FLORENCE, ITALY

Uffizi Galleries: Masterpieces

Twenty paintings from the Uffizi: altarpieces, portraits, mythologies and a battle, from Duccio and Giotto to Caravaggio, Artemisia Gentileschi and Claude Lorrain.



The Uffizi in Florence grew out of the Medici collections. It is now one of the best-known art museums in the world, and its galleries matter particularly for the history of Renaissance painting. Botticelli, Leonardo and Michelangelo draw much of the attention, but there is a good deal to learn from the painters around them.

Much of this selection of twenty paintings works by repetition. Duccio and Giotto both paint the Virgin enthroned; Gentile da Fabriano and Mantegna both paint the Magi arriving; Ghirlandaio, Botticelli and Perugino each gather saints around the Madonna. Seen together, these shared subjects make the differences between painters unusually easy to see. Botticelli also appears away from his famous mythologies, as the painter of an armoured Fortitude and a Madonna among saints. Portraits by Piero della Francesca and Bronzino, Uccello's battle and Titian's Venus of Urbino widen the range, and the latest picture, Claude Lorrain's imagined harbour, is a long way from the altarpieces.

Artline chose these works from documented Uffizi holdings, independently of the museum. Being in the collection does not mean a work is on display. Dates and attributions keep the qualifications given in the linked records.

Explore this selection in Artline

See the selected works alongside books and events from their period, or compare when the artists lived. The books and events provide context, not evidence of direct influence. Works without confirmed dates remain in this guide.

Artworks in context Who lived when?

artlines.org/guides/uffizi

The selection · 20

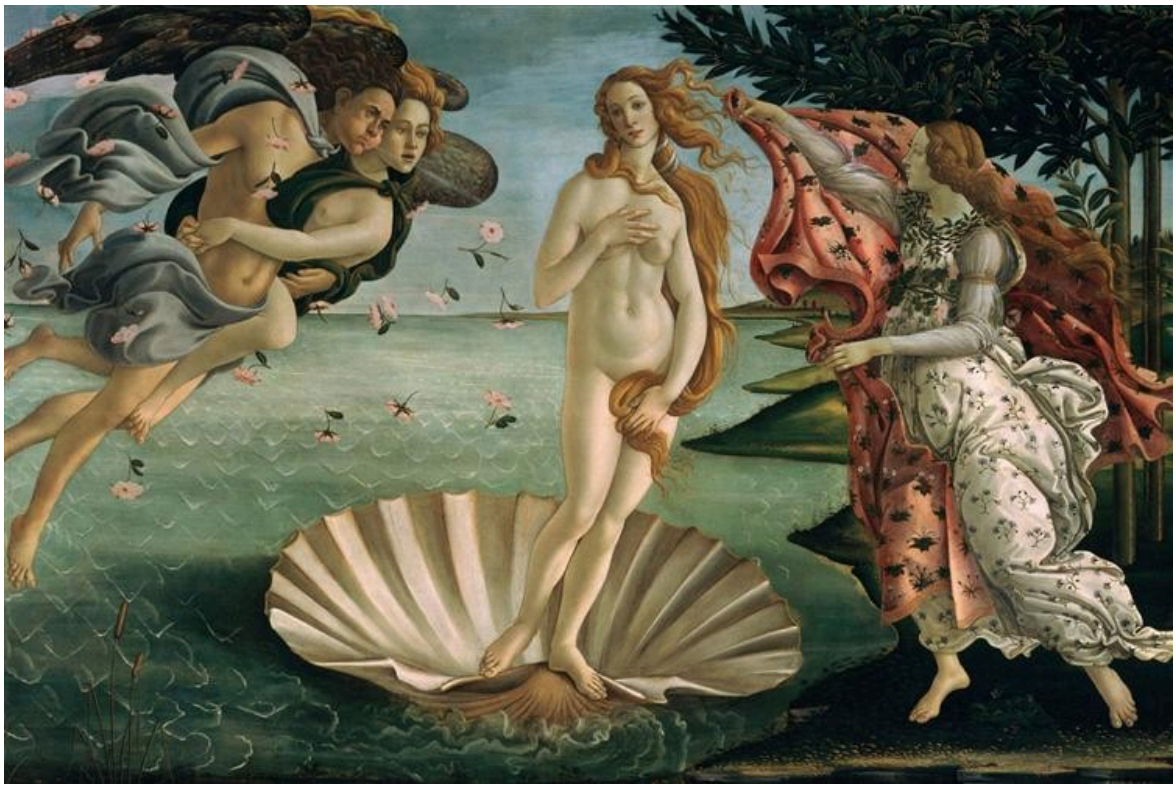
1. The Birth of Venus
   Sandro Botticelli · c. 1485
2. The Annunciation
   Leonardo da Vinci · 1472
3. Medusa
   Caravaggio · 1597
4. Venus of Urbino
   Titian · 1538
5. Ognissanti Madonna
   Giotto di Bondone · 1306-1310
6. Adoration of the Magi
   Gentile da Fabriano · 1423
7. Judith Beheading Holofernes
   Artemisia Gentileschi · c. 1620
8. Rucellai Madonna
   Duccio · 1285
9. Adoration of the Magi
   Andrea Mantegna · 1461
10. Primavera
    Sandro Botticelli · 1478-1482
11. Battista Sforza
    Piero della Francesca · 1465
12. The Battle of San Romano: The Unhorsing of Bernardino della Ciarda
    Paolo Uccello · 1438
13. Fortitude
    Sandro Botticelli · c. 1470
14. Madonna and Child with Two Angels
    Filippo Lippi · c. 1460–1465
15. Harbour with the Villa Medici
    Claude Lorrain · 1637
16. Lucrezia Panciatichi
    Bronzino · 1540
17. Madonna and Child with Saints Dionysius, Dominic, Clement and Thomas Aquinas
    Domenico Ghirlandaio · 1486
18. Madonna and Child with Six Saints
    Sandro Botticelli · c. 1470
19. Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Sebastian
    Pietro Perugino · 1493
20. Madonna of the Long Neck
    Parmigianino · 1534 - 1540

