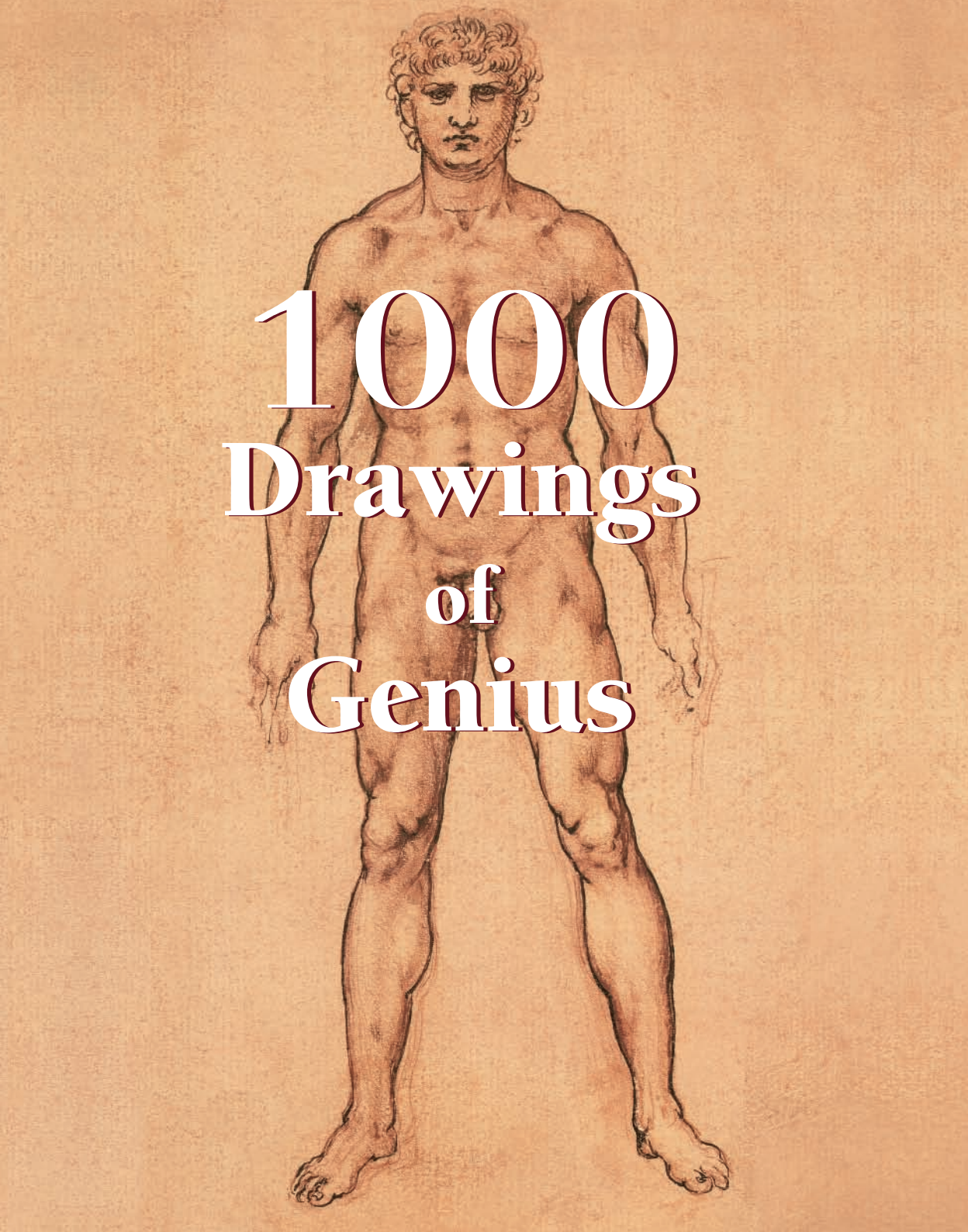

1000 Drawings of Genius

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1000 Drawings of Genius

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Contents

Introduction

This book aims to take the reader on a journey through the history of the art of drawing. As the pages advance, one can appreciate the evolution of Western art from the Late Middle Ages to the present day, as each chapter gives a visual account of the different artistic tendencies that coexisted in every century, with a generous selection of the great masters of each period. Every chapter is accompanied by a text written by a contemporary theorist or artist, in order to give the reader a better understanding of each period's concerns and approaches to art in general, and to drawing in particular.

An extract from John Ruskin's *The Elements of Drawing*, first published in 1857, has been chosen as the general introduction to this history of Western drawing. The focus, however, has not been placed on his detailed descriptions of how to practise the art of the line with the pen or pencil, or how to apply shade and colour. It may be of more interest to the reader to know the author's recommendations and warnings for those who desire to become artists. What is interesting about Ruskin is that he acts as a kind of link between the traditional and modern approaches to art. It is very possible that Ruskin may not, today, sound very modern; his sometimes strict recommendations seem to contradict the contemporary notion of absolute creative freedom. But while he retains many values of traditional art, Ruskin was also a champion of modern figures such as Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites at a time when it was not fashionable to be so, especially of the latter.

