

5 Artistic Strategies Against Automimesis

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the artist of the Italian Renaissance was bound to adhere to certain standards of behaviour and conduct. In the same way in which he behaved in accordance with the social *decorum*, he had to monitor his artistic creations. When Leonardo discussed the problem of automimesis, he advised painters to stick to certain patterns of pictorial representation that were cherished by the majority of people. For example, he recommended the use of a model figure with perfect proportions, which would help the painter to overcome his individual preferences and result in paintings which were generally accepted by the public. The following chapter discusses similar strategies in use amongst the artists of the Renaissance. The natural affection and love for their creations above all made a critical approach to their works difficult. By relying on the advice of learned friends, by referring to proportion theory, or by inverting their perception through the use of mirrors, painters and sculptors trained their artistic judgement and established rational methods for the creation and evaluation of works of art.

5.1 Fighting One's Own Inclinations

The antagonism between individual forms of expression and predominant rules, often referred to as between *ingenium* and *ars*, is one of the key elements which renders Renaissance art so particularly vivid. Whereas Topolino was a symbol for uncontrolled creation, Michelangelo, who partly fashioned himself as an ugly genius,¹ represented the virtues of self-knowledge, self-control, and self-discipline in an exemplary way. It is therefore a sign of aesthetic criticism when

1 For Michelangelo's self-fashioning as an ugly artist in the tradition of Socrates see Saviello 2012, pp. 223–232 and Barolsky 1990, p. 25.

Michelangelo mocks the beautiful artist Francesco Francia,² a Bolognese painter of whom he disapproved, for his ability to create beautiful offspring while failing to create beautiful paintings.³ Although Vasari preferred other artists as role models for the Accademia del disegno, the Florentine artist embodied the principles of art perfectly. His unquestioned role as advisor and instructor becomes manifest, not only in Vasari's *Vite*, but also in various paintings that illustrate how contemporary artists admired and studied his pictorial, architectural, and sculptural work (Fig. 37).

While paintings like the one by Nicodemo Ferrucci, with its representation of famous works by Michelangelo, underline the latter's general influence on the Renaissance artist, Daniele da Volterra's decoration of the Orsini chapel in the S. Trinità dei Monti in Rome is interesting because it showcases Michelangelo's superior understanding of the arts by means of a particular iconographic program. In addition to the official decoration of the chapel commissioned by Elena Orsini, which included frescoes of the legend of the cross as well as an altarpiece representing the deposition of Christ, Daniele da Volterra was granted the privilege of including two massive stucco reliefs, positioned at the bottom of the lateral walls and facing each other. Executed after the completion of the *Deposition* between 1547 and 1548, the reliefs were mentioned by Vasari.⁴ As is proved

2 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 3, p. 533: “Francesco Francia [...] si fece crescendo di persona e d’aspetto tanto ben proporzionato, e nella conversazione e nel parlare tanto dolce e piacevole [...]”

3 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 7, p. 170: “E di questo proposito medesimo, venendogli innanzi un figliuolo del Francia su detto, che era molto bel giovanetto, gli disse: ‘Tuo padre fa più belle figure vive che dipinte.’” Francia's lack of artistic beauty was further emphasized by Vasari when describing his death. Looking at a painting by Raphael, Francia was literally extinguished by the beauty of the work, took to his bed and died. Cfr. Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 3, p. 546.

4 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 7, pp. 55f.: “Ma perché le pitture che son fatte per questa via hanno sempre del duro e del difficile, manca quest’opera [i.e., the works of the Orsini chapel] d’una certa leggiadra facilità che suole molto dilettere. Onde Daniello stesso, confessando la fatica che aveva durata in quest’opera, e temendo di quello che gl’avenne e di non essere biasimato, fece per suo capriccio, e quasi per sua defensione, sotto i piedi di detti due Santi, due storiette di stucco di basso rilievo; nelle quali volle mostrare che essendo suoi amici Michelagnolo Buonarroti e fra’ Bastiano del Piombo (l’opere de’ quali andava imitando et osservando i precetti), se bene faceva adagio e con istento, nondimeno il suo imitare quei due uomini poteva bastare a difenderlo dai morsi degl’invidiosi e maligni, la mala natura de’ quali è forza, ancorché loro non paia, che si scuopra. In una, dico, di queste storiette fece molte figure di Satiri che a una stadera pesano gambe, braccia et altre membra di figure, per ridurre al netto quelle che sono a giusto peso e stanno bene, e per dare le cattive a Michelagnolo e fra’ Bastiano, che le vanno conferendo. Nell’altra è Michelagnolo che si guarda in uno specchio: di che il significato è chiarissimo.”



