

Art and Architecture

As the ideas and learning associated with Italian humanism moved north, so did Italian artistic styles. In some instances, monarchs brought Italian artists to their courts to design and adorn their palaces. Francis I enticed the Italian artists Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, and Andrea del Sarto to his court in France for this purpose. The influence of Italian styles in painting was seen through northern artists' adoption of linear perspective, realistic proportions, and expression through bodily movement. The work and career of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) represented all of these developments. A native of Nuremberg and a master printmaker, in 1494 Dürer traveled to Italy—where he came in contact with painters such as Andrea Mantegna, who worked in Mantua and other towns in northern Italy and ran a workshop in Venice. Mantegna was notable especially for his use of perspective in his paintings, something that was also a feature of Dürer's paintings, woodcuts, and engravings after his visit to Italy. One can also see the influence of Italian styles in the way in which Dürer highlighted the human body in his works and incorporated classical themes and mythological motifs into his work. His woodcuts depicting the Apocalypse, especially *The Four Horsemen* (c. 1497-1498), were striking for the violence of the images, but they were equally striking for the precision and fullness of the human figures in all their movement, betraying the influence of Italian masters. Dürer adopted this same precision and linear perspective to his woodcuts, making them appear more as engravings than prints, bringing a new level of sophistication to the medium.

In addition to these developments in technique and style, northern artists were increasingly influenced by another idea linked to the Italian artistic and cultural environment: that the fine arts were linked to the liberal arts, the core curriculum of the humanist movement. Humanist ideals of knowledge and preference for subject matter became a driver of theme selection. For example, the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam's ideal in his *Manual of the Christian Soldier* (1503) most likely inspired Dürer's *Knight, Death, and Devil* (1513), and Augsburg Hans Holbein the Younger illustrated Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (1509) in pen and ink. Moreover, the artist was the creator of his or her work and was sought out for what he or she personally added to the composition. The artist became acknowledged as an individual responsible for putting his or her personal touch on a painting. Dürer's woodcuts and engravings circulated all throughout Europe largely because they carried his name. He also produced a series of self-portraits throughout his career. As would be the case with northern humanists, northern artists of the Renaissance found it impossible to resist the tide of religious reformation. Dürer was an early follower of Martin Luther's reform, even though he continued to work for Catholic patrons from time to time. Art historians cite his panel paintings titled *The Four Apostles* (1523-1526), which he gave to his native city Nuremberg, a Lutheran city by 1526. The apostles John, Paul, Peter, and Mark are austere, and quotations from their writings translated into the vernacular by Luther appear at the bottom of the panels.