Of course, these are the recommendations of only one particular art theorist, but Ruskin was a very important one. It is very interesting to know which artists he considers best (and worst) for a young person to admire, as well as the literature he should read. Ruskin's is a great example because it places the reader in a time when rigid academic values were beginning to be challenged; it is here that one finds the very roots of contemporary art:

"*Preface.*

"It may perhaps be thought, that in prefacing a manual of drawing, I ought to expatiate on the reasons why drawing should be learned; but those reasons appear to me so many and so weighty, that I cannot quickly state or enforce them. With the reader's permission, as this volume is too large already, I will waive all discussion respecting the importance of the subject, and touch only on those points which may appear questionable in the method of its treatment.

"In the first place, the book is not calculated for the use of children under the age of twelve or fourteen. I do not think it advisable to engage a child in any but the most voluntary practice of art. If it has talent for drawing, it will be continually scrawling on what paper it can get; and should be allowed to scrawl at its own free will, due praise being given for every appearance of care, or truth, in its efforts. It should be allowed to amuse itself with cheap colours almost as soon as it has sense enough to wish for them. If it merely daubs the paper with shapeless stains, the colour-box may be taken away till it knows better: but as soon as it begins painting red coats on soldiers, striped flags on ships, etc., it should have colours at command; and, without restraining its choice of subject [...], it should be gently led by the parents to try to draw, in such childish fashion as may be, the things it can see and likes, birds, or butterflies, or flowers, or fruit. In later years, the indulgence of using the colour should only be granted as a reward, after it has shown care and progress in its drawings with pencil. A limited number of good and amusing prints should always be within a boy's reach: in these days of cheap illustration he can hardly possess a volume of nursery tales without good woodcuts in it, and should be encouraged to copy what he likes best of this kind, but should be firmly restricted to a few prints and to a few books. If a child has many toys, it will get tired of them and break them; if a boy has many prints, he will merely dawdle and scrawl over them; it is by the limitation of the number of his possessions that his pleasure in them is perfected, and his attention concentrated.

[...]

"*Appendix II. Things to be studied.*

"The worst danger by far, to which a solitary student is exposed, is that of liking things that he should not. It is not so much his difficulties, as his tastes, which he must set himself to conquer, and although, under the guidance of a master, many works of art may be made instructive, which are only of partial excellence (the good and bad of them being duly distinguished), his safeguard, as long as he studies alone, will be in allowing himself to possess only things, in their way, so free from faults, that nothing he copies in them can seriously mislead him, and to contemplate only those works of art which he knows to be

either perfect or noble in their errors. I will therefore set down, in clear order, the names of the masters whom you may safely admire, and a few of the books which you may safely possess. In these days of cheap illustration, the danger is always rather of your possessing too much than too little. It may admit of some question, how far the looking at bad art may set off and illustrate the characters of the good; but, on the whole, I believe it is best to live always on quite wholesome food, and that our enjoyment of it will never be made more acute by feeding on ashes; though, it may be well sometimes to taste the ashes, in order to know the bitterness of them. Of course the works of the great masters can only be serviceable to the student after he has made considerable progress himself. It only wastes the time and dulls the feelings of young persons, to drag them through picture galleries; at least, unless they themselves wish to look at particular pictures. Generally, young people only care to enter a picture gallery when there is a chance of getting to run a race to the other end of it; and they had better do that in the garden below. If, however, they have any real enjoyment of pictures, and want to look at this one or that, the principal point is never to disturb them in looking at what interests them, and never to make them look at what does not. Nothing is of the least use to young people (nor, by the way, of much use to old ones), but what interests them. And therefore, though it is of great importance to put nothing but good art into their possession, yet, when they are passing through great houses or galleries, they should be allowed to look precisely at what pleases them: if it is not useful to them as art, it will be in some other way. The healthiest way in which art can interest them is when they look at it, not as art, but because it represents something they like in Nature. If a boy has had his heart filled by the life of some great man, and goes up thirstily to a Van Dyck portrait of him, to see what he was like, that is the wholesomest way in which he can begin the study of portraiture. If he loves mountains, and dwells on a Turner drawing because he sees in it a likeness to a Yorkshire scar or an Alpine pass, that is the wholesomest way in which he can begin the study of landscape; and if a girl's mind is filled with dreams of angels and saints, and she pauses before an Angelico because she thinks it must surely be like heaven, that is the right way for her to begin the study of religious art.

"When, however, the student has made some definite progress, and every picture becomes really a guide to him, false or true, in his own work, it is of great importance that he should never look, with even partial admiration, at bad art; and then, if the reader is willing to trust me in the matter, the following advice will be useful to him. [...]

"First, in galleries of pictures:

"1. You may look, with trust in their being always right, at Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Giovanni Bellini, and Velázquez, the authenticity of the picture being of course established for you by proper authority.

"2. You may look with admiration, admitting, however, question of right and wrong, at Van Eyck, Holbein, Perugino, Francia, Angelico, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, and the modern Pre-Raphaelites. You had better look at no other painters than these, for you run a chance, otherwise, of being led far off the road, or into grievous faults, by some of the other great ones, as Michelangelo, Raphael, and Rubens; and of being, besides, corrupted in taste by the base ones, as Murillo, Salvator, Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Teniers, and such others. You may look, however, for examples of evil, with safe universality of reprobation, being sure that everything you see is bad, at Domenichino, the Caracci, Bronzino, and the figure pieces of Salvator.

"Among those named for study under question, you cannot look too much at, nor grow too enthusiastically fond of, Angelico, Correggio, Reynolds, Turner, and the Pre-Raphaelites; but, if you find yourself getting especially fond of any of the others, leave off looking at them, for you must be going wrong some way or other. If, for instance, you begin to like Rembrandt or Leonardo especially, you are losing your feeling for colour; if you like Van Eyck or Perugino especially, you must be getting too fond of rigid detail; and if you like Van Dyck or Gainsborough especially, you must be too much attracted by gentlemanly flimsiness.

