

L3-3day3

Northern Renaissance 15th Century

Art Discussed:

Van der Weyden, *Deposition*, 1435

Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1505

VOCAB:

Composition

HW:

Activity Sheet

Van der Weyden, *Escorial Deposition*

- No deep landscape, figures on a shallow stage, silhouetted against a gold ground
- Dynamically curved composition
- Strong emotional impact on the observer, particularly in the tear-streaked face of swooning Mary
- Dramatic stress
- Zigzag rhythm and profiles
- Parallel relationships in positioning of the figures: Mary and Christ, the two figures holding them, and the two end figures
- Brilliantly colored

Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights*

- Left: Garden of Eden with God and Adam and Eve
- Center: Garden of Earthly Delights: a treacherous peril-filled paradise
- Right: Hell
- Reverse: the earth in a glass globe, surrounded by water
- Four panels are an allusion to the four states of alchemy: bringing together of opposites, unification of elements in a balanced whole, purging in a fire and rinsing clean

- Also an allusion to the Four Ages of Man
- Filmy transparent surface
- People are soft and boneless, glowing, have no dignity or power
- High horizons get as much detail in the paintings as possible
- Humans are without individuality, have no will, follow trends, are a helpless tool in the power of greater forces
- Sexual scenes suggested, commonly understood Flemish symbols of lust include the birds and berries
- Behind Eve is a rabbit, indicating how she will reproduce
- Central panels has phallic symbols, as in the spiky towers and the pond in the center
- Arrangements suggest the consequences of a sinful life
- Many of the consequence of the middle panel are graphically exposed in the right panel
- Compositional elements continue from one panel to another:
horizontal line through each scene

Activity 3:3 Van der Weyden

Study the following painting in your textbook: Rogier van der Weyden, *Last Judgment Altarpiece*, 1444-1448, Museum of Civic Hospice, Beaune. Read the selection that describes this painting. Answer the following questions:

1. This is a complex polyptych. How are the panels arranged?

2. Which elements of the painting transcend the boundaries of the individual panels?

3. What other symmetrical arrangements are apparent in the painting?
