

GLOSSARY

ACANTHUS	A prickly plant with large leaves; used as ornament in ancient Greece and the Renaissance.
ALTARPIECE	A religious painting composed of one or several compartments or panels; intended to stand on or hang above an altar.
APOCRYPHA	Literally, things that are “hidden.” The Apocrypha are not universally accepted as official scripture and are excluded from the old and new Testaments.
BLUE	The color of the sky. In Christian painting it symbolizes Heaven. Mary, known as the Queen of Heaven, wears a blue mantle. Blue pigment was derived from either the mineral azurite, a copper carbonate mineral, or ultramarine, made from lapis lazuli. The latter was very costly.
BURIN	A pointed tool used to engrave lines into a metal plate that is used for printmaking. Ink applied to the plate will sink into the engraved lines and transfer to the paper.
CARTOUCHE	An ornament in the shape of a scroll with ends folded back.
COFFERED	“Divided in squares,” usually refers to a popular Renaissance ceiling treatment that used recessed squares.
COAT OF ARMS	A heraldic device identifying a person, family, or institution of the nobility.
CONFRATERNITY	An assembly of lay persons dedicated to strict religious observances.
CORNICE	A horizontal band that crowns the top of a building.
CUIRASS	A piece of close-fitting armor for protecting the chest and back.
DAMASCENED	Metalwork ornamented with an inlaid design.
DIPTYCH	A painting, usually an altarpiece, made up of two hinged panels. A triptych has three hinged panels.
<i>DOGE</i>	The chief justice in the republics of Venice and Genoa.
EMBOSSSED	Metal that is hammered, molded, or carved so as to create a bulge or an image in relief.

ENGRAVING	A process used by printmakers who cut grooves or pits into a wood block or metal plate with a sharp tool called a burin. When the plate is inked, the printer's ink sinks into the grooves; then the plate is wiped, to remove the ink from the smooth areas. The inked plate is pressed against damp paper by running both between two heavy rollers. The pressure forces the softened paper into the grooves to pull out the ink, which we see as lines.
ENTABLATURE	The part of the building that is above the columns, encompassing the architrave, the frieze, and the cornice. This element was first found in Greek architecture.
FOREGROUND	The part of the painted image that appears closest to the viewer, usually the lower area of the painting or other composition. The background, usually the upper area of the painting, appears to be farther back. The middle ground is everything in between.
GOLD	A symbol of pure light, the heavenly element in which God lives.
GROTESQUE	A type of decoration found on Roman wall paintings that were excavated in the sixteenth century, especially in Nero's Golden House. The wall paintings were found in underground caves called "grottoes," thus, the newly discovered ornamentation was called "grotesque." These wall decorations featured motifs characterized by imaginative, organic connections between disparate elements, including human figures, animals, insects, and birds, mythological and other fantastic beasts, architectural and plant elements.
HALO	The gold circle or disk placed behind the heads of Christ and saints, a symbol of their sanctity or the light of God.
HATCHING	The drawing or engraving of fine parallel lines to show shading. When the lines intersect each other, it is called cross-hatching.
HORIZON LINE	The line where the sky and earth appear to meet. The horizon line is drawn across the picture at the artist's eye level.
HUE	A particular variety of a color, shade, or tint.
LUNETTE	<i>Luna</i> means "moon" in Latin and Italian. A lunette is a semicircular shape, in this case above the main panel of the Raphael altarpiece.
MAGUS	A member of the ancient Persian priestly caste, skilled in Eastern magic and astrology. In the New Testament, the Magi are the three wise men who came from the East to pay homage to the newborn Christ Child.
MAJOLICA	Tin-glazed earthenware.

<i>PALAZZO</i>	An Italian word used to describe a large building. It may be a mansion or palace, or an official government building like a town hall, court, or embassy.
PASSION OR THE PASSION OF CHRIST	The events surrounding the Crucifixion of Christ; a popular subject for religious drama, painting, and sculpture.
PERSPECTIVE	A technique that artists use to represent the three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface, such as a piece of paper, canvas, or wood panel. Using perspective, an artist can create the illusion of depth or space and show the proper proportion between objects. Without perspective a painting or drawing will appear flat.
PICTORIAL SPACE	The illusion of three-dimensional space created on a two-dimensional surface.
<i>PREDELLA</i>	An Italian word for the series of small paintings that form the lower section of large altarpieces. The predella usually has narrative scenes from the lives of the saints who are represented on the main and side panels of the altarpiece.
<i>PUTTO</i>	From the Latin word meaning “male child.” In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century poetry and painting, <i>putti</i> are depicted with wings and connected with the god of love, Eros, also known as Cupid.
RED	In Christian paintings, a symbol of the blood of Christ or the Passion.
RELIEF	A raised surface; for example, sculpture that is carved or modeled and which projects from a background.
STAR	In Christian paintings, a symbol of divine guidance or favor. The Star of the East guided the three Magi to Bethlehem.
TRIUMPH	An ancient Roman tradition honoring the return of a victorious general, who paraded his soldiers, prisoners, and spoils through the city streets.
TROMPE L’OEIL	French for “fool the eye”; a style of painting intended to trick the viewer into believing that the minutely observed objects shown are part of the viewer’s three-dimensional world.
VANISHING POINT	The point where parallel lines appear to meet on the horizon line.