"Secondly, of published, or otherwise multiplied art, such as you may be able to get yourself, or to see at private houses or in shops, the works of the following masters are the most desirable, after the Turners, Rembrandts, and Durers, which I have asked you to get first:

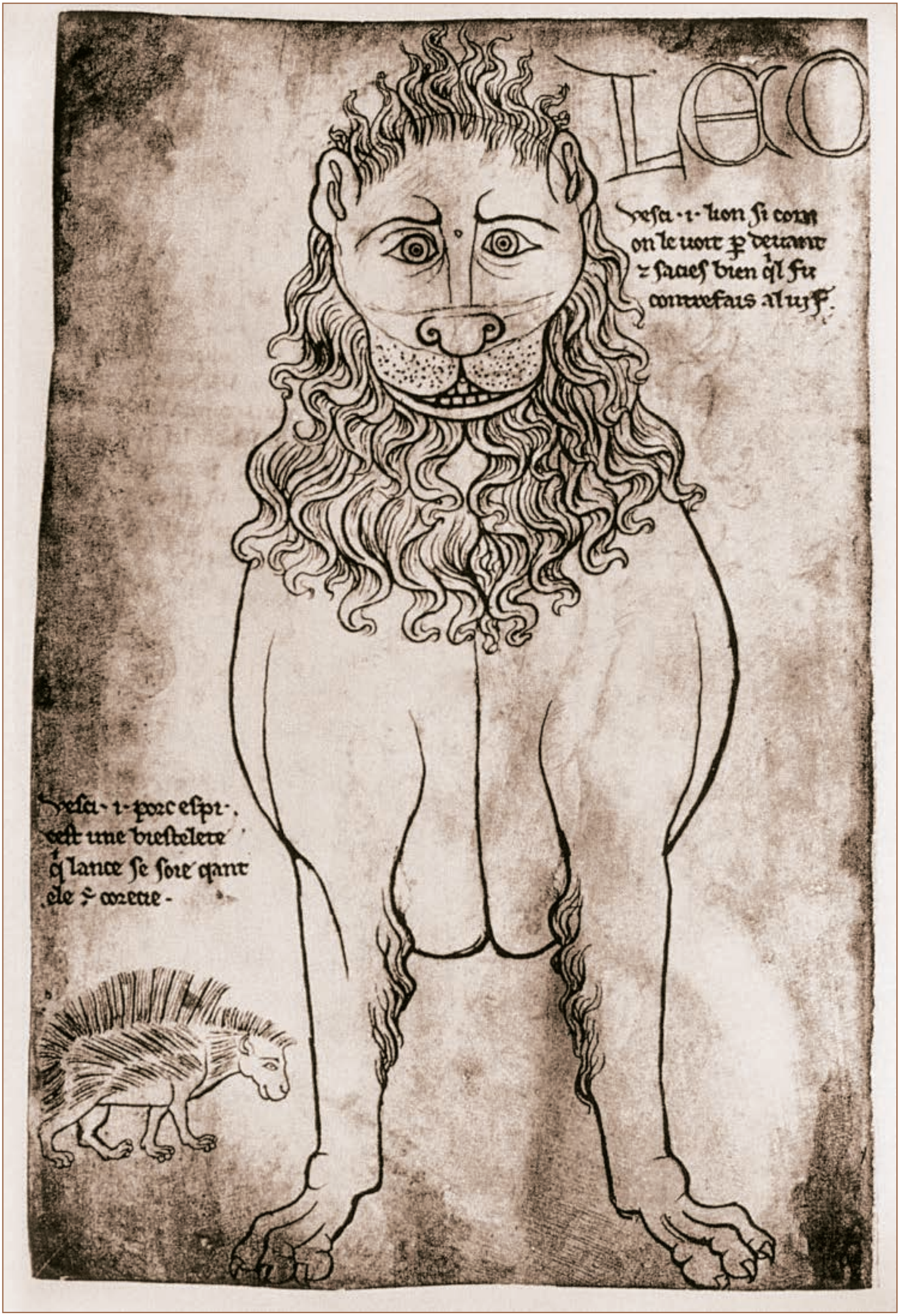
"An edition of Tennyson, lately published, contains woodcuts from drawings by Rossetti and other chief Pre-Raphaelite masters. They are terribly spoiled in the cutting, and generally the best part, the expression of feature, entirely lost; still they are full of instruction, and cannot be studied too closely. But observe, respecting these woodcuts, that if you have been in the habit of looking at much spurious work, in which sentiment, action, and style are borrowed or artificial, you will assuredly be offended at first by all genuine work, which is intense in feeling. Genuine art, which is merely art, such as Veronese's or Titian's, may not offend you, though the chances are that you will not care about it; but genuine works of feeling, such as "Maude" or "Aurora Leigh" in poetry, or the grand Pre-Raphaelite designs in painting, are sure to offend you: and if you cease to work hard, and persist in looking at vicious and false art, they will continue to offend you. It will be well, therefore, to have one type of entirely false art, in order to know what to guard against. Flaxman's outlines to Dante contain, I think, examples of almost every kind of falsehood and feebleness which it is possible for a trained artist, not base in thought, to commit or admit, both in design

and execution. Base or degraded choice of subject, such as you will constantly find in Teniers and others of the Dutch painters, I need not, I hope, warn you against; you will simply turn away from it in disgust, while mere bad or feeble drawing, which makes mistakes in every direction at once, cannot teach you the particular sort of educated fallacy in question. But, in these designs of Flaxman's, you have gentlemanly feeling, and fair knowledge of anatomy, and firm setting down of lines, all applied in the foolishest and worst possible way; you cannot have a more finished example of learned error, amiable want of meaning, and bad drawing with a steady hand. [...]

