

L3-24day24

Northern European Art 16th Century

Art Discussed:

Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*

Altdorfer, *Battle of Issus*

VOCAB:

Predella

HW: Read the selection on the Protestant Reformation in the textbook and write a paragraph describing the impact it had on the visual arts.

Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*

- Placed in a chapel in a hospital where ergotism was treated
- Ergotism causes gangrene, boils and lesions, patients have to be amputated
- Patients identify with Christ's suffering on the cross
- Loincloth around waist resembles tattered bandages around the amputees
- Stark and unflinching picture of Christ as Savior
- People looking at painting understood Christ's suffering, preparing them spiritually for their own possible demise
- Dark background, decomposing flesh, agony, ugliness of pain
- Swooning Virgin, dressed as a widow, in arms of Saint John the Evangelist resembles relatives at the bedside of the dying
- Arms are torn from sockets, feet crushed
- When painting is opened, you amputate Christ's right arm; Christ also amputated below the knees in the predella
- Strong diagonals of composition

Altdorfer, *Battle of Issus*

- Alexander the Great defeating Persian King Darius at the Battle of Issus

- Contemporary significance: patron of work, Wilhelm IV of Bavaria, was fighting the Turks at the time
- Contemporary armor and battlefield, despite 4th Century BC date
- Scene takes place in an Alpine setting, with Gothic buildings in the background
- Effort made to copy Middle East geography: the Nile with seven branches flowing into the Mediterranean; left of the Nile is the Red Sea; Cyprus in the center
- Geographically positioned from the Middle East looking out to the Mediterranean
- Constantinople nestled behind and to the left of the big mountain suggesting the conflict between east and west
- Sun sets over the victorious Greeks on the right
- The crescent moon wanes over the defeated Persians at left
- Man is small in an infinite, swirling cosmos
- Miniscule details everywhere, hard to make out the whole with so much going on
- Brilliant coloring