01 / 20

The Birth of Venus

Sandro Botticelli

c. 1485 · Tempera on canvas · Uffizi Galleries



Sandro Botticelli. The Birth of Venus. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Venus has reached the shore on her shell, but the wind is still blowing: it blows her hair and the cloak that a waiting figure holds out for her. The bodies are unusually long and graceful, and the stretching looks deliberate. The picture is made out of the flowing outlines of hair, drapery and limbs rather than the proportions of observed figures.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1890 n. 878

02 / 20

The Annunciation

Leonardo da Vinci

1472 · Oil , panel , tempera , wood · Uffizi Galleries



Annunciation. WikiArt; Leonardo da Vinci. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

A lectern and a garden wall enclose the meeting of Mary and the angel in a space that feels close enough to measure. Beyond the wall the rules change. Water and mountains grow steadily less distinct, and Leonardo marks distance by how clearly he paints things, not only by how small he makes them.

Object source · Open artwork

03 / 20

Medusa

Caravaggio

1597 · Uffizi Galleries



Caravaggio. Medusa. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

The support is a convex shield, and Caravaggio lets the object and the image pull against each other. The surface bulges out towards the viewer, while the severed head seems to sit in some uncertain space inside it. The mouth is open in a cry that no severed head could sustain. Blood below and snakes above leave almost no neutral ground around the face.