"Finally, your judgment will be, of course, much affected by your taste in literature. Indeed, I know many persons who have the purest taste in literature, and yet false taste in art, and it is a phenomenon which puzzles me not a little; but I have never known anyone with false taste in books, and true taste in pictures. It is also of the greatest importance to you, not only for art's sake, but for all kinds of sake, in these days of book deluge, to keep out of the salt swamps of literature, and live on a little rocky island of your own, with a spring and a lake in it, pure and good. I cannot, of course, suggest the choice of your library to you: every several mind needs different books; but there are some books which we all need, and assuredly, if you read Homer, Plato, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Dante, Shakespeare, and Spenser, as much as you ought, you will not require wide enlargement of shelves to right and left of them for purposes of perpetual study. Among modern books, avoid generally magazine and review literature. Sometimes it may contain a useful abridgement or a wholesome piece of criticism; but the chances are ten to one it will either waste your time or mislead you. If you want to understand any subject whatever, read the best book upon it you can hear of: not a review of the book. If you do not like the first book you try, seek another; but do not hope ever to understand the subject without pains, by a reviewer's help. Avoid especially that class of literature which has a knowing tone [...]. Then, in general, the more you can restrain your serious reading to reflective or lyric poetry, history, and natural history, avoiding fiction and the drama, the healthier your mind will become. Of modern poetry, keep to Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, Crabbe, Tennyson, the two Brownings, Thomas Hood, Lowell, Longfellow, and Coventry Patmore, whose "Angel in the House" is a most finished piece of writing, and the sweetest analysis we possess of quiet modern domestic feeling; while Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" is, as far as I know, the greatest poem which the century has produced in any language. Cast Coleridge at once aside, as sickly and useless; and Shelley, as shallow and verbose; Byron, until your taste is fully formed, and you are able to discern the magnificence in him from the wrong. Never read bad or common poetry, nor write any poetry yourself; there is, perhaps, rather too much than too little in the world already.

"Of reflective prose, read chiefly Bacon, Johnson, and Helps. Carlyle is hardly to be named as a writer for "beginners," because his teaching, though to some of us vitally necessary, may to others be hurtful. If you understand and like him, read him; if he offends you, you are not yet ready for him, and perhaps may never be so; at all events, give him up, as you would sea-bathing if you found it hurt you, till you are stronger. Of fiction, read *Sir Charles Grandison*, Scott's novels, Miss Edgeworth's, and, if you are a young lady, Madame de Genlis', the French Miss Edgeworth, making these, I mean, your constant companions. Of course you must, or will, read other books for amusement once or twice; but you will find that these have an element of perpetuity in them, existing in nothing else of their kind; while their peculiar quietness and repose of manner will also be of the greatest value in teaching you to feel the same characters in art. Read little at a time, trying to feel interest in little things, and reading not so much for the sake of the story as to get acquainted with the pleasant people into whose company these writers bring you. A common book will often give you much amusement, but it is only a noble book which will give you dear friends. Remember, also, that it is of less importance to you in your earlier years, that the books you read should be clever, than that they should be right. I do not mean oppressively or repulsively instructive; but that the thoughts they express should be just, and the feelings they excite generous. It is not necessary for you to read the wittiest or the most suggestive books: it is better, in general, to hear what is already known, and may be simply said. Much of the literature of the present day, though good to be read by persons of ripe age, has a tendency to agitate rather than confirm, and leaves its readers too frequently in a helpless or hopeless indignation, the worst possible state into which the mind of youth can be thrown. It may, indeed, become necessary for you, as you advance in life, to set your hand to things that need to be altered in the world, or apply your heart chiefly to what must be pitied in it, or condemned; but, for a young person, the safest temper is one of reverence, and the safest place one of obscurity. Certainly at present, and perhaps through all your life, your teachers are wisest when they make you content in quiet virtue, and that literature and art are best for you which point out, in common life, and in familiar things, the objects for hopeful labour, and for humble love."

John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 1857


LEO
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13TH CENTURY-14TH CENTURY

Although it was written at a time when art was quickly shifting towards a whole new era, Cennino Cennini's *Trattato della pittura* (1437) makes for a perfect summary of the artistic techniques of the Late Middle Ages, a kind of cookbook, as was typical of the centuries preceding the Renaissance. Presented here are a few of Cennini's guidelines regarding drawing, as well as the author's principles for the practice of art in general, some of which the modern reader will find curious, at the least:

"*Chapter 8. In what manner you should begin to draw with a stile, and with what light.* [...] begin to draw with it from a copy as freely as you can, and so lightly that you can scarcely see what you have begun to do, deepening your strokes as you proceed, and going over them repeatedly, to make the shadows. Where you would make it darkest, go over it many times; and, on the contrary, make but few touches on the lights. And you must be guided by the light of the sun, and your eye, and your hand; and without these three things you can do nothing properly. Contrive always when you draw that the light be softened, and the sun strike on your left hand; and in this manner you should draw a short time every day, that you may not become tired or weary. [...]

