

Promoting Global Understanding: An In-Depth Study of the Neoclassical Frescos
located at Villa Di Geggiano, Siena Italy

by
Joy Shind

A thesis presented to the Honors College of Middle Tennessee State University in
Partial fulfillment of requirements for graduation from the University Honors
College

October 2017

Promoting Global Understanding: An In-Depth Study of the Neoclassical Frescos
located at Villa Di Geggiano, Siena Italy

Joy Shind

APPROVED:

Dr. Gloria Wilson
Art Department

Department Chair

Honors Council Rep
Honors Department

Dr. John R. Vile
University Honors Dean

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Tennessee Consortium for International Studies for the opportunity to study abroad. If it had not been for my first trip to Italy, this project would never have materialized. I would also like to thank URECA Grant Studies at Middle Tennessee State University for the opportunity to travel back to Italy a second time. The URECA Gold level grant enabled me to offset travel costs giving me the opportunity to spend the time needed at Villa Di Geggiano for this research study. I would like to thank to Dr. Gloria Wilson for guiding me through this process and directing my focus on many occasions. I am indebted to Dr. Debrah Sickler-Viogt as well, for the encouragement she has given me to apply for the URECA Gold level grant. She has significantly refined my grant writing capabilities and encouraged me to grab hold of opportunities that arise. Above all, I am grateful to Middle Tennessee State University's Honors College for awarding me the Honor's Transfer Fellowship and guiding me in the writing of my first thesis. I hope that that choosing me for this honor will prove beneficial to both Middle Tennessee State University, and Middle Tennessee State University's Honors Program.

Table of Contents

Abstract	7
Introduction.....	9
Part I: The History of Frescos.....	12
The Fresco Timeline.....	32
Part II: The Creative Project.....	35
Part III: An Interactive Lesson Plan.....	41
Conclusion.....	46
References.....	48

Abstract

As a future educator, my goal is to present meaningful art lessons that introduce students to international cultures while reflecting on historical art making processes. I have chosen the art that inspired me during two separate studies abroad that I took in Italy to create my thesis project. The results of this study are the groundwork for enhancing my knowledge about fresco technique and applying this knowledge to my future teaching. I will do this by creating my own fresco using historical techniques, writing a literature review regarding the history of frescos, and developing a research-based lesson plan that provides a strategy for teaching fresco techniques to 7th-12th grade students.

The primary research questions guiding my study are as follows: What were the significant advances in fresco making throughout history? Which historical method most closely relates to the Neoclassical frescos located at Villa Di Geggiano? How does the historical narrative of Geggiano's frescos and their survival during World War II connect to the need for continued preservation of this artwork and others like it? How might I learn and thereby teach historic fresco techniques to 7th-12th grade students?

My thesis is threefold with specific objectives. First, I have written a literary review on the history of frescos, highlighting important advances in the technical skills and cultural trends in fresco making. Understanding the history of frescos allows us to understand the significance of the frescos located at Villa Di

Geggiano. Next, as part of my exploration, I have created a fresco using techniques that would have been used during the Neoclassical time period. Creating a fresco using historical methods ties into my third objective, which was to create a research-based lesson plan and instructional materials that provide strategies for teaching fresco techniques to 7th-12th grade students.

This study was designed to encourage both teachers and students to engage in the art of frescos by sharing my research. I sincerely hope that this undergraduate thesis study encourages future educators to bring historically and culturally relevant material into the classroom through the lens of personal experience.

Introduction

The National Art Education Association has challenged teachers to “promote global understanding” through teaching and research (Franklin, 2015). As a future educator, my goal is to present meaningful art lessons that introduce students to international cultures while reflecting on historical art making processes. With that goal in mind, I have decided to use the art that inspired me during two separate study abroad trips which I took in Italy to create my thesis project. In May 2015, I visited Villa Di Geggiano in Tuscany and became acquainted with a Neoclassical fresco on its site painted by traveling artist Ignatius Moder. I was especially inspired by the fresco paintings located at Geggiano. This interest motivated me to examine and gain a better understanding of fresco works as a thesis topic. I had hopes of returning to the site to continue investigating those works of art.

Due in part to being awarded a URECA gold level grant, in June 2016, I had the opportunity to travel back to Italy and stay on site at Villa Di Geggiano. During my three day stay I spent time studying the frescos, interviewing the owners, and experiencing more deeply the art which was preserved with great effort by archeologist and Art Historian Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, who in 1930 chose to reside in the Villa as his main residence (Dictionary of Art Historians, 2016). The experience was truly unique. My stay in the guest house at the Villa was like spending three full days at a museum.

I was able to convert the information gathered at Villa Di Geggiano into a thesis. I intend to use this research paper as an educational tool to enhance global learning for 7th-12th grade students by sharing the experience of field study in an international setting and relating international experiences through real-life connections with a hands on fresco making lesson. I hope to inspire students through this experience to engage in meaningful artistic research and creative processes through cultural understanding. According to Flavia Bastos, Professor of Art Education at the University of Cincinnati, who conducted cross-cultural learning in her education classes, this type of research is invaluable to the classroom. “Such research can inform meaningful art education practices that while rooted in the different communities we participate, creates opportunities to recognize and transcend our familiar boundaries” (Bastos, 2006). It is my sincere hope that the lesson plans that result from my studies at Villa Di Geggiano and in Italy will help promote a global mindset with future students.

Part I of my thesis begins with an introduction of the history of frescos and fresco technique, as well as the stories that the frescos located at Villa Di Geggiano visually chronicle. Included in the historical study of Villa Di Geggiano’s frescos is an account of the rich history of the Bianchi Bandinelli family and the artist they hired to paint the foyer and sitting room. The owners have placed high importance on commissioning and preserving the arts.

Part II involves my own creative research. I created a fresco using techniques that would have been used during the Classical period. This art making

process proves invaluable to the instructional resources that I created. A study conducted by University of Melbourne in 2010, found that “teachers who utilize their own art making processes in the classroom give students an example of the excitement that comes from being an artist, and motivates students to become critical interpreters” (Imms, W., & Ruanglertbutr, 2013).

Moving on I would like to discuss part III of my thesis. Given my review of literature and study of the original fresco, I have created a research-based lesson plan with instructional materials that provide strategies for teaching fresco techniques to 7th-12th students. It is designed to inspire students to broaden their global understanding and study opportunities. The students will be able to explore the art-making process through the lens of global history. This supports London and Freyermuth’s (2005) notion, “Effective art teachers know how important art history is to the formation of a prospective learner.”

My goal is to bring historically relevant material into the classroom with the hope that my first hand experience will motivate students to investigate international cultures. By creating a literary review of the history of frescos, documenting my own creative process, and constructing resource based instructional resources in the form of a lesson plan modified for the 7th-12th grades classroom, I believe I have attained this goal.

Part I: The History of Frescos

The word fresco is based on the Italian word “fresh,” which is a process of applying pigments on lime plaster while wet (Mercadal, 2105). The natural pigments mix with the chemicals in the lime plaster creating vibrant colors that could last for thousands of years in the right conditions. Fresco technique was the preferred method of mural painting for many years because of its long life and durability (Horgnies, 2014).

While frescos are typically thought of as inheriting their beginnings from Europe and being mainly initiated by natives of Pompeii and Crete around 1500 BC (Gardner, 2014), there is significant evidence supporting beliefs that non-western cultures utilized fresco techniques as well. Even ancient Egyptian culture reveals that murals were painted using the fresco technique of applying pigments to wet plaster (Davies, 1937).

The frescos of ancient Egypt were created by using a very thin coat of plaster. This coat of plaster was painted over another layer of plaster that had been previously mixed with straw (Davies, 1937). The earliest known paintings from the Egyptian culture were done with extreme skill and attention to detail. The tomb of Itet dating back to 2700 BC, is recorded as having very close color matches to birds and fauna depicted in the murals (Davies, 1937). This reveals to art historians that the artists carefully mixed pigments to imitate nature. The Geese at Meidum is a prime example of the use of this precise and exacting detail.

This detail can be viewed on page 32 as part of The History Of Frescos timeline following Part I. The frescos located at the tomb of Itet assist art historians to understand the culture and times of ancient Egypt. Skilled artisans paid special attention to the usage of color and delicate line-work, thus creating highly imitational works of art. The geese are even modeled after specific breeds confirming that Egyptians had a love for nature (Fernandez, n.d.). Art historians have also noted that the geese are so arranged in a compositional manner that creates the illusion of space, confirming that ancient Egyptian civilizations were using advanced art techniques (Ball, 2007).

Ancient Egypt played a significant role in the history of fresco technique since that is where the earliest known frescos were discovered (Macaulay, 2001). It is also possible that ancient Egypt had direct influence over early Aegean cultures. M.C. Shaw writes in the *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, about a possible link between Egyptian frescos and those of later Aegean cultures based on similarity of patterns discovered in both Knossos and Tell el dab'a, the modern name for Ancient Egypt's Hyksos (Shaw, 2012).

The ground work has been laid for understanding where frescos had their start. In what follows, I provide an explanation of the progression of fresco technique and its global impact elsewhere. Ancient Mesopotamia housed one of the most significant fresco discoveries in the study of art history. Hammurabi, one of the city states of Mari, now Syria, once held "Investiture of Zimri-Lim," a fresco dating back to 1775 BC (Gardner, 2014).

Now residing in the Musee du Louvre, Paris, The “Investiture of Zimri-Lim,” a painting taken from a chapel wall, is a mixture of symbolism and symmetrical architecture (Schmandt-Besserat, 2007). An array of animals, gods, and goddesses were depicted in the painting originally located in the royal palace of Mari’s chapel (Schmandt-Besserat, 2007). The religious symbolism and authoritative posturing of king Zimri-Lim demonstrates that paintings were beginning to depict more than just imitative figures. These paintings detailed deep symbolic meaning (Schmandt-Besserat, 2007). Please refer to timeline on page 32.

The “Investiture of Zimri-Lim” provides unique informational value. Art historians are able to study and gain insight from the color palette used by ancient Mesopotamians. Colors were created by grinding natural pigments and mixing the pigments with a binding agent (Calvert, n.d.). In the case of fresco technique, the pigments were mixed with plaster. The colors used in the “Investiture of Zimri-Lim,” were black, white, red, red-ochre, red-orange, yellow, pink, green, blue, and gray (Schmandt-Besserat, 2007). This is an extensive range of colors giving art historians insight in understanding the advancements in the production of pigment in 1700 BC.

These advancements in pigmentation and the symbolic meaning behind the paintings in Egypt and Mesopotamia provide understanding of not only the art in the ancient world, but also the progression of ancient civilizations. As time passed the cultures changed and so did fresco painting techniques. Let us look at

the next major advancement in fresco painting which was the buon fresco technique.

The Ancient Aegean cultures were noted for initiating the buon fresco technique (Gardner, 2014). The buon fresco technique evolved from painting on dry plastered walls in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to painting on freshly plastered walls while the plaster was still wet. This involved laying several layers of plaster to dry, then, a final layer called intonaco was carefully spread on the previous layers (Macaulay, 2001). This thin layer of plaster was then painted while still wet with mineral pigments. The wet plaster worked as the binder which affixed to the pigments. Since the plaster would dry in approximately ten hours, it was important to work on the section of the mural while the plaster remained wet (Macaulay, 2001).

The palace of Knossos in Crete houses prime examples of the buon fresco technique. Examining the work gives art historians both an understanding of the technique and the culture of the Minoan peoples. “Bull-Leaping” vividly illustrates the risky Minoan ceremony where participants would grasp a bull by the horns and vault onto its back (Gardner, 2014). The documentation of their murals and fresco technique has been invaluable throughout the ages. Beverly Sills wisely quoted that “Art is the signature of Civilizations.” Historians rely on the paintings of the past to bring the ceremonies and traditions of those who lived before us to light.

Next, our journey in discovering frescos and the evolution of fresco technique brings us to the Classical period. According to Gardener (2014):

Art historians date the beginning of the Classical age from a historical event: the defeat of the Persian invaders of Greece by the allied Hellenic city-states... The narrow escape of the Greeks from domination by Asian “barbarians” nurtured a sense of Hellenic identity so strong that from then on, the history of European civilization would be distinct from the civilization of Asia, even though they continued to interact.” (p. 123).

Understanding this turning point in Greek civilization is imperative to this study because the frescos located at Villa Di Geggiano, though painted in 1780 appear to be modeled after those painted in the Classical period, as will be discussed in more detail further on in the study.

In the Classical period, beginning in 480 BC (Gardner, 2014), artists focused on depicting humans and animals realistically; we know this due to careful observation of Classical Greek pottery (Boardman, 2012). Sadly, most of the mural paintings from this time period have not survived. Fortunately the early tombs in Greece contained fresco murals. Tomb frescos make up most of the frescos discovered in the early Classical period (Biers, 2006).

In addition to the Greek frescos, the art of the Etruscans, which was located in middle Italy during the fourth century BC, became a focal point in the history of fresco painting during the classical period. These tombs contained

frescos as well. Etruscan tombs, however were set apart from the Classical Greek Paintings because they depicted frescos on all four walls as opposed to one or two walls (Gardner, 2014). The painted tombs of Tarquinia display traits of classical Etruscan paintings such as couples banqueting in open air environments (Gardner, 2014). This stands out in classical design because the Greeks were more likely to focus on depicting mythological figures rather than the simple joys of everyday life (Gardner, 2014).

While frescos discovered in middle Italy during the early classical period gave Art Historians insight regarding culture and technique, it is the frescos discovered in Pompeii that provide the deepest level of understanding. When Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D., burying the entire town of Pompeii, the volcanic ash preserved the frescos marvelously (Gardner, 2014). This misfortune for the Pompeians was a boon for art historians who received keen insights and understanding of the culture and art techniques of the time.

As it can be seen on page 33 in The History of Frescos timeline the Pompeian frescos were lavish in design. Many residences had mural paintings covering the walls of entire rooms. These frescos were painted in what is referred to as the “true” fresco technique as discussed earlier in this review as buon fresco technique (Gardner, 2014). It is clear that Pompeian artists took great pains to enhance their interior decorative style. The nature of the buon fresco technique alone exhibits extreme skill. With only ten hours to complete the painting stage of fresco making over a widespread area is highly difficult.

Pompeian frescos can be classified into four distinct styles developed by a German art historian named August Mau (Gardner, 2014). The first style of frescos were created to give the viewer a sense of illusion. Paint applied to walls made it look as if it had been made of marble or wood (Gardner, 2014). Simple inexpensive plaster could be used to create the illusion of more expensive imported materials, giving each room a grandiose feel.

The second style, also illusionary, was created to give the viewer the feel of a three-dimensional space. These types of frescos depicted indoor rooms filled with party goers captivated in the delights of the Pompeiian lifestyle. Draped figures enjoyed plentiful wine, rich cuisine, and intimate company. These frescos also depicted distant cityscapes, outdoor gardens and pastoral scenes (Gardner, 2014). Of August Mau's four styles, the second style of Pompeian fresco painting poses the most important to the study of the Neo-Classical frescos painted at Villa Di Geggaino by Ignatius Moder. Within Moder's works are themes closely related to the second style of classical Pompeian frescos. These scenes depict people employing life's delights by celebrating the seasons through their festivities. There are also illustrations of those engaging in the necessary work of a well-run Italian vineyard. Each wall had distant figures and or components that create the illusion of depth. It was as if you could take a stroll across the Tuscan hillside all while keeping your feet planted in the Villa. We will consider the Villa Di Geggaino further on. Let us return to the frescos of Pompeii.

The third style of Pompeian frescos was less concerned with three dimensional space and more focused on detailing fanciful scenes set in definite borders. Such paintings depicted outdoor scenes and extravagant parties yet they were made to look more like a picture hanging on the wall rather than mimicking the second style's illusion of depth. These scenes were outlined by a confined geometrical border. Some of these borders represented painted-on picture frames instead of using real picture frames (Gardner, 2014).

The third Pompeian style of fresco painting is known for its shift in decor. Just as the interior styles of today can take an abrupt turn, the Pompeian trends of interior design shifted from colorful scenic paintings to stately, monochromatic rooms. Rooms which no longer seemed to trick the eye with the impression of outdoor spaces painted on villa walls, but single color usage of neutral tone only accented with small geometrical features and diminished elegant figures.

The Pompeian's must have missed their colorful spacious paintings, because by 50 AD, twenty nine years before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, the fourth style of fresco painting reintroduced illusionism (Gardner, 2014). A reintroduction of the illusion of depth was exercised by fresco painters. The walls were divided into geometrical sections that once again appeared like openings with three dimensional items such as windows and doors (Gardner, 2014). Artists who painted in the third style also utilized elements from the first style. That is, the use of pigment on plaster to represent different materials such as wood or marble (Gardner, 2014).

The Pompeiian frescos proved to be paramount in art historical studies, however, let us not neglect influential finds from elsewhere in the in the history of frescos. When undertaking the task of highlighting the evolutionary developments in fresco making it is necessary to include the nonwestern cultures. The impressive frescos located in Sigiriya, Sri Lanka are a must when studying the frescos of the nonwestern cultures because of their importance in beginning a new style in fresco making.

In 477 AD, King Kassapa moved Sri Lanka's capital city to Sigiriya (D'Alfonso,1989). This would become the future home of the famous Sigiriyan frescos. The Sigiriyan frescos developed into a trendsetter for eastern style frescos, more specifically relating to the Gupta style. Gupta is an Indian art expression that focused on using bright colors and imitating natural, life-like figures (Saraogi, 2013). The Sigiriyan frescos were predecessors of many forms yet to come in the Gupta style by following statement in "The History of Art," by Ernest d' Alfonso,

Here following the example of Gupta art, the sides of a thoroughfare hewn through a large rock were painted with twenty-one exquisitely executed female figures exuding property and sexuality. These frescos gave rise to a long series of frescos done in the same style, including those decorating the Hindagala caves (seventeenth century), the Mahintale stupa (eight century) and the Mahinyangana (eleventh century) (p. 545).

It was the sheer size and the realism of these frescos that set them apart. The Sigiriyan frescos popularized the non-western movement of fresco painting (D'Alfonso,1989). These frescos covering the exterior rock wall at the Sigiriya were so large that ancient artists needed to use scaffolding constructed from bamboo and rope in order to completely cover the impressive space (Ponnamperuma,n.d.). Art historians noted the Sigiriyan frescos were surprisingly realistic. In fact, according to the former director of the Sri Lanka tourist board, P.P. Hettiarachchi, "Sigiriya paintings represent the earliest surviving examples of realism, already fully evolved by the time of the 5th century."

Returning to fresco study of the Middle Ages, wall paintings became extremely popular in churches as well as in secular buildings alike (Ross, 2003). A great master, Giotto Di Bondone changed the course of fresco painting. Giotto brought such skill into fresco technique which until that time was unrivaled regarding realism. "With Giotto, the flat world of the thirteenth-century Italian painting was transformed into an analogue for the real world, for which reason he is considered the father of modern European painting" (Meagher, 2000). Commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni, wealthy Italian banker, Giotto created what is considered his masterpiece located in Scrovegni Chapel (Scrovegni Chapel frescos, 2015). These paintings were a prime example of Giotto's use of realistic imitation, according to popular art website artable.com regarding the Scrovegni Chapel frescos:

Di Bondone's predecessors were solidly Byzantine; they painted in the traditional flowy, unrealistic and excessively holy style that had characterized European art for centuries. Di Bondone was the first artist to move away from this highly stylized way of painting and toward a more natural and realistic method.

Giotto's paintings ushered in a new level of talent regarding the use of techniques enhancing the illusion of depth (Meagher, 2000). Giotto created objects in the distance as smaller and higher on the picture plane. He also depicted objects in the foreground with more detail. These are key factors in creating the illusion of depth (Cycleback, 2003).

Frescos in the Middle Ages set the stage for the development of enhanced skills that became more evident in the Renaissance. The Renaissance, spanning from 1400-1650 AD, was time of new cultural achievements in painting (Raditsa, 2000). The Renaissance rejuvenates a period of interest in Classical Greek and Roman Art (Raditsa, 2000). A deep interest in creating the highest forms of art possible drove Renaissance artists to study art designed by the ancient Romans as it was considered most proficient (Raditsa, 2000).

The work of Italian Renaissance artists is not only influenced by an interest in the ancient Roman past but also naturalism and religious beliefs (Raditsa, 2000). The acclaimed Michelangelo Bounarroti, the artist commissioned to paint the ceilings of the Sistine Chapel located in Vatican City, is one of the world's most famous artists. His work is a pinnacle in the Renaissance movement.

Although he preferred sculpting to painting (Gardner, 2014), Michealangelo's contribution to the study of fresco technique was paramount. According to Gardener, in the *Fiftieth Addition of Gardener's Art Through the Ages*:

Michelangelo believed that the image which the artist's hand produces must come from the idea in the artist's mind. The idea, then, is the reality that the artist's genius has to bring forth. But artists are not creators of the idea's they conceive. Rather, they find their ideas in the natural world, reflecting the absolute idea, which for the artist, is beauty. (pg 633).

This quote epitomizes the ideas that were raised during the Renaissance. Notice the focus on humanism, naturalism, and religion that Michelangelo so perfectly alluded to in his statement. Michelangelo's work at the Sistine chapel influenced the evolution of fresco technique. The sheer size of the project alone is impressive. Michelangelo brought painting into the spotlight. No longer was celebrity status reserved for poets and musicians, but now included visual artists as well. "In Cinquecento Italy, the pictorial arts achieved the high status formerly held only by poetry, and painters and sculptors became international celebrities for the first time" (Gardner, 2014, p. 624).

I have had the opportunity to visit the Sistine Chapel twice. The undertaking of such an impressive painting must have been overwhelming. I remember staring at portions of the painting trying to figure out if Michelangelo had actually built some sculpture into the frescos or if it was created with such

skill that observers were tricked into seeing three dimensional forms that did not exist. “He always painted with a sculptors eye for how light and shadow reveal volume and surface. It is no coincidence that many of the figures in the Sistine Chapel seem to be painted statues.” (Gardner, 2014, p. 267)

It is clear to see how the contributions of Michelangelo significantly enriched fresco technique. He set the bar in realism techniques through the use of values. (Rizzatti,1967). His techniques in “trompe-l’oeil,” or paintings that “trick the eye” continued throughout the ages and are evidenced in the work of subsequent artists. Designed in a similar fashion, the Neoclassical frescos located at Villa Di Geggaino are intended to “trick the eye” by giving viewers the illusion of being in an open air, 3D space.

Like the Renaissance, the Neoclassical movement, of the eighteenth century seemed to have a fascination with the Classical movement. This new interest in Classicism was due partly to the excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii (Gardner, 2014). It was during the Neoclassical time period that the works of Ignatius Moder were created at Villa Di Geggano.

My research regarding the interests of Neoclassical artists, combined with my personal inspection, led me to conclude that Ignatius Moder was inspired by Ancient Pompeian paintings. A study of the painting styles in Pompeii, as previously mentioned in this study, show strong links to the second style of Pompeian Frescos. These frescos were purposely designed to depict a three dimensional view of the Tuscan hillside just as the elaborate Pompeian garden

scenes were on their walls. Here each wall depicts a season. Workers and family members are seen working on the hillside and enjoying the delights that Tuscany offered.



Above: The view as one enters the foyer at Villa Di Geggiano



Above: Second style Pompeian Fresco (Kliener, 13th edition)



Above: Moder's fresco depicting harvest time at Villa Di Geggiano



Above: Moders fresco depicting sheep shearing at Villa Di Geggiano



Above: Moder's fresco depicting a winter scene at Villa Di Geggiano

Inspecting these images on site was a unique experience. I had the pleasure of speaking to the owners of the villa which has been in the family for hundreds of years. They take great care to preserve the art, especially the paintings of Ignatius Moder. The villa, which includes the family's modern vineyard, allows guests to tour the rooms and view the frescos. As a future art educator, I anticipate sharing with my students the wealth of knowledge I gathered at Villa Di Geggiano.

Introducing the Neoclassical time period to the classroom will prove most beneficial because it includes two major art movements. The Neo-classical movement, which encompassed both the exploration of the rising age of

enlightenment and the investigation of an age past, and the Classical movement known for its excellence in art techniques (Gardner, 2014).

After touring the Villa for the first time and hearing the story behind the paintings and the history of the building, I decided to implement this art as part of my student oriented study of frescos. The paintings at Villa Di Geggiano have a deeper purpose than of merely being aesthetically pleasing. That purpose is to relate the story of generations past. At first I did not understand the significance of these frescos. However, upon deeper inspection and interviews with the owner, I began to grasp the value that the Bandinelli family placed in the arts. Theirs is a rich history of preservation unparalleled with other lesser known works of its time.

Villa Di Geggiano is home to art that dates from the 1500's (Baldini, 2016). The art in this Villa is unique because it has survived horrendous historical events. The Florentine's (2011) article recalls the following about Italy's involvement in World War Two:

In July 1943, Italy's leaders deposed Mussolini. By early September they had withdrawn their nation from its alliance with Nazi Germany and agreed to an armistice with the Allies. The Germans quickly responded by occupying hundreds of villages and cities. From 1943 until May 1945, Allied armies fought to expel German forces from Italy in a series of battles known as the Italian campaign (para. 3).

During my tour and stay at Villa di Geggiano, Alessandro Boscu Bianchi Bandinelli, part owner of Villa Di Geggiano, explained that the region of Tuscany, where Geggiano is located, was once a war-torn area. Villa Di Geggiano was one of the few Tuscan Villas to remain untouched during the Italian Campaign in World War II. My host claimed that when the German Armies advanced close to the estate, one of the Bandinelli family members lied as they told the approaching German army that top German officials were already headquartered in the Villa and preferred to be left alone. The Germans took the bait and did not interfere with the Villa or its art. This is why The Villa Di Geggiano is well known for original works of art to this day (A.B.B. Bandinelli, personal communication, May 22, 2015).

Bianca Bandenelli, daughter of one the owners, related a story about how one of her past relatives was descending the staircase and a German soldier who had been in the Villa took aim at her ancestor with a firearm. However, a German officer redirected the shot by pushing the soldier's arm towards the wall, protecting Bianca's ancestor. This all took place after the villa was protected from the battles of the Italian campaign. The bullet struck the wall that had the sheep shearing painting (B.Bandinelli, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

The bullet hole can be seen in the sheep's ear. At the time this must have seemed like a devastating blow to the preservation of the frescos, it now documents the history of the Villa and its dwellers. Today the family proudly shows guests the visual documentation of an important family event.

Below: Bullet hole in Moder's painting located at Villa Di Geggiano.



Besides narrowly escaping German invasion, there is another reason that the Villa has successfully preserved its art. Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, a famous archeologist and art historian, decided to make Villa Di Geggiano his personal dwelling. He was passionate about passing his love of art to family members who would follow his footsteps in preserving the Villa (Dictionary of Art Historians n.d.).

In 1945 Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli accepted the position of General Manager of Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy. His role was to promote restoration of art destroyed in World War II (Baldassarre, n.d.). If ever a place was to be established for a successful run in art restoration, it was Villa Di Geggiano. Ranuccio Bandinelli's success for passing on his love for preserving the arts to family is evidenced by the current owners Alessandro Boscu Bianchi Bandinelli and Andreas Boscu Bianchi Bandinelli. The two brothers, with much loving effort, have continued the tradition of preserving the arts at the Villa.

In order to more fully understand the art of fresco making, I have created a fresco from scratch in a similar manner to that of Michelangelo. Please see part II of this study to for a visual exploration of this endeavor.

My experience abroad provided a great platform for learning more about frescos. Enjoying Moder's work on site inspired me to study the history of fresco culture and technique. In conclusion on my writings of the history of frescos I have created a timeline with bullet points to visually explain my findings.

Fresco Timeline

2700 BC

4TH DYNASTY FRESCO FROM ANCIENT

- life-like colors used
- thin layer of plaster painted over a straw plaster layer



1770 BC

INVESTITURE OF ZIMRI-LIM FROM SYRIA

- depictions of animals and gods as symbolic authorities
- use of wide color range



1600 BC

PALACE OF KNOSSOS, AEGEAN CIVILIZATION

- similar patterns to those found in Ancient Egypt.
- the initial use of “buon” frescos



Fresco Timeline

470 BC

CLASSICAL FRESCO FROM ETRUSCAN TOMB

- realistic depiction of the human figure
- open air painting



79 AD

POMPEII

- buon style fresco
- painted on all four walls
- preserved by volcanic ash



480 AD

SIGIRIYA FRESCO FROM SYRIA

- impressive large scale
- advanced use of realism



Fresco Timeline

1305 AD

MIDDLE AGES FRESCO, GIOTTO DI BONDONE

- enhanced illusion of depth
- revival of Classical Greek



1400 AD

EARLY MODERN EUROPE/ RENAISSANCE

- strong focus on humanism, naturalism, and religion
- impressive use of



1780 AD

NEO-CLASSICAL FRESCO

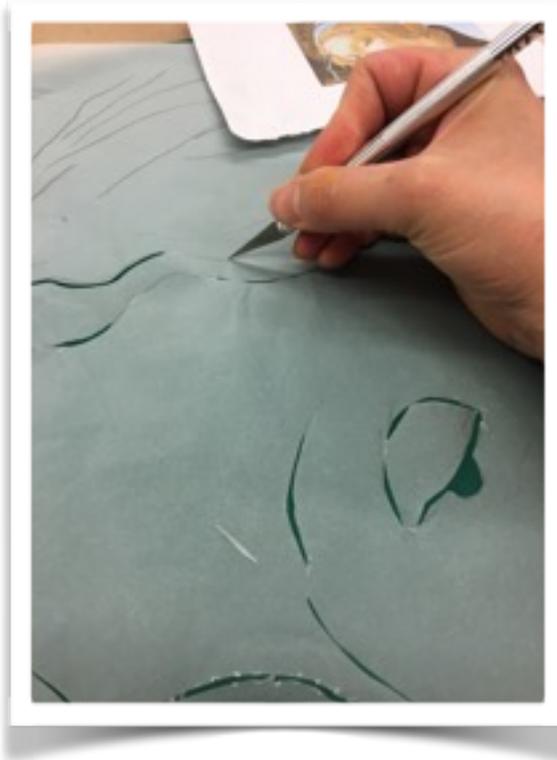
- influenced by the classical movement
- "plein-aire", or outdoor focus



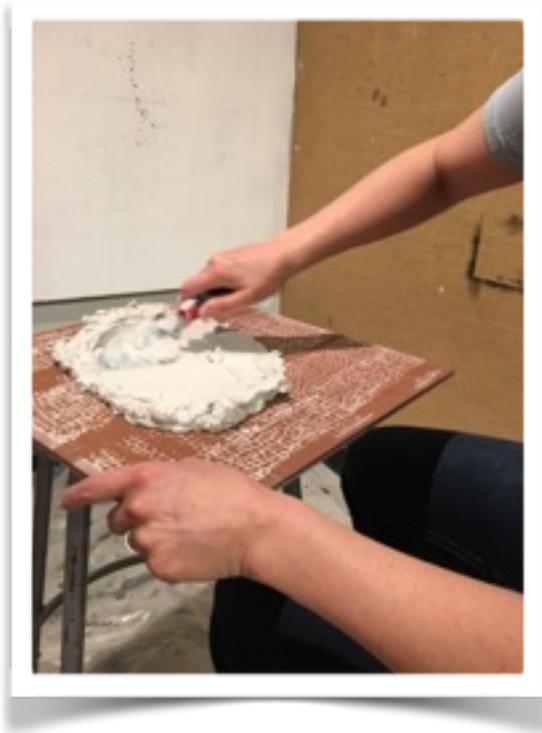
Part II: The Creative Project



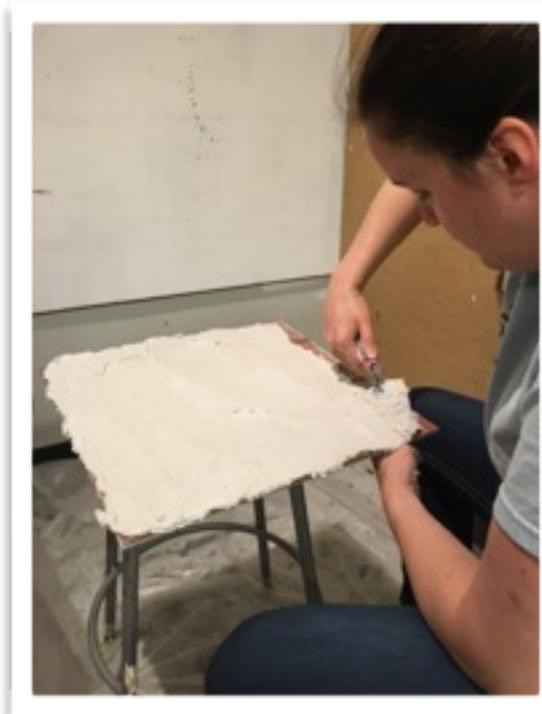
A mixture of lime, sand and plaster is used to create fresco plaster.



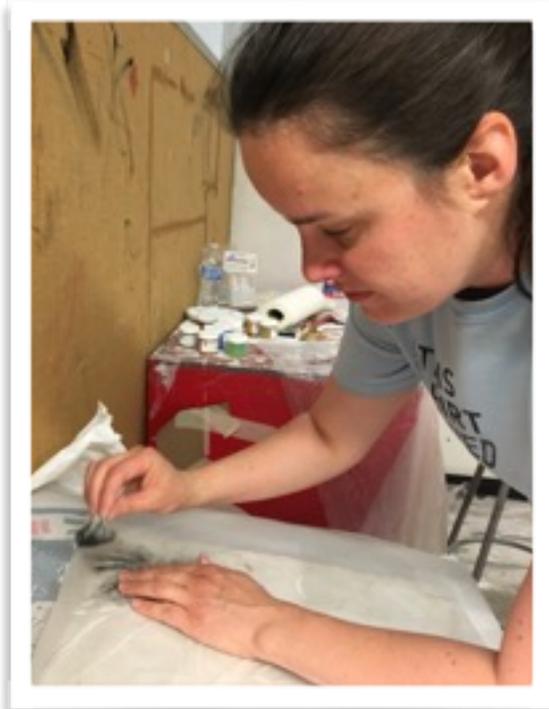
This cartoon was created by using parchment paper and an x-act knife.



Preparing the plaster by spreading it on the back of a clay tile.



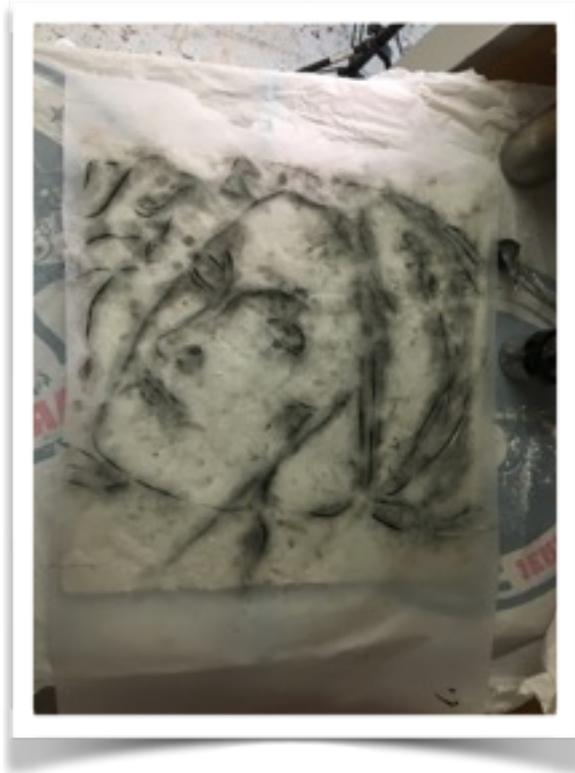
A smooth surface is necessary because the pigments will be added directly to the plaster.



A method called pouncing is used to transfer the image to the plaster. Charcoal was crushed and placed into a empty teabag to create the desired result.



When the parchment paper is pulled back, the cartoon is transferred to the plaster.



The parchment paper is fully pounced.



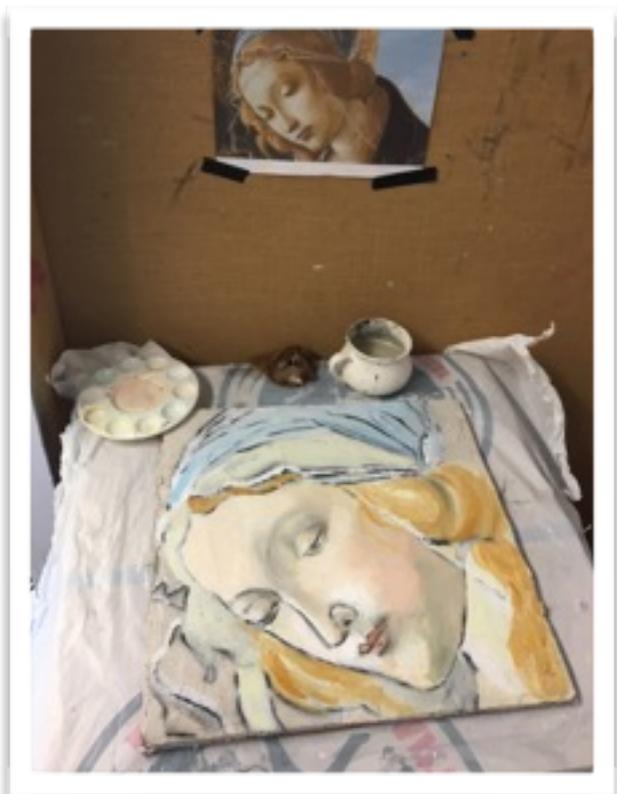
The image is completely transferred to the plaster canvas. The lines are used as guides to keep the painter on track. Cartooning is necessary because fresco painting is done quickly before the plaster dries. The painter must be able to make quick decisions about tone and shade. Having the cartoon as a guide eliminates the time needed to for constant proportion measuring.



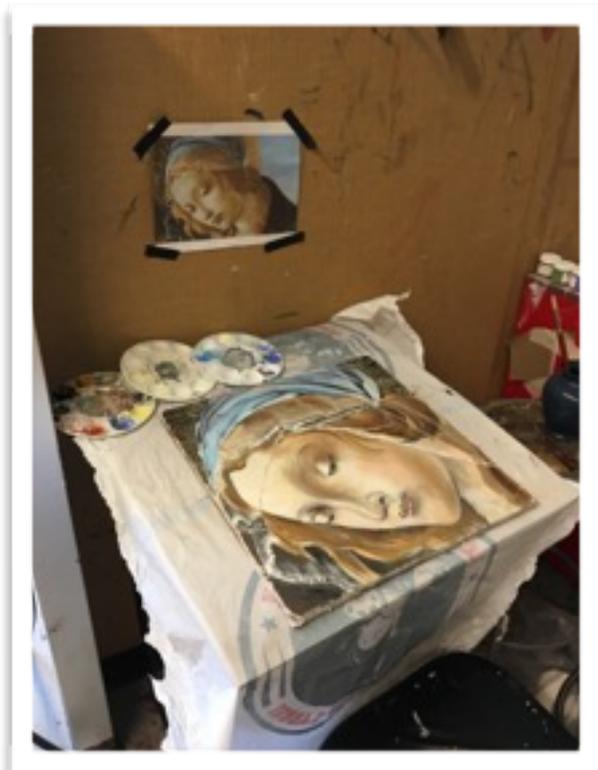
In fresco painting the lime acts as a binder which chemically binds with the pigments to stabilize the color. All natural mineral pigments are used along with distilled water to achieve desired color results.



Lighter tones are the first to be applied to the painting, and then medium pigments are gradually added.



The darker pigments are the last to be applied. As the pigments are layered the painter will experiment with the interaction between tones for the perfect result.



This is the finished result

Part III: Lesson Plan
(adapted from Dr. Debrah Sickler-Voigt)

Name: Joy Shind

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Sessions: 1 hour - 5 sessions

Lesson Title: The History of Frescos, An Historical Approach to Fresco Making

Big Idea: Study Abroad (geared to introduce high school students to the idea of studying abroad)

Objectives:

Studio Art Objective: The Students will examine historical art techniques by investigating historical fresco making techniques and developing their own frescos using these techniques.

Aesthetic Objective: The students will observe the art of Ignatius Moder located at Villa Di Geggiano, Siena, Italy through a powerpoint presentation and question themselves as to why the artist created these frescos. The students will then demonstrate their thoughts in a written short essay which they will defend orally with their classmates and the teacher in a think pair share session. The teacher will assess the students on participation and thoughtful responses.

Art Criticism Objective: The students will identify the lifestyle of a traveling artist in the Neo-classical time period through a socratic seminar.

Socratic Seminar questions:

- Why do you think an artist would prefer to travel in the Neo-classical Era?
- What would be the main influence in a traveling artists work?
- Do you think the work created at Villa Di Geggiano is as valuable as the work created by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel? Why or Why not?

Next, the students will compare and contrast their original findings with the new information they have learned.

Procedures:

Step 1: Class Session 1: Introduce students to the pictures located at Villa Di Geggiano through teacher created Power Point. Introduce students to the teachers in-depth study of the history of frescos.

Step 2: Class Session 1: The students will create a 1-page essay discussing why they think the paintings at Villa Di Geggiano were created.

Step 3: Session 2: The Students will view a teacher created Power Point of her experiences in the creation of historical frescos.

Step 4: Class Session 2: The students will discuss the use of tools and safe practices for creating their own fresco.

Step 5: Class Session 2: The students will design a cartoon for their individual fresco projects, examples will be provided.

Step 6: Class Session 3: The students will participate in a Think, Pair, Share discussion. The students will be placed in groups and discuss why they think Ignatius Moder painted the frescos at Villa Di Geggiano. After their discussion the students will share with the classroom about each other's findings.

Step 7: Class Session 3: The students will transfer their cartoon design to parchment paper and use Exacto knives to cut out their designs.

Step 8: Class Session 3: The students will create a pouncing bag with emptied teabags and crushed charcoal.

Step 9: Class Session 4: The students will trowel plaster on to their tiles.

Step 10: Class Session 4: The students will use their pre-made pouncing bags to pounce their design over the parchment paper and onto the plaster.

Step 11: Class Session 4: The students will paint their tiles using natural pigments. This will complete the production part of this lesson. This lesson will build upon earlier lessons in color theory and pigmentation.

Step 12: Class Session 5: The students will participate in a socratic Seminar regarding why the paintings located at Villa Di Geggiano were created.

Part III: Lesson Plan
(adapted from Dr. Debrah Sickler-Voigt)

Step 13: Class Session 5: The students will compare the new information they learned with the information they learned in the Socratic Seminar.

Art Criticism Questions (Based on Tome Anderson's Model, 2005)



Artist: Ignatius Moder, 1780

1. **General Reaction:** What do you think is happening in this picture?
2. **Description Obvious Thematic, Formal, and Technical Qualities:**
Does this Picture have historical value?
3. **Description Formal Relationships of Shapes and Images:**
Is this painting well balanced? Why?
4. **Description Formal Characterization:**
5. **Description Contextual Examination:**
Where should a picture like this be placed? In a home or a museum?
6. **Interpretation:** What is happening in this picture?

7. **Evaluation:** Do you think the artist is talented?
8. **Aesthetic Judgment:** Is this representational art?
9. **Contextual Judgment:**
Do you think the hole in the painting adds to the value of the painting?
What if it were a bullet hole from WWII?
10. **Final Judgment:** Would you travel to Italy to see this painting?

Aesthetic Questions (Based on Sally Mcrories's Model, 1996)



Artist: Ignatius Moder, 1780

1. **Definitions of Art:** What type of painting is this?
2. **Artist-centered Issues:**
Do you think the artist was trying to convey a message with this work?
3. **Audience-centered Issues**
How does this painting make you feel?
4. **Cultural Context:**
Are men and women portrayed equally in the background?
5. **Criticism and Interpretation:**
Do you think the artist was commissioned to paint this scene?
6. **Values in Art:** Discuss the historical value of this work.

TN State Standards utilized in this Lesson Plan

Course Level Expectations

1.4

Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the application of media, techniques, and processes used to solve visual arts problems.

2.1

Demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of design.

Checks for Understanding

Formative

1.2

Recognize, use and care for art media and tools in a safe responsible manner.

Summative

1.4

Apply successfully the qualities and characteristics of a chosen medium in a work of art.

(This lesson plan format is an adaptation of an original lesson plan designed by Debrah Sickler-Voigt.)

Conclusion

The memory of studying frescos at Villa Di Geggiano is something that will continue to inspire me for years. Conducting a field-study and sharing it's findings with the classroom will encourage students to search beyond the mere obtaining of knowledge. They will be encouraged to follow in the teacher's footsteps of experiencing art for itself. It is my goal to use my experience to promote global understanding through study abroad to inspire students to experience art for themselves at its origin.

My aim in investigating the history of frescos was to develop research-based instructional strategies for the classroom using Moder's Villa Di Geggiano frescos. My primary findings were the deep connections between the frescos of ancient Pompeii and the frescos located at Villa Di Geggiano. I realized that art has intrinsic values that go beyond simple aesthetics. Art is valued by the history it declares. Intensively studying a work unveils a rich history.

This research project has enhanced my ability to conduct historical research. I now have a solid understanding of the history of frescos and Neoclassical art from the late eighteenth century. It is my sincere hope that my students will be inspired to follow in my footsteps and study art at its source.

As an honor's student at Middle Tennessee State University and a recipient of the URECA gold level grant, I am delighted to have the opportunity

to share my creative project and research findings with my University. I am honored to attend a University that places importance in supporting the arts. This thesis project has given me the opportunity to enhance my research skills, understand the process of acquiring a grant, and participate in meaningful study abroad. I am truly grateful for the opportunities that have been made available to me through Middle Tennessee State University's Honor's College and Art Education Program.

References

- Bastos, F. M. (2006, July). Boarder-Crossing Dialogues Engaging Art Education. National Art Education Association, 59, 20-24. Retrieved June 23, 2016
- Baldassarre, I. (n.d.). Bianchi Bandenelli, Ranuccio in "Dizionario Biografico" Retrieved August 18, 2016, from [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ranuccio-bianchi-bandinelli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ranuccio-bianchi-bandinelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)
- Ball, L. (2007). 30'000 years of art: The story of human creativity across time and space. London: Phaidon Press. p. 58.
- Beatty, D. (1997, December). The Hidden Churches of Tigre. Geographical Magazine, 69(December), 8-15.
- Beck, E. (1999). Marchetto Of Padua And Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel Frescoes. *Source: Notes in the History of Art, 18(4)*, 1-15. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23206808> (Image timeline)
- Biers, W. R. (2006). The new book of knowledge. Danbury, CT: Scholastic Library Pub.
- Boardman, J. (2012, October 26). The Classical period (5th - 4th century BC). Retrieved July 15, 2016
- D'Alfonso, E., Sgarbi, V., & Culverwell, G. (1989). The history of art. New York, NY: Gallery Books.
- Davies, N. M. (1937). Ancient Egyptian paintings (Book Review). *American Journal Of Archaeology*, 41638-642.
- Dictionary of Art Historians - Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli. (n.d.). Retrieved June 22, 2016.
- Egyptian Paintings. (n.d.). Retrieved July 05, 2016, from <http://www.aldokkan.com/art/painting.htm>
- Franklin, P. (2015). Cultural Connections: Promoting Global Understanding. National Arts Education Association, Dec. Retrieved March 21, 2016.

Fernandez, G. (n.d.). The Gooses of Medium. Retrieved July 06, 2016, from <http://www.theartwolf.com/masterworks/meidum.htm>

Gardner, H., & Kleiner, F. S. (2014). Gardner's Art through the ages: A global history. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Gillmore, L. (1999). Cold comfort and the Last Judgement. *The Independent*. p. 7. (Image Timeline, Voronet Fresco)

Hettiarachchi, P. P. (n.d.). Sigrid. Retrieved July 29, 2016.

Horgnies, M., Bayle, M., Gueit, E., Darque-Ceretti, E., & Aucouturier, M. (2014). Microstructure and Surface Properties of Frescoes Based on Lime and Cement: The Influence of the Artist's Technique. *Archaeometry*, 57(2), 344-361. doi: 10.1111/arcm.12093

Imms, W., & Ruanglertbutr, P. (2013). The Teacher as an Art Maker: What do Pre-Service Teachers Identify as the Issues?. *Australian Art Education*, 35(1/2), 81.

London, P., & Freyermuth, V. (2005, February). The Wonder-Full Teacher project: Peter London and Virginia Freyermuth. *School Arts*, 104(6)

Macaulay, S. G. (2001). The art of Fresco. (Cover story). *Arts & Activities*, 129(3), 20.

Meagher, Jennifer. "Italian Painting of the Later Middle Ages." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

Mercadal, T. M. (2015). Fresco Painting. Salem Press Encyclopedia. Retrieved June 23, 2016

Michelangelo. (2016). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michelangelo>

Nascimbeni, P. (n.d.). History of Fresco Painting I. Retrieved July 09, 2016, from <http://frescoarte.com/history>

Ponnamperuma, S. (n.d.). Sigiriya Frescoes - Amazing 1600 year old paintings. Retrieved October 12, 2016, from <http://seelanka.net/sigiriya/sigiriya-frescoes.html>

Raditsa, B., & Bonfante-Warren, A. (2000). The art of Renaissance Europe: A resource for educators. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Rizzatti, M. L. (1967). *The life and times of Michelangelo*. Philadelphia: Curtis

Ross, L. (2003). *Artists of the Middle Ages*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Schmandt-Besserat, D. (2007). *When writing met art: From symbol to story*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Scrovegni Chapel Frescoes. (2015). Retrieved October 12, 2016, from http://www.artble.com/artists/giotto_di_bondone/paintings/scrovegni_chapel_frescoes

Shaw, M. C. (2012). New Light On The Labyrinth Fresco FromThe Palace At Knossos. *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 143.