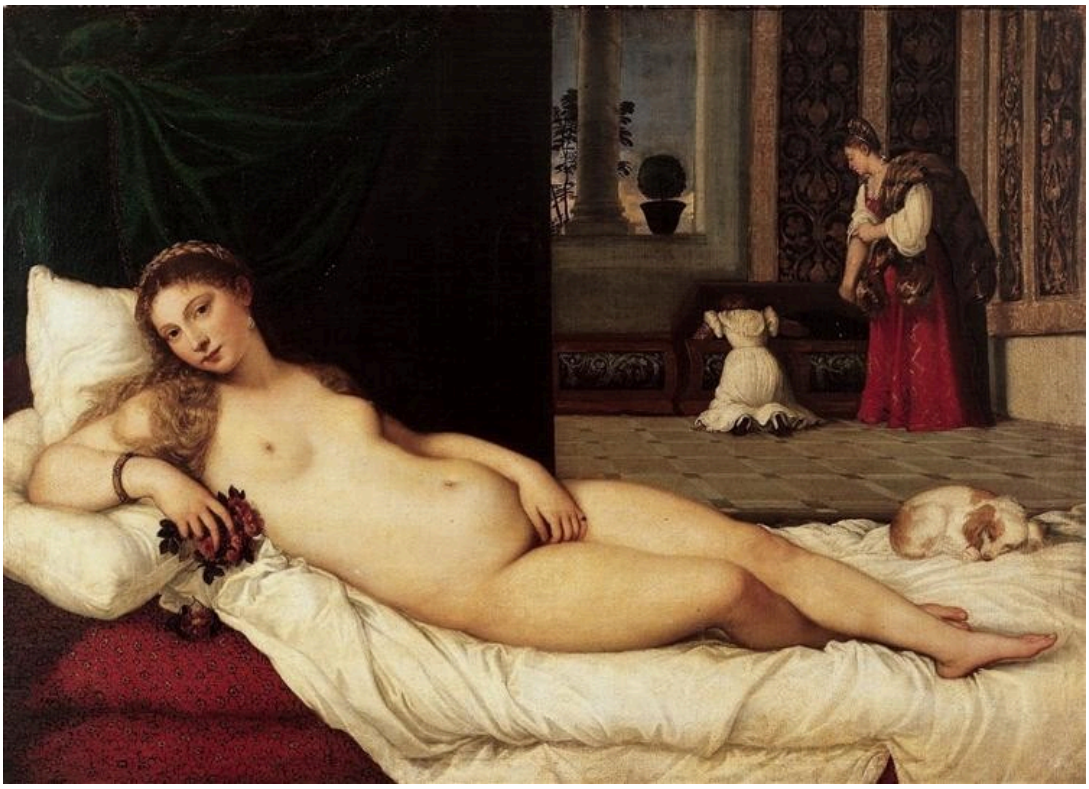
Object source · Open artwork

04 / 20

Venus of Urbino

Titian

1538 · Oil on canvas · Uffizi Galleries



Titian. Venus of Urbino. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

The title calls her Venus, but she lies in what looks like a household going about its business. Behind her, maids attend to a chest and a dog sleeps. Their attention is turned elsewhere or switched off altogether, which makes her own gaze out of the picture all the more direct. The Uffizi reads these domestic details in relation to marriage, which would give the nude a place in a social world.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1890 no.1437

05 / 20

Ognissanti Madonna

Giotto di Bondone

1306-1310 · Uffizi Galleries



Giotto di Bondone. Madonna in Maest (Ognissanti Madonna). Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Scale settles the hierarchy at once: Mary is painted larger than anyone around her, so her rank is clear before any gesture is read. Her size does not make her weightless, though. Giotto gives her robe the weight of a seated body, and the throne that holds her is built with architectural depth.

Object source · Open artwork

06 / 20

Adoration of the Magi

Gentile da Fabriano

1423 · Uffizi Galleries



Gentile da Fabriano. Adoration of the Magi. Image credit: Gentile da Fabriano. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

The Magi's procession is already on its way through the distant hills, so reading across the painting means following the journey to the child. At its end, elaborate clothes and horses crowd round the meeting. All that finery might have produced a closed ceremonial group, but the landscape keeps the journey in view. These visitors have come from somewhere.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 8364

07 / 20

Judith Beheading Holofernes

Artemisia Gentileschi

c. 1620 · Oil on canvas · Uffizi Galleries



Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Beheading Holofernes. Uffizi Galleries, Florence. Reproduction via Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). Source reproduction has a levels adjustment. Full-frame proportional resize and JPEG compression to at most 100,000 bytes; no crop or generated content. · Public Domain Mark 1.0 / PD-Art

Caravaggio's Medusa is all aftermath. Here the beheading is still under way, and it takes two women. Judith and her maidservant each have a different task, and their arms are locked so tightly that the act depends on both. Braced shoulders and gripping hands show resistance as well as effort. The killing is hard physical work.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1890 no. 1567

08 / 20

Rucellai Madonna

Duccio

1285 · Uffizi Galleries



Duccio. Madonna Rucellai. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

A gold edge runs through the broad blue of Mary's robe and turns where the body beneath it turns. So there is a body here, but the figure keeps a clear, ceremonial outline. The angels support the throne and attend the Virgin rather than sharing an ordinary room with her. Set beside Giotto's later Ognissanti Madonna, with its heavy seated figure, Duccio's Virgin holds on to more of the ceremony.

Object source · Open artwork

09 / 20

Adoration of the Magi

Andrea Mantegna

1461 · Tempera on panel · Uffizi Galleries



Adoration of the Magi, central panel from the Altarpiece. WikiArt; Andrea Mantegna. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

Gentile da Fabriano crowds his arrival with rich clothes and horses; Mantegna lets the rock do the organising. Mary and the child are placed in a narrow, rocky opening, and the approaching procession has to cross difficult ground to reach them. The rock encloses the meeting, and the thin route behind it records the distance travelled.

Object source · Open artwork

10 / 20

Primavera

Sandro Botticelli

1478-1482 · Uffizi Galleries



Sandro Botticelli. The Spring. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Several kinds of movement share the picture: a pursuit at the right, a dance, and a stiller centre. Botticelli keeps these groups distinct, although repeated contours link them beneath the trees. How the episodes add up, and what the painting means as a whole, is still debated.

Object source · Open artwork

11 / 20

Battista Sforza

Piero della Francesca

1465 · Tempera on panel · Uffizi Galleries



Portrait of Battista Sforza. WikiArt; Piero della Francesca. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

Jewels and a patterned bodice show Battista Sforza's status, but the portrait's authority lies elsewhere. It comes from the strict profile, its edge cut hard and exact against a landscape that stretches far into the distance behind her.

Object source · Open artwork

12 / 20

The Battle of San Romano: The Unhorsing of Bernardino della Ciarda

Paolo Uccello

1438 · Tempera on wood · Uffizi Galleries



Victory over Bernardino della Ciarda. WikiArt; Paolo Uccello. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

The title names a single incident, the unhorsing of Bernardino della Ciarda, but the most telling detail may be on the ground. Fallen weapons lie beneath the colliding horses, pointing in clear directions, and they make the space measurable while the fighting above is in violent disorder. The most orderly things on the field are the ones that have been dropped.

Object source · Open artwork

13 / 20

Fortitude

Sandro Botticelli

c. 1470 · Tempera on panel · Uffizi Galleries



Sandro Botticelli. Fortitude. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/sandro-botticelli/fortitude-1470-1 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

A virtue in armour who strikes no one. Botticelli gives Fortitude a seat and a restrained gesture, and her strength shows as readiness, in the braced posture and firm grasp, rather than as action. The hard metal of the armour stands out against a broad sweep of red cloth.

Object source · Open artwork

14 / 20

Madonna and Child with Two Angels

Filippo Lippi

c. 1460–1465 · Uffizi Galleries



Filippo Lippi. Madonna and Child. Image credit: Filippo Lippi. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

Everything in the devotional group is in order (Mary's hands joined, the child supported) until one angel turns and smiles out of the picture. It is an ordinary, friendly glance, and it opens up a group that might otherwise seem closed to whoever is looking at it.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1598

15 / 20

Harbour with the Villa Medici

Claude Lorrain

1637 · Oil on canvas · Uffizi Galleries



Claude Lorrain. Harbour with Villa Medici. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/claude-lorrain/harbour-with-villa-medici-1637 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

The title ties the scene to the Villa Medici, but the harbour itself is imagined. Buildings and ships supply the solid forms, and Claude places them so that a passage stays open towards the light. Small workers in the foreground give a human scale, but the scene is organised around distance rather than around them. In a selection crowded with Madonnas, saints and sitters, this is the one picture in which people are not the subject.

Object source · Open artwork

16 / 20

Lucrezia Panciatichi

Bronzino

1540 · Oil on panel · Uffizi Galleries



Bronzino. Lucrezia Panciatichi. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/agnolo-bronzino/lucrezia-panciatichi-1540 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

Piero's Battista Sforza takes her authority from the edge of a profile; Bronzino's sitter takes hers from stillness. Lucrezia Panciatichi rests a hand on a book. Jewels and dark trim break up the expanse of red satin, and all of it is arranged around a face held absolutely still.

Object source · Open artwork

17 / 20

Madonna and Child with Saints Dionysius, Dominic, Clement and Thomas Aquinas

Domenico Ghirlandaio

1486 · Oil on panel · Uffizi Galleries



Madonna and Child enthroned with St. Dionysius, Aeropagita, Domenic, Clement and Thomas Aquinas. WikiArt; Domenico Ghirlandaio. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

The title reads like a list of names, and Ghirlandaio might have painted it as one. Instead an architectural recess gives the saints a shared focus, and their heights vary because some kneel while others stand. Floor and arches hold the gathering in one coherent space, so the saints read as a company rather than a row of separate sacred portraits.

Object source · Open artwork

18 / 20

Madonna and Child with Six Saints

Sandro Botticelli

c. 1470 · Tempera · Uffizi Galleries



Sandro Botticelli. Madonna and Child with Six Saints. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/sandro-botticelli/madonna-and-child-with-six-saints · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

The kneeling saints occupy the nearest part of the patterned floor and bridge the distance up to the raised Virgin and child. From there, turns of the head lead from figure to figure. Little moves in this group; its structure comes from small shifts of posture.

Object source · Open artwork

19 / 20

Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Sebastian

Pietro Perugino

1493 · Oil on wood · Uffizi Galleries



Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and St. Sebastian. WikiArt; Pietro Perugino. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

Ghirlandaio and Botticelli draw their saints together through posture and the turn of a head. Perugino gives his saints room instead. Open space surrounds each one, and the gaps read as clearly as the figures. Repeated arches measure out these intervals without breaking up the group, and the way through to Mary stays clear.

Object source · Open artwork

20 / 20

Madonna of the Long Neck

Parmigianino

1534 - 1540 · Oil on canvas · Uffizi Galleries



Parmigianino. Madonna with the Long Neck. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/parmigianino/madonna-with-the-long-neck-1540 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

The title names the feature nobody misses, but the neck is only part of it. The angels crowd together on one side, while the space beside the column is left open. The bodies are out of balance in the same way: Mary's neck is extended and her fingers long, and the child has unusual proportions. Botticelli's Venus is stretched too, but her length follows a flowing line. Here there is no single settled scale to measure anything by.

Object source · Open artwork

Near and far

One way through the selection is to ignore the order and follow a single question. Distance is a good one, because it does a different job from picture to picture. In Leonardo's Annunciation it lies beyond the garden wall, water and mountains losing definition as they recede. For Gentile da Fabriano and Mantegna it is the story itself: the road the Magi have already travelled, through distant hills in one case and along a thin route behind the rock in the other. Behind Battista Sforza a far-reaching landscape gives Piero something to cut her profile against. In each of these, distance serves the figures in front of it. Claude turns the relation round. His small foreground workers are there to give scale, and the open passage towards the light is what the harbour has been arranged to show. Hands would make another route through the same selection, from Mary's joined hands in Filippo Lippi's Madonna to the locked grip of Judith and her maidservant, Lucrezia Panciatichi's hand on her book and Parmigianino's long fingers.

Further reading

A Treatise on Painting

Leonardo da Vinci; translated by John Francis Rigaud · Read free · English

John Francis Rigaud's English translation gathers Leonardo's writings on proportion, movement, light and the arrangement of figures. These are a painter's working observations, set out as general principles rather than as commentary on particular pictures, so they can be tested against the paintings here. Leonardo's own Annunciation is the obvious place to begin.

Museum website · Official collection guide

Sources and visitor information checked: 2026-10-12

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