"*Chapter 12. How, when drawing with a lead pencil, an error may be corrected.* You may draw on paper also with the above-mentioned leaden stile, either with or without bone-dust; and if at any time you make an error, or you wish to remove any marks made by the leaden stile, take a crumb of bread, rub it over the paper, and efface whatever you please. And in the same manner you may shade with ink, or colours, or red tints, with the before-mentioned vehicle. [...]

"*Chapter 27. Showing how you should endeavour to draw and instruct yourself in design as much as you can.* It is now requisite that you should copy from models, in order to attain the highest branches of the science. [...] Having practised drawing a sufficient time on tablets, as I have before directed, always study and delight in drawing the best subjects which offer from the works of the great masters. If there are many good masters in the place where you live, so much the better for you. But I advise you always to select the best and most celebrated; and if you daily imitate this manner, it is scarcely possible but that you will acquire it; for if you copy today from this master and tomorrow from that, you will not acquire the manner of either; and as the different style of each master unsettles your mind, your own manner will become fantastic. If you will study this manner today and that tomorrow, you must of necessity copy neither perfectly; but if you continually adopt the manner of one master, your intellect must be very dull indeed if you do not find something to nourish it. And it will happen that if nature has bestowed on you any invention, you will acquire a manner of your own, which cannot be other than good, because your hand and your understanding being always accustomed to gather flowers, will always avoid the thorns.

"*Chapter 28. How you should draw continually from nature, as well as from the masters.* Remember that the most perfect guide that you can have and the best direction is to draw from nature: it is the best of all possible examples, and with a bold heart you may always trust to it, especially when you begin to have some knowledge of design. And continuing always and without fail to draw something every day, how little soever it may be, you will certainly attain excellence.

"*Chapter 29. How you should regulate your manner of living so as to preserve decorum, and keep your hand in proper condition, and what company you should frequent;* [...] Your manner of living should be always regulated as if you were studying theology, philosophy, or any other science; that is to say, eating and drinking temperately – at the most twice a day, using light and good food, and but little wine; keeping in good condition, and restraining your hand, preserving it from fatigue, throwing stones or iron bars for instance, and many other things which are injurious to the hand, causing it to shake. There is still another cause, the occurrence of which may render your hand so unsteady that it will oscillate and tremble more than leaves shaken by the wind, and this is, frequenting too much the company of ladies. [...]"

Cennino Cennini, *Trattato della pittura*, 1437

1. **Villard de Honnecourt**, 1190-1235, French, *A Lion and a Porcupine*, c. 1225-1240. Graphite enhanced with pen on parchment, 22 x 14 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. High Middle Ages.

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2. **Anonymous**, 13th century, English, *The Building of Clifford's Tower* (from the *Lives of the Offas* by Matthew Paris, 1200-1259), c. 1250-1254. Ink on vellum. British Library, London. High Middle Ages.

3. **Queen Mary Master**, 14th century, English, *Noah and the Ark* (from the *Queen Mary Psalter*), c. 1310-1320. Ink on parchment. British Library, London. Late Middle Ages.

4. **Queen Mary Master**, 14th century, English, *Hunting Scene* (from the *Queen Mary Psalter*), c. 1310-1320. Ink on parchment. British Library, London. Late Middle Ages.

5. **Anonymous**, 14th century, *Leo* (illustration to *Treatise on Astrology* by Albumazar, 787-886), c. 1325-1375. Ink on parchment, 27 x 18 cm. British Library, London. Late Middle Ages.

6. **Anonymous**, 14th century, *Taurus* (illustration to *Treatise on Astrology* by Albumazar, 787-886), c. 1325-1375. Ink on parchment, 27 x 18 cm. British Library, London. Late Middle Ages.

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AMBROGIO LORENZETTI

(Siena, 1285-1348)

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, like his brother Pietro, belonged to the Sienese School dominated by the Byzantine tradition. They were the first Sienese to adopt the naturalistic approach of Giotto. There is also evidence that the brothers borrowed tools from each other. They were both major masters of naturalism. With the three-dimensional, Ambrogio foreshadowed the art of the Renaissance. He is well known for the fresco cycle *Allegory of the Good and Bad Government*, remarkable for its depiction of characters and of Sienese scenes. The frescos on the wall of the Hall of Nine (*Sala della Pace*) in the Palazzo Pubblico are one of the masterworks of their secular programmes. Ghiberti regarded Ambrogio as the greatest of Sienese 14th-century painters.

7. **Jean Pucelle**, c. 1300-1334, French, *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (folio from *The Hours of Jeanne d'Évreux*), 1324-1328. Grisaille, tempera and ink on vellum, 9.2 x 6.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. International Gothic.

8. **Jean Pucelle**, c. 1300-1334, French, *Christ Bearing the Cross* (folio from *The Hours of Jeanne d'Évreux*), 1324-1328. Grisaille, tempera and ink on vellum, 9.2 x 6.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. International Gothic.

9. **Ambrogio Lorenzetti**, 1285-1348, Italian, *Annunciation* (detail of the angel), c. 1340. Sinopia. Oratorio di San Galgano, San Galgano. International Gothic.

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10. **Ambrogio Lorenzetti**, 1285-1348, Italian,
Annunciation (detail of the Virgin), c. 1340. Sinopia.
Oratorio di San Galgano, San Galgano. International Gothic.

