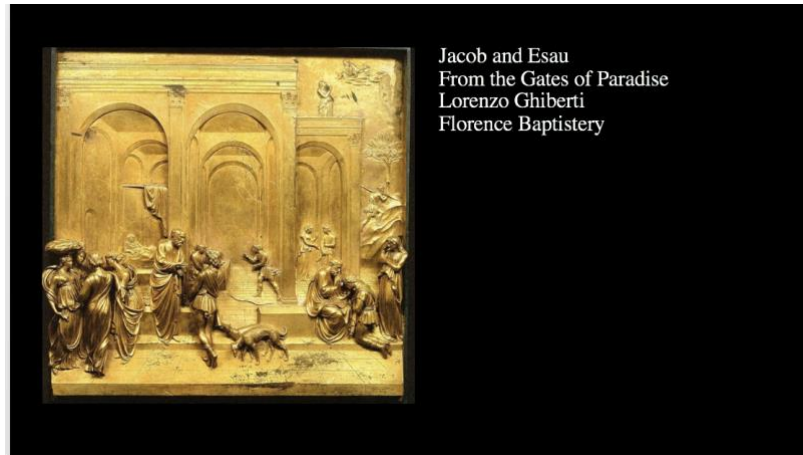
The compositions themselves though, are quite similar. In both, Mary is front and center and is much larger than any of the other figures. This central place and use of hieratic scale positions Mary as the most important figure in the composition. In Cimabue's scheme the angels look away from her, as if overwhelmed by her glory, while in Giotto's composition they stare up at her in awe.

**RESPONSE QUESTION 2/3: Write a paragraph comparing these three figures.** Hint: how are they standing? Do they use contrapposto, and does the contrapposto look the same in each figure?



Each of these figures is a woman standing with her weight put on one leg. All of them are in contrapposto, but the distribution of weight is very different for each figure. The Medici Venus is in classic, subtle contrapposto. Her right leg is slightly bent, with her foot lifting off the ground. Her weight is on her left leg. Botticelli's Venus shows more exaggerated contrapposto. Against the right leg is bent and the foot left, but she seems to sway on her left leg, which is at a strong diagonal. Her torso is shifted back towards to the right. She seems to be more unstable than the Medici Venus, where the distribution of weight is much less extreme. Finally, with the *Virgin of Paris*, a Gothic sculpture, the use of contrapposto is so extreme, that it is almost not appropriate to call this position contrapposto. Contrapposto is the uneven distribution of weight, where the body shifts slightly. Here though the Virgin has one hip juttred out. Her whole body curves. We cannot see her legs because she is clothed, but there is the sense that she does not have her legs bent and straight like the Venus'. Her entire body curves to her left, rather than showing the weight shifting from one leg to the other.

**RESPONSE QUESTION 3/3: write a one paragraph formal analysis describing this panel.**



Jacob and Esau  
From the Gates of Paradise  
Lorenzo Ghiberti  
Florence Baptistery

The remarkable thing about this panel is the level of detail and naturalism the Ghiberti achieved in a small bronze panel. First, the figures are extremely detailed. The curves of the bodies and the way the figures interact is extremely naturalistic. They seem to be moving around each other and conversing as figures would in reality. This is particularly true of the central figures, one of whom has his back turned to us. It was unusual for figures to be shown from behind. This increases the naturalism because it gives the effect that the viewer is not looking at a posed scene, but has a glimpse into bustling activity. The wet drapery of their garments adds to this sense of movement.

The depiction of space is also crucial to the sense of naturalism. Ghiberti uses linear perspective, which is particularly visible in the architecture, which recedes back into space on orthogonal lines towards a central vanishing point. The varying depth of relief also creates depth. The figures closest to the viewer are in the highest relief, while those further in the composition are in low relief. This amplifies the sense that certain figures and objects are closer to the viewer because they seem to emerge out of the composition and into the viewer's space.