Madonna of Chancellor Rolin

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Course

Date
Introduction

There are numerous artworks such as paintings that were created hundreds of years ago and are now worth millions of dollars. Nevertheless, it can be pointed out that at the time when paintings were been produced, the artists who came up with the paintings mainly either wanted to send out a certain message with the painting or the paintings mainly symbolized something. This paper focuses on the an oil painting by Jan van Eyck that was known as the Madonna of Chancellor Rolin and is reported to have been produced in the year 1435 and has been on display in the Musee du Louvre, Paris.1

Historical background of Madonna of Chancellor Rolin

The Madonna of Chancellor Rolin was completed in the year 1435 by Jan van Eyck who was a popular Flemish painter specifically on Northern renaissance and he also completed other popular works that among others comprised of Alterpiece of Ghent as well as the Man in the Red Turban. The artist was a patron of Nicolas Rolin who happened to be the Chancellor to the Philip the Good who was the duke of Burgundy at that time.2

The work was thus commission by Rolin who has been described as a man with a forceful personality. Indeed, it can also be noted that Rolin was highly admired at the time since even though he had come from a humble background; he was very bright and with time, he rose to become the holder of the uppermost offices of State. For a


period that spanned for more than 40 years, Rolin was Philip the Good's right-hand man, and one of the main planners of the monarch's success. The painting of Rolin was commissioned when he was in his 60s.

**Description and analysis of image**

The scene of the image portrays the Virgin capped by a hovering Angel while she presents the newborn Jesus to Rolin. In context of the setting, it can be explained that the setting of the image is within an expansive Italian-style terrace with a rich adornment of columns and bas-reliefs. On the other hand, the background of the image features a landscape with a city on a river, possibly envisioned to be autumn in Burgundy which was the hometown of Rolin. An extensive variety of well detailed palaces, cathedrals, an isle, a towered bridge, hills and fields have also been portrayed, subject to a uniform light. Moreover, the picture has a mountain range with the far distance. Nevertheless, it can be explained that just as is the case with most of the paintings that are classified as Early Netherlandish paintings, the sharpness of the hills and mountains is depicted as been bigger than what is the case in real sense mainly for dramatic effect.

The most amazing aspect in this impressive painting can be explained to entail the townscape that expands far off the loggia. The crenellated fortifications give the impressions that that the palace is indeed a fortress that has been erected on the edge of a cliff. Beneath, a wide bendy river with an island in its midst flows through the heart of

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a city. The humbler areas of the town lie to the left, just behind Rolin. On the right, behind the Virgin, are the prosperous quarters, with a wealth of buildings, subjugated by an impressive Gothic church. Numerous little figures are coming to this part of town, across the bridge and through the roads and squares. On the other hand, on the river, boats are also arriving thus giving the impression that the entire mankind, united by faith, happens to be travelling in journey towards this city and its cathedral.

**Analysis of patronage, audience, location**

From an analytical perspective, the subject of this work can be said to be aimed as a ceremonial portrait in which Rolin happens to be the patron for. Indeed, a closer look at the painting indicates that the key figures featured in the painting comprises of Chancellor Rolin, Madonna, baby Jesus and an angel who is hovering above their heads. Rolin is definitely praying as can been from his hand gestures as he appears to be submissive while Madonna and child appear before him. On the other hand, Jesus can be said to be blessing Rolin since his hand is definitely raised up towards Rolin. Rolin’s attention focuses toward Jesus and his mother while Madonna is looking down towards the child and is watching the interaction between him and the Rolin. All of the figures can be said to have very neutral expressions and have a shared interest in the child in Madonna’s lap. The room’s environment is quite dark and conveys a chiaroscuro effect. There is a warm, yellow light that highlights the faces and bodies of the figures. It is clearly daylight, maybe mid-afternoon and summertime because of all the green foliage in the background landscape.
There are numerous aspects of the painting that have reoccurred many times in research. One of such aspects can be explained to entail the role of Rolin and the aims that he had with the piece. Indeed, one of the most common aim of the painting have been alleged to entail self-promotion since in the painting, it is clear that Rolin appears to be highly regarded hence the reason he even has the opportunity to be in the same room with baby Jesus.

The Renaissance can be explained to have been a period that saw the rebirth and reawakening that happened in Europe and started from the 14th Century to the 16th Century. During this period, many changes that to some extent shaped the modern day Europe can be explained to have taken place. The Madonna of Chancellor Rolin is one of the paintings that was commissioned at the time and was mainly used to show the rebirth that was taking place.

The Madonna of Chancellor Rolin as already pointed out was commissioned by Rolin and can be said to have been intended at convincing people to believe more in Jesus Christ since Rolin himself appears to be worshiping Jesus. Considering the type of impact that Rolin had at that time, it is expected that many people became more religious after they saw the paintings as they would have liked to emulate Rolin whom they admired.
Bibliography