11. **Buonamico Buffalmacco**, active 1315-1336, Italian, *The Triumph of Death*
(detail of a woman with a little dog), c. 1330-1340. Sinopia.
Camposanto, Pisa. Trecento.

12. **Buonamico Buffalmacco**, active 1315-1336, Italian, *The Triumph of Death*
(detail of Saint Macarius the Great), c. 1330-1340. Sinopia.
Camposanto, Pisa. Trecento.

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13. **Andrés Marçal de Sas**, active c. 1393-1410, German, *St. Catherine of Alexandria*, date unknown. Pen and ink on parchment.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Late Gothic.

14. **Andrés Marçal de Sas**, active c. 1393-1410, German, *Page of the Alphabet with the Letters R, S, T, U*, date unknown. Pen and ink on parchment.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Late Gothic.

15. **Andrés Marçal de Sas**, active c. 1393-1410, German, *Virgin of the Annunciation*, date unknown. Pen and ink on parchment.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Late Gothic.

16. **Giovanni da Milano**, c. 1325-1370, Italian, *Crucifixion*, 1365.
Brush and ink on brown prepared paper, 28.4 x 22 cm.
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin. Late Gothic.

17. **Anonymous**, 14th century, Italian, *The Visitation*, c. 1350.
Pen and ink on parchment, 21.2 x 33.3 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. International Gothic.

18. **Jean d'Orleans** (attributed to), active c. 1356-1408, French, *Parement of Narbonne*, c. 1375.
Grisaille on silk, 78 x 286 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris. International Gothic.

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19. **Giovannino de'Grassi**, c. 1350-1398, Italian,
Two Young Women Playing Music, 1380-1398.
Pen, ink and watercolour on parchment, 26 x 19 cm.
Civica Biblioteca Angelo Mai, Bergamo. International Gothic.

20. **Giovannino de'Grassi**, c. 1350-1398, Italian,
A Group of Young Men Singing, 1380-1398.
Pen and ink on parchment, 26 x 19 cm.
Civica Biblioteca Angelo Mai, Bergamo. International Gothic.

21. **Giovannino de'Grassi**, c. 1350-1398, Italian,
A Prehistoric Man, 1380-1398.
Pen and ink on parchment, 26 x 19 cm.
Civica Biblioteca Angelo Mai, Bergamo. International Gothic.

22. **Giovannino de'Grassi**, c. 1350-1398, Italian,
A Lion Eating a Deer, 1380-1398. Ink, traces of silver shades,
white tempera and watercolour on parchment, 26 x 19 cm.
Civica Biblioteca Angelo Mai, Bergamo. International Gothic.

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15TH CENTURY

Florence of the 15th century saw the birth of the Renaissance. The first theorist of this revolutionary art was Leon Battista Alberti, an architect and humanist who represented the ideal of the 'universal man'. His *De Pictura*, published in 1435-1436, laid the foundations for the long line of Renaissance theorists that would follow. Although his treatise gives practical examples of techniques for drawing and painting, as earlier texts had done, Alberti's 'recipes' are aimed at a new kind of sensibility. The man who makes paintings and sculptures is no longer a craftsman, but an artist whose work is intellectual as much as manual. Art and science go together, and its key element is perspective, the 'visual pyramid' of which Alberti speaks in this short extract dealing with drawing, that has been selected from his second book on painting:

"[Painting] is only worthy of a noble and free spirit, being for me the best sign of its ingenious excellence the dedication to drawing. [...]

"The perfection of painting consists of contour, composition, and light and shade [...]

"[C]ontour consists of the correct placing of lines, which today is called "drawing". [...] I feel drawings must be done with very subtle lines, hardly visible for the eye, in the way Apelles did [...] I would like drawing to be limited to giving contour, for which it is necessary to exercise with infinite diligence and care, since no composition or intelligent use of light can be praised if they are missing the drawing. On the contrary, many times it so happens that a good drawing is enough to please the viewer: this is why drawing is the part on which we must insist the most, for the study of which there can be no better method than the veil, of which I am the inventor. You must take a transparent piece of fabric, commonly called a veil, of any colour. Once we have placed it on a stretcher, we use threads to divide it into many small, equal squares. Afterwards, we place it between us and the object we want to copy, in order for the visual pyramid to penetrate through the transparency of the veil. This veil has many uses: first, it always represents the same immobile surface [...] It is absolutely impossible for things not to change when one is painting, since the painter never looks at the object from exactly the same spot [...] Therefore, the veil has the advantage that it will always represent the object in the same way. Secondly, with the veil all the parts of the drawing, as well as the contours, will be shown with exact precision; because on seeing that the forehead is on one little square, that the nose is on the one below it, the cheek on the one next to it, the beard on the one further down and, in the same way, all the parts in their respective places, it is very easy to transfer them to the panel or the wall, using the same disposition of squares we have used on the veil. [...] I do not share the opinion of those who say: it is not good for painters to get used to the veil or the grid; because it makes things easier and serves to do things well, afterwards they will not be able to do anything by themselves without its help, only with great effort. It is obvious that we do not look into the great or little effort of the painter, but rather praise the painting which has high relief and which looks like the natural bodies it represents. I do not know how this can be achieved by anyone, even half-well, without the help of the veil. For those who wish to progress in art, take advantage of it; and if someone wants to display their knowledge without it, then they must imagine they have it before them, and work as if it were really there, so that with the help of an imaginary grid they can give exact limits to the painting."

Leon Battista Alberti, *De Pictura*, 1435-1436

23. **Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni)**, c. 1370-1425, Italian,
Saint Benedict Sitting in a Throne, date unknown.
Pen and ink on parchment, 24.5 x 17.5 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. International Gothic.

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LORENZO MONACO
(Piero di Giovanni)
(Siena?, c. 1370 – Florence, c. 1425)

Lorenzo Monaco was one of the last great exponents of Florentine late Gothic painting. Though he is thought to have been born in Siena, he worked in Florence for more than thirty years. His real name was Piero di Giovanni, but he began to be known as Lorenzo Monaco (Lorenzo 'the monk') when he entered the Camaldolense monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli in 1391. He is known for his frescoes in the Bartolini chapel in Santa Trinità (Florence), but he was mainly a painter of altarpieces.

He received the influence of Duccio and may have been trained by Agnolo Gaddi and Jacopo de Cione. His graceful figures and gold backgrounds, typical of the Italo-Byzantine Gothic, make him perhaps the last great exponent of this school. His work serves as a sharp contrast to his greatest contemporary, Masaccio, who would signal the way for Renaissance painting. Despite this, Monaco would have an important influence on another Renaissance great, Fra Angelico.

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27. **Anonymous**, 15th century, Italian, *The Dominican, Petrus de Croce, Encountering the Devil and Serpents*, 1417.
Pen and wash on parchment, 24.1 x 13.4 cm.
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Late Gothic.

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28. **Anonymous**, 15th century, Italian, *The Shipwreck of Brother Petrus, His Capture and His Audience before a Muslim Ruler*, 1417.
Pen and wash on parchment, 30.2 x 13.8 cm.
Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge (Massachusetts). Late Gothic.

24. **Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni)**, c. 1370-1425, Italian,
Six Saints Kneeling, date unknown.
Pen and ink on parchment, 24.5 x 17.5 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. International Gothic.

25. **Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni)**, c. 1370-1425, Italian,
Decorated Initial with Scene of Christ Entering the Temple, 1408-1411.
Pen and ink on parchment, 30.5 x 24.4 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. International Gothic.

26. **Anonymous**, 15th century, Italian,
Two Monks Looking up at a Dragon in a Tower, 1400-1450.
Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash on vellum, 18.7 x 13.9 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Late Gothic.

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29. **Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian, *Justice*, c. 1427.
Pen and ink, brush and brown wash, 19.3 x 17 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Early Renaissance.

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30. **Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian,
King David Playing a Psaltery, c. 1430.
Pen and ink, and wash, on vellum, 19.7 x 17.8 cm.
British Museum, London. Early Renaissance.

FRA ANGELICO
(Guido di Pietro)
(Vicchio di Mugello, c. 1395 - Rome, 1455)

Secluded within cloister walls, a painter and a monk, and brother of the order of the Dominicans, Angelico devoted his life to religious paintings.

Little is known of his early life except that he was born at Vicchio, in the broad fertile valley of the Mugello, not far from Florence, that his name was Guido de Pietro, and that he passed his youth in Florence, probably in some bottegha, for at twenty he was recognised as a painter. In 1418 he entered a Dominican convent in Fiesole with his brother. They were welcomed by the monks and, after a year's novitiate, admitted to the brotherhood, Guido taking the name by which he was known for the rest of his life, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole; the title of Angelico, the "Angel," or Il Beato, "The Blessed," was conferred on him after his death.

Henceforth he became an example of two personalities in one man: he was all in all a painter, but also a devout monk; his subjects were always religious ones and represented in a deeply religious spirit, yet his devotion as a monk was no greater than his absorption as an artist. Consequently, though his life was secluded within the walls of the monastery, he kept in touch with the art movements of his time and continually developed as a painter. His early work shows that he had learned of the illuminators who inherited the Byzantine traditions, and had been affected by the simple religious feeling of Giotto's work. Also influenced by Lorenzo Monaco and the Sienese School, he painted under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici. Then he began to learn of that brilliant band of sculptors and architects who were enriching Florence with their genius. Ghiberti was executing his pictures in bronze upon the doors of the Baptistery; Donatello, his famous statue of St. George and the dancing children around the organ- gallery in the Cathedral; and Luca della Robbia was at work upon his frieze of children, singing, dancing and playing upon instruments. Moreover, Masaccio had revealed the dignity of form in painting. Through these artists, the beauty of the human form and of its life and movement was being manifested to the Florentines and to the other cities. Angelico caught the enthusiasm and gave increasing reality of life and movement to his figures.

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31. **Circle of Jan van Eyck** (c. 1390-1441), Flemish, *Saint Paul*, c. 1430.
Pen and brown ink, point of the brush and brown ink, with purple and gold heightening, on vellum, 14.6 x 7.9 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Northern Renaissance.

32. **Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian,
Christ on the Cross, c. 1430.
Pen and brown ink, with red and yellow wash on parchment, 29.3 x 19 cm.
Albertina, Vienna. Early Renaissance.

33. **Stefano da Verona (Stefano di Giovanni)**, c. 1374-1438, Italian,
Three Standing Figures, 1435-1438.
Pen and brown ink over traces of charcoal or black chalk, 30 x 22.4 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Early Renaissance.

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34. **Konrad Witz**, c. 1400-1445, Swiss,
Virgin and Child in an Interior, date unknown.
Pen, brown ink and wash, 29.1 x 20 cm.
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.
Northern Renaissance.

35. **Stefano da Verona (Stefano di Giovanni)**, c. 1374-1438, Italian,
The Virgin with Christ Child and St. John the Baptist, 1420-1430.
Pen and ink on watermarked white paper, 22.4 x 14.3 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Early Renaissance.

36. **Pisanello (Antonio Pisano)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian, *Three Monkeys in Different Postures, Sketch and Head of Another Monkey*, c. 1430.
Silverpoint on paper, 20.6 x 21.7 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris. Early Renaissance.

37. **Jan van Eyck**, c. 1390-1441, Flemish,
Portrait of Cardinal Niccolo Albergati, c. 1435.
Silverpoint on paper, 21.2 x 18 cm.
Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden.
Northern Renaissance.

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JAN VAN EYCK

(Near Maastricht, c. 1390 - Bruges, 1441)

Little is known of the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck, even the dates of their births being uncertain. Jan, as perhaps also Hubert, was for a time in the service of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. He was entered in the household as 'varlet and painter', but acted at the same time as a confidential friend, and for his services received an annual salary of two horses for his use, and a 'varlet in livery' to attend on him. The greater part of his life was spent in Bruges.

Their wonderful use of colour is another reason of the fame of the van Eycks. Artists came from Italy to study their pictures, to discover what they themselves must do in order to paint so well, with such brilliance, such full and firm effect, as these two brothers. For the latter had found out the secret of working successfully with oil colours. Before their time, attempts had been made to mix colours in the medium of oil, but the oil was slow in drying, and the varnish added to remedy this had blackened the colours. The van Eycks, however, had hit upon a transparent varnish which dried quickly and without injury to the tints. Though they guarded the secret jealously, it was discovered by the Italian, Antonello da Messina, who was working in Bruges, and through him published to the world. The invention made possible the enormous development in the art of painting which ensued.

In these two brothers the grand art of Flanders was born. Like ¨the sudden flowering of the aloe, after sleeping through a century of suns,˝ this art, rooted in the native soil, nurtured by the smaller arts of craftsmanship, reached its full ripeness and expanded into blossom. Such further development as it experienced came from Italian influence, but the distinctly Flemish art, born out of local conditions in Flanders, was already fully-grown.

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38. **Pisanello (Antonio Pisano)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian,
Castle and Landscape, 1440-1450. Sinopia.
Museo di Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. Early Renaissance.

39. **Circle of Rogier van der Weyden** (c. 1399-1464),
Flemish, *Men Shoveling Chairs*, 1444-1450.
Pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk, 30 x 42.6 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Northern Renaissance.

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40. **Paolo Uccello (Paolo di Dono)**, 1397-1475, Italian,
Study for the *Monument to John Hawkwood*, c. 1436.
Metalpoint and white lead on squared paper, 46.1 x 33.3 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Early Renaissance.

41. **Andrea Mantegna**, 1430/1431-1506, Italian,
Faun Attacking a Snake, 1446-1506.
Pen and ink on paper, 29 x 17.2 cm.
British Museum, London. Early Renaissance.

PAOLO UCCELLO
(Paolo di Dono)
(Florence, 1397-1475)

Paolo di Dono was called 'Uccello' because he loved birds and the Italian word for bird is uccello. As well as painting on panel and in fresco, he was also a master of mosaics, especially in Venice, and produced designs for stained glass. We can feel the influence of Donatello especially in a fresco representing the *Flood and the Recession*, whereas the figure in this work is reminiscent of Masaccio's frescos of the Brancacci chapel. His perspective studies are very sophisticated, recalling the Renaissance art treatises of Piero della Francesca, Leonardo da Vinci, or Dürer. He was a major proponent of the Renaissance style. However, if his masterwork *The Battle of San Romano* (1438-1440) has Renaissance elements, Uccello's gold decorations on the surface of his masterpieces are indebted to the Gothic style.

42. **Pisanello (Antonio Pisano)**, c. 1395-1455, Italian,
Tournament, c. 1440-1450. Sinopia.
Museo di Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. Early Renaissance.

ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO
(Andrea di Bartolo di Bargilla)
(Castagno, before 1419 - Florence, 1457)

An Italian painter of the Florentine school, Andrea del Castagno was born in Castagno, in the district of Mugello. He followed the naturalism of Masaccio and made use of scientific perspective, gaining wide recognition for his monumental frescoes for the convent of Sant'Apollonia in Florence. These included a *Last Supper* and three scenes from the Passion of Christ. Another of his principle works (many of them have disappeared) was the equestrian figure of Nicola di Tolentino, in the cathedral of Florence. Castagno added to the Renaissance's illusionism a strong expressive realism that was influenced by the sculptures of Donatello. He, in turn, would prove influential for succeding generations.

For four centuries, Castagno's name was burdened with the henious charge of murder. It was said that he had treacherously assasinated his colleague, Domenico Veneziano, in order to monopolise the then-recent secret of oil painting as practised in Flanders by the Van Eycks. This charge was, however, proved to be untrue, as Domenico died four years after Andrea.

43. **Andrea del Castagno (Andrea di Bartolo di Bargilla)**, before 1419-1457, Italian, *Christ in the Sepulchre with Two Angels,* 1447. Sinopia. Sant'Apollonia, Florence. Early Renaissance.

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