Figure 37 Nicodemo Ferrucci, *Artists studying the Works of Michelangelo*, 1615–1616, Florence, Casa Buonarroti

by a letter to Giovanni Bottari,⁵ they were still visible in the 18th century although they were later destroyed. Thanks to a manuscript made for the Spanish antiquarian Alonso Chacón at the end of the Cinquecento, we also have visual evidence of Volterra's reliefs. The two sketches in the manuscript represent satyrs that are weighing legs, arms, and other members of figures with a steelyard on the right-hand side of the chapel (Fig. 38), and Michelangelo looking at himself in a mir-

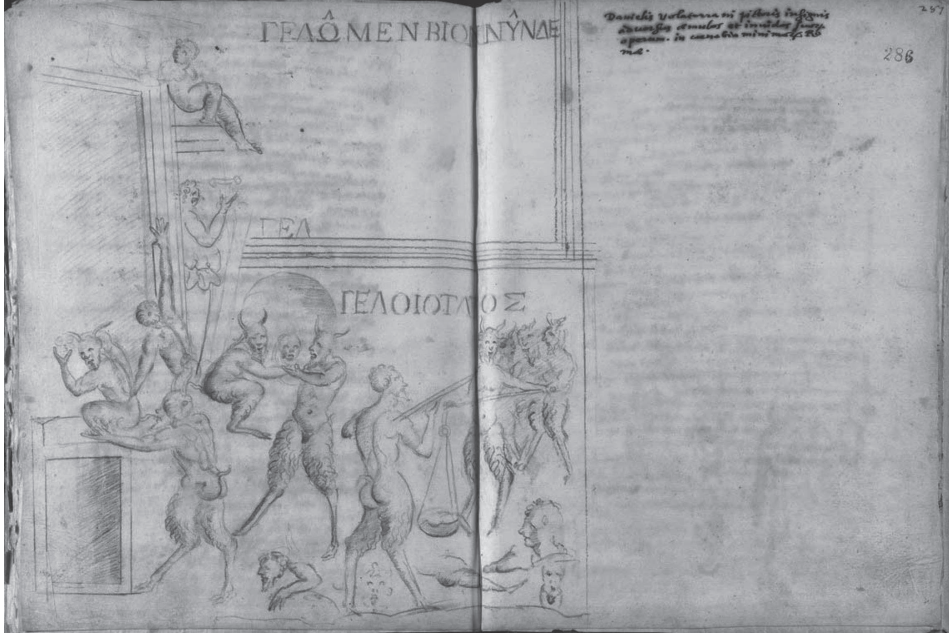


Figure 38 Unknown Artist after Daniele da Volterra, Drawing of the Relief on the right of the Orsini Chapel, 1590s, Rome, Biblioteca Angelica

ror, flanked by a personification of Justitia and a representation of Sebastiano del Piombo on the left-hand side (Fig. 39). Furthermore, both reliefs were equipped with Greek inscriptions, the one to the right reading ΓΕΛΩΜΕΝ ΒΙΟΝ ΝΥΝ ΔΕ ΓΕΛΟΙΟΤΑΤΟΣ (“We laugh at life, but now life is really laughable”), the two to the left ΠΑΣΙ ΠΑΡΑΓΓΕΛΛΩ ΜΗΔΕΝ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΟΝ ΜΕΤΡΟΝ (“My advice to all is that nothing is beyond measure”) and ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ (“Know thyself”).⁶

5 Bottari/Ticozzi 1822–1825, vol. 4, p. 558.

6 For a discussion of the sketches and further literature on the chapel see Graul 2009.

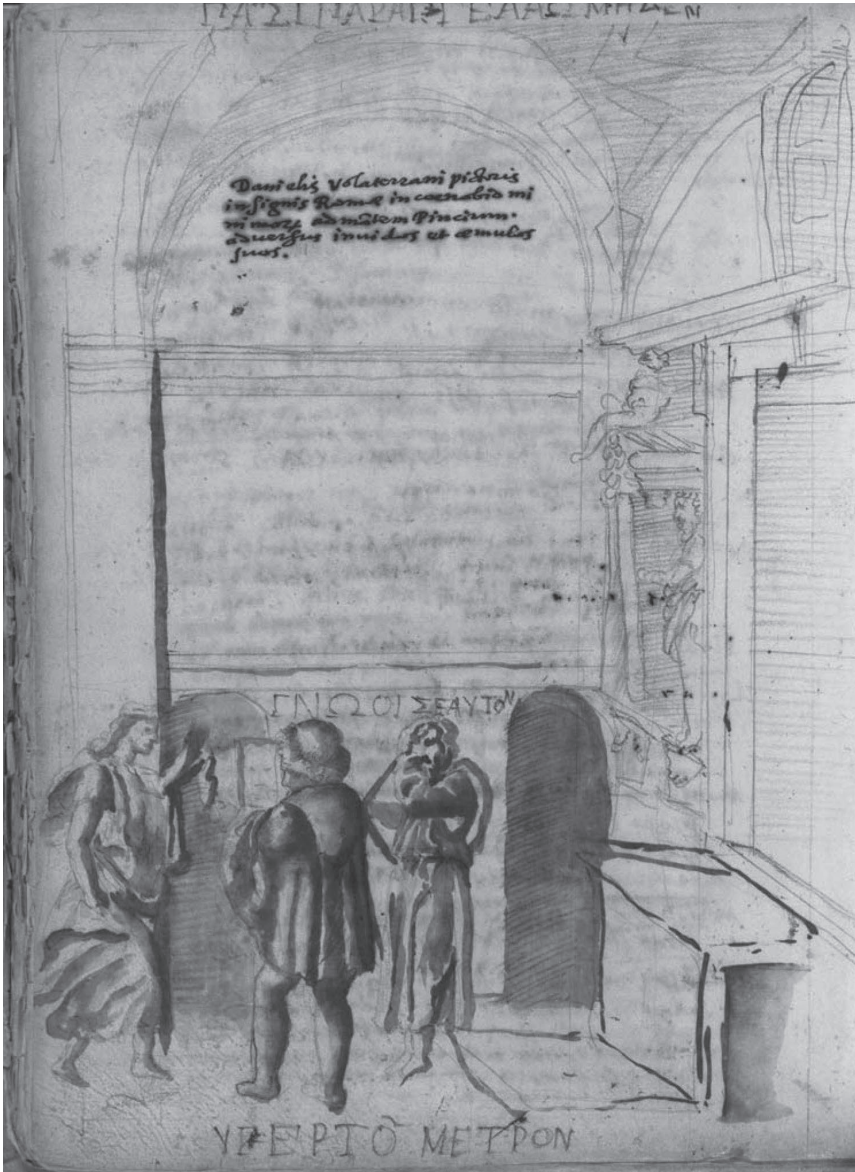


Figure 39 Unknown Artist after Daniele da Volterra, Drawing of the Relief on the left of the Orsini Chapel, 1590s, Rome, Biblioteca Angelica

David Jaffé, who first identified the sketches as representing the lost decoration of the Orsini chapel in 1991, interpreted Volterra's reliefs as an illustration of the right judgement of art. Virtually taking limbs and members from the figures of Volterra's paintings to measure them with scale tape and steelyard, the group of satyrs represents a mathematical method of artistic *giudizio* which is merely based on the right proportions and a coherent perspective. Michelangelo, literally on the other side, exemplifies a different approach to the evaluation of pictorial compositions. As is suggested by the mirror and the inscriptions next to the Florentine artist, his appearance is meant to illustrate that there are no strict rules or prescriptions to follow and that every artist should look for his own style and talents.⁷ According to Julian Kliemann's observations, the group around the Florentine artist was actually a visual manifestation of the *giudizio dell'occhio*. According to this interpretation, Justitia represents self-knowledge and right measurement; Sebastiano del Piombo, who holds a compass while covering his right eye, and Michelangelo, who gazes at his reflection in a mirror, allude to the necessity of inner examination as the first step towards an internalized recognition of beauty and proportion.⁸ The ancient proverb *Know thyself*, better known in its Latin form *Nosce te ipsum*, suggests a philosophical reading of the scene. The implications of the famous sentence, one of the maxims of the seven Sages written on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, was popularized by the writings of Erasmus in the Renaissance. The maxim emphasized the importance of a thorough knowledge of one's abilities and defects, necessary for a fulfilling life.⁹

But the saying was also meant in a corporeal way, as is shown by its appearance in prefaces of 16th century treatises on human anatomy. Although the authors are clearly referring to the ancient meaning of the proverb, they also suggest a transposition from a psychological to a physical and anatomical interpretation of *Nosce te ipsum*.¹⁰ Illustrations also underscored this altered meaning. A fugitive sheet from ca. 1555 with liftable flaps emphasized the connection between self-knowledge and the knowledge of the human body by depicting a woman who shows her internal organs while holding a plate with the aforementioned motto (Figs. 40 and 41). This modern understanding of the saying was particularly interesting to artists as they strived for a deeper understanding of proportions by dissecting and analyzing the individual parts of the human body. Andrea Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica libri VII*, published in 1543, illustrates the attention that was paid to anatomical dissections. Furthermore, Michelangelo is known to have

7 Jaffé 1991, p. 250.

8 Kliemann 2006, pp. 220 f.

9 Hager 1992.

10 Carlino 1995, pp. 64 f.

Figure 40 Monogrammist RS, Fugitive Sheet with Anatomical Models after Andrea Vesalius, ca. 1555, London, British Museum



Figure 41 Monogrammist RS, Fugitive Sheet with Anatomical Models after Andrea Vesalius (detail), ca. 1555, London, British Museum

participated in the preparation of a similar treatise, Realdo Colombo's *De re anatomica libri XV* from 1559, in which he is portrayed among the persons on the title page (Fig. 42).¹¹

Daniele da Volterra's portraiture of Michelangelo, accompanied by the Greek inscription, thus points not only to the philosophical implications of the motto, but was also hinting at the necessity of knowing the proportions of the human body by heart. While the satyrs have to rely on external, technical instruments to evaluate pictorial compositions, the self-reflective Michelangelo is granted the ability to replace these instruments with his eyes and mind. Volterra's reliefs thus illustrate the raw and uncontrolled artistic *ingenium*, represented by the libidinous and unreasonable satyrs, as opposed to the refined and sophisticated artist, who possessed *misura* as well as *giudizio* and *licenzia*.¹²

However, even as Volterra expressed his admiration for his friend and teacher Michelangelo, he applied the motto *Nosce te ipsum* to his own work, fashioning himself as a successor to the Florentine artist. By choosing Michelangelo as his example to follow, he showed a superior understanding of his own nature and talents. Volterra's style in the *Deposition* of the Orsini chapel is similar to that of the master, not only because he chose to copy his works, but also because his inborn soul was similarly shaped. Just as Sebastiano del Piombo decided to adhere to the style of Michelangelo, allowing him to compose many beautiful works, Volterra was following his natural inclinations when he followed the style of Michelangelo. Although absent from the honorific relief representing Michelangelo and Sebastiano, Daniele da Volterra was close to the two artists through his work, which embodied the principles of Michelangelo's (and Sebastiano's) art.¹³ Volterra's awareness of his individual *ingegno* was appreciated by Lomazzo, who complimented him on his clear-sighted choice.¹⁴ This awareness was later incorporated

11 Michelangelo's collaboration with Colombo is mentioned by Ascanio Condivi, cfr. Dillon 2012, p. 227.

12 Cfr. Pinelli 1993, p. 107.

13 Hansen 2013, pp. 61–64.

14 Cfr. Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, p. 31: "Per via d'imitazione si procede quando uno, non avendo notizia perfetta dei termini e precetti dell'arte, sì che con quelli possa per se stesso liberamente operare, con l'osservar solamente le cose d'altri, e rapresentarsele inanzi, segue la maniera di alcuni pittori eccellenti, i quali furono Daniello da Volterra e Sebastiano del Piombo dietro a Michel Angelo [...]." Lomazzo's advice to choose an adequate master was probably modelled on similar remarks made by Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria*, II, VIII and X, II). When discussing the qualities of a good rhetor, he also debates his capacity to instruct students. Rather than teaching each pupil identical things, a good rhetor should foster the particular characteristics of his pupils. And a pupil as well should take care of his individual dispositions when choosing his master.



Figure 42 Title Page from the 1559 Edition of Realdo Colombo's *De re anatomica libri XV*

in a general formula of artistic self-knowledge and education in Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy's *De arte graphica* (1668). Its English edition, published in 1695 by John Dryden, discusses the issue as follows:

"Since every painter paints himself in his own Works (so much is Nature accustom'd to reproduce her own Likeness) 'tis advantageous to him, to know himself: to the end that he may cultivate those Talents which make his Genius, and not unprofitably lose his Time, in endeavouring to gain that, which she has refus'd him."¹⁵

5.2 Artistic Narcissism

The presence of satyrs in Volterra's stucco reliefs was not only a reference to an unreasonable and libidinous process of artistic creation; it also pointed to another issue of self-referentiality as well. As personifications of the artist's instincts, the satyrs alluded to the destructive power of excessive love and self-indulgence. An uncritical approach to painting and sculpture, caused by the painter's natural affection for his own works, was indeed a frequently discussed problem in the art literature of the Cinquecento. Although Alberti described Ovid's Narcissus, the beautiful youth who fell in love with the reflection of his own image, as the inventor of painting,¹⁶ artistic narcissism was considered to be negative because it prevented self-criticism and led to mediocrity.

Leonardo addressed the issue repeatedly in his *Trattato della pittura*. Blinded by the inclinations of their souls, painters would only paint figures which appeal to them. According to Leonardo, this natural habit was the cause of misproportioned figures and a lack of *varietà*.¹⁷ Albrecht Dürer, probably influenced by Leonardo, was also aware of the dangers caused by blind affection. When writing about judgement in 1512, he advised painters to be aware of their own predilections, because they could trigger paintings which are only pleasant to the painter:

"Many fall into error because they follow their own taste alone; therefore let each look to it that his inclination blind not his judgment. For every mother is well pleased with

15 Dufresnoy 1695, pp. 63 f.

16 For a discussion of Alberti's Narcissus in *Della Pittura* with regards to the proverb *Ogni pittore dipinge sé* cfr. Ordine 2003, pp. 173–181; for the negative reception of Narcissus in the Renaissance see Pfisterer 2001.

17 Leonardo (1995), p. 75.

her own child, and thus also it ariseth that many painters paint figures resembling themselves.”¹⁸

Leonardo and Dürer addressed a crucial question at the very core of artistic creation: How can an artist defeat his natural inclinations and create works of art that are commonly appreciated because of their universal beauty? Indeed, the love for one’s own creations was considered a natural law and applied to children as well as to intellectual products. During the Renaissance, Aristotle provided a widely accepted explanation for this general phenomenon. In his *Rhetoric* he states that similar things are usually pleasant to each other. For instance, a horse, man, or young person is pleasant for another horse, man, or young person. This empirical observation served to explain why human beings tend to love not only themselves, but also their works. Since everything like and akin to oneself is pleasant, and since every man is more like and akin to himself than anyone else is, it follows that everyone is naturally pleased by himself. The same applied to the works of a man: What is our own pleases, because it is similar to us.¹⁹ This principle of creative affection, regarded as a universally valid principle, helped explain natural

18 Conway 1889, p. 180. For the German text see Ullmann 1993, p. 128. Because of their corporeal beauty, neither Leonardo nor Dürer had to be preoccupied with the quality of their works. When Joachim Camerarius wrote the introduction to the Latin edition of Dürer’s *Unterweysung der Messung* (1532), he explicitly states that Dürer possessed a beautiful soul, a quality which naturally led to the creation of beautiful works of art. Conway 1889, pp. 180 f.: “Nature bestowed on him a body remarkable in build and stature and not unworthy of the noble mind it contained; that in this too Nature’s Justice, extolled by Hippocrates, might not be forgotten – that Justice, which, while it assigns a grotesque form to the ape’s grotesque soul, is wont also to clothe noble minds in bodies worthy of them. [...] But after his hand had, so to speak, attained its maturity, his sublime and virtue-loving genius became best discoverable in his works, for his subjects were fine and his treatment of them noble. [...] The nature of a man is never more certainly and definitely shown than in the works he produces as the fruit of his art.”

19 Aristotle (1549), p. 63: “Et perche egli è piacevole tutto quello, che è naturale, essendo le cose dei parenti naturali inverso l’un dell’altro, però tutte le parentele, & tutte le similitudini ci dan’ piacere il piu delle volte, sicome fa l’huomo all’altro huomo, & il cavallo al cavallo, & il giovane al giovane; La onde è il Proverbio Che il simile appetisce il simile. Et che al simile il simile sempre è amico. Et che la fiera conosce la fiera. Et che la cornacchia sta con la cornacchia, & altre cose simiglianti. Ma perche tutto quello, che ci è simile, & che ci è congiunto per parentado, ci arreca piacere, essendo queste due conditioni in ciaschedun’ huomo, massimamente inverso di se medesimo, per necessità si conchiude, che tutti gli huomini sieno di loro stessi amatori ò piu, ò meno, perche le cose dette disopra sono massimamente in se stesso. Et perche chiascheduno ama se medesimo, però tutte le cose, che da noi stessi dependono, di necessità ci arrecan’ piacere, come sono l’attioni, & i ragionamenti.” (*Rhetoric*, 1371b). Segni’s *volgare* edition of the *Rhetorica* and *Poetica* was crucial for the reception of Aristotle in Italy. With re-

as well as cultural phenomena. That is, because they resemble each other, a father loves his son and a poet adores his poems.²⁰ Vincenzio Borghini, the *luogotenente* of the Accademia del disegno and a friend of Vasari's, discussed the issue in 1564 in his *Selva di notizie* with regards to the works of artists:

“Dice Aristotile ch’ogniuno ama sé stesso e le cose sue: pongniàn caso il padre e’ figli come cosa fatta da sé. Di qui nasce che gl’artefici amano l’opere loro [...] perché, se bene un padre ama e’ sua figli, imperò ne ama più quello che è più grazioso, più gentile e più virtuoso etc., et i pittori e scultori stimano et aman più quelle opere che gl’han fatte più belle.”²¹

Although love and affection were generally regarded as positive, they had their downsides, too. Borghini identified the natural inclination of artists as a reason for the never-ending *paragone* between painting and sculpture. Since painters tend to appreciate the art of painting and sculptors tend to appreciate the art of sculpture, it would be rather unlikely to expect an objective judgement from the artists.²²

A frequently used example for the bad influence of excessive narcissism was provided by the animal kingdom. Since antiquity, the ape mother served to illustrate the bad effects of unconditional love.²³ According to Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, VIII, LXXX, 216), she used to hug and embrace her newborns so often that they frequently died. Since her offspring were thought to be remarkably ugly, her behaviour was not only seen as an exaggerated form of affection but also as a sign of defective judgement. Consequently, many authors mentioned the ape mother when they discussed the problem of individual judgement. The ancient author Synesius of Cyrene²⁴, as well as the Renaissance humanists Angelo Poliziano and

gard to the nature of friendships, Aristotle makes similar observations, but admits that opposites could attract each other, too. (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155b).

20 For the use of analogy in Aristotle see Müller 1965, p. XV and Oehler 1963, pp. 37 ff. In the 16th century, the proverbs cited by Aristotle were widely in use. This is especially true for the proverb *Ogni simile appetisce il suo simile*.

21 Borghini (1971–1977), p. 657.

22 Borghini (1971–1977), p. 657.

23 For the ape in Renaissance art history see Janson 1952. A similar example was the sculptor Pygmalion, who fell in love with a sculpture he had carved.

24 Synesius of Cyrene (1926), p. 78: “After all, love of offspring is so great a force in nature that, according to the fable, the very apes when they bring forth their young gaze upon them as idols, and are lost in admiration of their beauty, but those of their fellows they see just as they are – the offspring of apes. Hence we should leave to others the task of appraising the value of our creation, for partiality is quite capable of warping our judg-

Benedetto Varchi,²⁵ were aware of the dangers of self-deception and used the example as an illustration. The metaphor of the ape was highly descriptive and therefore easily understandable for artists as well. The unusual proportions of the ape, its fur covering wide parts of the body, and its uncovered and joyfully exposed genital area collided with the traditional ideals of corporeal beauty in Renaissance Italy. In addition, the ridiculous appearance of the ape was understood to be an expression of its ridiculous soul.²⁶ As an *exemplum vitiosum* of social behaviour and bodily shape, the ape was thus used to describe libidinous and unreasoned humans: “Sono le simie significato de gli huomini maligni, e libidinosi [...]. Un’uomo c’ha le parti del corpo mal composte, è detto Simia.”²⁷

As a result of this negative background, pictorial representations of the ape mother and her offspring were frequently used to illustrate the bad effects of excessive self-love and unjustified adoration. An emblem from Giulio Cesare Capaccio’s *Delle imprese* (1592) is used in this sense; it depicts the ape mother in a beautiful landscape hugging her offspring (Fig. 43). The gesticulating arms and



Figure 43 Illustration of an Ape Mother with her Offspring, from the 1592 Edition of Giulio Cesare Capaccio’s *Delle imprese*

ment. It was for this that the sculptor Lysippus brought the painter Apelles to see his pictures, and for the same reason Apelles brought Lysippus to see his own.” Synesius’ epistles were first published in Marco Musuro’s *Corpus degli epistolografi greci* (Venice 1499) and translated into Latin by Giano Cornario in 1560.

25 Varchi 1570 (1995), p. 519: “Perché tutti amano più sé stessi che altri e più le loro cose proprie che l’altrui; e perché i figliuoli sono la più cara cosa che habbiano gli huomini e i componimenti sono i figliuoli de’ componitori, quindi avviene che ciascuno, e massimamente coloro che sono più boriosi degli altri, ne’ loro componimenti s’ingannano, come dicono che alle bertucce paiono i loro bertuccini la più bella e vezzosa cosa che sia, anzi che possa essere in tutto ‘l mondo.”

26 Gesner 1551, p. 961: “natura simiae ridiculo animali, & animam habenti ridiculam, corporis quoque constructionem ridiculam dedit.”

27 Capaccio 1592, fol. 68r.

the open snout of the newborn indicate that this scene is not as peaceful as it seems: Driven by her great affection, the ape mother is actually crushing her offspring to death rather than softly squeezing it. In fact, as the Horatian titulus *Est modus in rebus* (There is a measure in all things) suggests,²⁸ the etching was meant to allude to the virtue of *temperantia*, since excessive love for one's own creation can cause harmful effects. According to Capaccio, apes were therefore frequently used as emblems for poets who were enthused by their own writings, while being overly critical of the works of other authors.²⁹

5.3 Apelles and the Use of Collective Intelligence

The increasing popularity of narcissistic apes in Renaissance culture was the result of a change in attitude towards the creation of works of art. Similar to the iconographic program of Volterra's stucco reliefs in S. Trinità dei Monti, they gave visual expression to a general tendency in the arts of the Cinquecento. The criticism of art had become a matter of public interest performed in the academic spheres of the humanists, in the studios of the artists, and in the interiors of churches and chapels. The artists were confronted with a multitude of observations and objections that they had never encountered before.³⁰ While they were gaining a social status comparable to that of the poets, their works received the same critical attention as the writings of poets. Because of this paradigmatic shift Vasari interpreted Volterra's reliefs as a sort of self-defense against art critics who accused him of blindly imitating the style of Michelangelo.³¹ The increased attention paid to the works of artists also obliged them to perform a self-conscious evaluation of their own works. In benefitting from the opinions of others, artists showed an analytical approach to their own defects – the first step towards an improvement in the art of painting and sculpture.

28 The titulus is taken from Horace: "Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum." (*Satires*, I, 1, 106–107).

29 Capaccio 1592, fol. 68v.: "E per che le Simie, turpissimae bestiae dette da Ennio, credono che i loro Simiotti più belli siano de gli altri parti, per questo sono Imprese di queglii Scrittori, che i proprij scritti lodano, e schivano gli altrui."

30 For the increase of art criticism cfr. Frangenberg 1990, pp. 44 ff. and Franceschini 2021.

31 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 7, pp. 55 f.: "Daniello stesso, confessando la fatica che aveva durata in quest'opera, e temendo di quello che gl'avenne e di non essere biasimato, fece per suo capriccio, e quasi per sua defensione, sotto i piedi di detti due Santi, due storiette di stucco di basso rilievo [...]."

The advice to consider the judgement of others was hardly a new one. Since the time of Horace (*Ars poetica*, 408–434), poets were aware of their reduced capacities when it came to the question of auto-evaluation; they were counseled to rely on the judgement of their closest friends to improve upon their writings. Many bibles published in the 16th century emphasized the human inclination to recognize the errors of others while failing at recognizing one's own, by incorporating illustrations of the famous parable of the mote and the beam (Fig. 44),



Figure 44 Unknown Artist, Parable of the Mote and the Beam, ca. 1526, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek

given in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt, 7,1–5): “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again. And why seest thou the mote, that is in thy brother’s eye, and perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” In the Renaissance, this general phenomenon was explained by the diversity of human nature. Because each man was equipped with special talents and interests, the judgement of each man was believed to be different. Whereas the defects of a

friend are therefore easy to recognize, one's own errors are unrecognizable by one's own judgement and thus remain invisible.³²

It is in this context that many writers on art advised their readers about the problem of narrow-mindedness. As remarked by Gilio da Fabriano in his *Dialogo* (1564), a painter had to examine his own paintings as carefully as a critical judge would. By amending compositional errors, reading books, and asking others for advice, he could improve the quality of his works.³³ Giovanni Battista Armenini was especially concerned with the tender affection that artists showed towards their own paintings, which they unreasonably believed to be the most perfect. Critical advice from learned people was therefore strongly suggested in his *De' veri precetti della pittura*:

“E perciò è di molta utilità al pittore il sottoporsi al parere altrui, ed è bene à cominciarsi da' disegni, che tuttavia vien facendo, e lasciata la sua persuasione, accettar la correction de gli huomini eccellenti, perche le sciocche compositioni e l' opere malfatte, nascono bene spesso dal troppo credere di se medesimo. [...] Ma gli huomini buoni, et intelligenti, ti faranno secondo il loro giuditio, toglier via alcune cose, mutare, aggiungere, e variare e per quanto e come li parerà di bisogno.”³⁴

As is shown by Armenini's remarks, this process of consultation was not to be considered a free exchange of equivalent opinions. Instead, the works of an artist were evaluated on the basis of the judgement of the *huomini eccellenti*, well-read artists and humanists familiar with the academic principles of the art of painting. According to their profession, their verdict was characterised by an artistic analysis of formal aspects regarding compositional errors and technical problems, as well as an examination of the rhetorical structure of the painting, mainly focusing on the treatment of its literary subject.³⁵

32 Cfr. Castiglione 1528 (1998), p. 28: “Chi vol con diligenza considerar tutte le nostre azioni, trova sempre in esse varii difetti; e ciò procede perché la natura, così in questo come nell'altre cose varia, ad uno ha dato lume di ragione in una cosa, ad un altro in un'altra: però interviene che, sapendo l'un quello che l'altro non sa ed essendo ignorante di quello che l'altro intende, ciascun conosce facilmente l'error del compagno e non il suo ed a tutti ci pare essere molto savi, e forse più in quello in che più siamo pazzi.”

33 Gilio 1564 (1960–1962), p. 49: “Però sarebbe bene che facesse, come di anzi fu detto, parecchi giorni prima i loro cartoni, schizzi o modelli, e quelli cento volte rivedere e considerare, non come padre, ma come giudice; aggiungere, scemare, emendare e correggere bene la cosa come esser vuole; domandare, informarsi, leggere et aver bene a mente tutto il soggetto et ogni sua particolarità e qualità, tanto del proprio quanto degli accidenti; e non fare a la cieca, e dar tosto l'imprimiera et operare il pennello.”

34 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 159.

35 Thomas 2000, p. 44.

But in addition to learned artists, patrons, and humanists, the common people – the so-called *popolo basso*, who consisted of *uomini non intendenti* – were able to have their say, too. Although not acquainted with the peculiarities of art, they were often believed to have a good understanding of the abundance of natural phenomena, so their advice was often appreciated.³⁶ Vincenzo Borghini, one of Vasari's closest friends and advisors, discussed the issue in his *Selva di notizie*, a short treatise that contained several observations on the arts; it was probably meant to serve as a preparatory draft for a lecture to be held at the Accademia del disegno.³⁷ According to the scholar, the people possessed a general understanding of beauty and proportion because they were equipped with a multitude of eyes and brains, allowing them to generate a universal judgement: “Notando uno una cosa e quell'altro un'altra e conferendo insieme di molti particolari che di per sé sarebbon perfetti, ne nasce un universale perfetto.”³⁸

The *locus classicus* for this topos in art literature was provided by Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, XXXV, 85). As stated by the Roman historian, the painter Apelles liked to set his paintings up in public and then hide behind them to hear what faults the passersby noted. When a passing cobbler commented on the mistakes he had made painting a shoe, Apelles corrected him thankfully. On seeing the improved painting the next day, the cobbler felt encouraged and began to criticize other parts of the painting as well. Enraged by the presumptuous craftsman, Apelles harshly told him to stick to his last (“Sutor, ne ultra crepidam!”).³⁹

Although Pliny's account ultimately focuses on the limits of a synthesised judgement, his story was often retold by Italian art theorists such as Alberti,

36 Cfr. Leonardo (1995), p. 63: “Certamente non è da ricusare mentre che l'uomo dipinge il giudizio di ciascuno, perocché noi conosciamo chiaro che l'uomo, benché non sia pittore, avrà notizia della forma dell'altro uomo, e ben giudicherà s'egli è gobbo o s'egli ha una spalla alta o bassa, o s'egli ha gran bocca o naso od altri mancamenti. Se noi conosciamo gli uomini poter con verità giudicare le opere della natura, quanto maggiormente ci converrà confessare questi poter giudicare i nostri errori, ché sappiamo quanto l'uomo s'inganna nelle sue opere; e se non lo conosci in te, consideralo in altrui, e farai profitto degli altrui errori. Sicché sii vago con pazienza udire l'altrui opinione; e considera bene e pensa bene se il biasimatore ha cagione o no di biasimarti; e se trovi di sí, racconcia, e se trovi di no, fa vista di non l'aver inteso; o, s'egli è uomo che tu stimi, fagli conoscere per ragione ch'egli s'inganna.” A contemporary source, the literary critic Matteo Bandello, confirms that Leonardo actually worked like this when he painted the *Last supper* in Milan. As cited in Villata 1999, p. 301: “[...] allora l'eccellente pittore Lionardo Vinci fiorentino dipingeva, il quale aveva molto caro che ciascuno veggendo le sue pitture, liberamente dicesse sovra quelle il suo parere.”

37 Cfr. Burioni 2008, p. 77.

38 Borghini, *Selva*, Ed. Barocchi, p. 629.

39 The proverbial “Cobbler, stick to thy last” is already quoted by the Roman historian Valerius Maximus (*Factorum et dictorum memorabilium*, VIII, 12).

Varchi, and Dolce, who underlined the positive effects of Apelles' strategy.⁴⁰ According to these authors, the individual judgement of an artist had to be accompanied by a corrective authority, which stimulated an objectified approach to his works of art. Vasari relates the episode not only in his *Vite*, but also in the form of a large-scale fresco in the Casa Vasari in Florence, painted between 1569 and 1573 (Fig. 45). The fresco shows the cobbler on his knees in front of Apelles' painting, indicating the incriminated sandal with the index finger of his right hand. Other persons, a bearded older man among them, seem to interfere with the cobbler, presumably engaging in discussions about the quality of the painting of Diana. Whereas these persons are the center of attention, Apelles himself is shown to the far right in a small corner behind his painting. Unnoticed by the spectators and enshadowed by a red curtain, he seems to be listening to the ongoing debate while his chin rests on his left hand in a gesture of reasoning.

That Vasari emphasized the importance of the *giudizio del popolo* with this fresco is not only shown by the visual precedence given the cobbler, but also confirmed by the spatial collocation of the painting. It was positioned on one of the longitudinal walls of the *Sala grande* in the Casa Vasari, facing a representation of the painter Zeuxis relying on his individual judgement to compose an image of ideal beauty (Fig. 32). While the portrait of Apelles represented a humble and self-reflective artist, always interested in improving his art, the portrait of Zeuxis can be associated with the authority of the individual nature, an art in which the entire process of artistic invention was attributed to the painter. As is shown by these opposing frescoes, both paradigms were indispensable for Vasari. According to the Aretine author, the art of painting was best served by combining the Apellian and Zeuxian strategy. While the former ensures the legibility of paintings and represents the application of universally valid rules, the latter focuses on the importance of individual solutions and inventions, a quality of the artist that Renaissance humanists summarized under the term *ingegno*.

Of course, the *popolo* was not to be followed in all regards. In his amusing adaption of the Apellian episode, Paolo Pino mocked an old lady for her concerns regarding a portrait of her daughter. Mistaking a shadow cast on the face of her offspring for a mole, she showed a lack of understanding of the peculiarities

40 Alberti (2002), pp. 166 ff.: "L'opera del pittore cerca essere grata a tutta la moltitudine. Adunque non si spregi il giudicio e sentenza della moltitudine, quando ancora sia licito soddisfare a loro oppenione. Dicono che Appelles, nascoso drieto alla tavola, acciò che ciascuno potesse più libero biasimarlo e lui più onesto udirlo, udiva quanto ciascuno biasimava o lodava. Così io voglio i nostri pittori apertamente domandino o odano ciascuno quello che giudichi, e gioveralli questo ad acquistar grazia." Further examples for the paedagogic use of this anecdote can be found in Varchi 1550 (1960–1962), p. 56, Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 134, and Dolce 1557 (1960–1962), p. 156.



Figure 45 Giorgio Vasari, