

L2-4day4

Byzantine Icons

Art Discussed:

Virgin and Child between Saints Theodore and George 6th Cent
Annunciation 14th Cent

Andrei Rublev, *Old Testament Trinity*, c.1410

VOCAB:

Icon

Iconography

Iconstasis

HW:

Activity Sheet

How Icons Are Made

- Made of rectangular wooden panels
- Painters were monks and worked with humility, rarely signing anything
- Wood prepared by covering the surface with fish glue and then a layer of putty
- Cloth placed on top and successive layers of stucco are laid over the cloth
- Paper sketch is placed over and lines are traced on the surface
- Gilded, then painted
- Varnish applied last to make it shine and protect the surface
- Icons were often handled and kissed

Iconoclastic Controversy:

- icons prohibited as sacrilegious and pagan between 726-843

Virgin and Child Enthroned between Saints Theodore and George

- Theodore and George, two military saints, have rigid frontal poses, as befits the military
- Archangels painted with free open brushwork
- Devoid of depth
- Virgin relatively solid and three-dimensional, her knees to the right
- Virgin's head frontal, but eyes averted
- Christ convincingly rendered as a child
- Perhaps executed by three different artists in different styles

Annunciation

- Classical looking angel with heavy modeling
- Strong line surfaces
- Mary sits enthroned
- Realistic setting contrasts with golden background
- Small squashed figures hold up canopy

Rüblev, *Old Testament Trinity*

- Byzantine affinity for repeating forms from older art
- Forms of angels are traditional
- Heads of angels nearly identical
- Poses are mirror images

- Luminous appeal of colors
- Deep color harmonies of draperies
- Extensive use of gold
- Nearly spaceless background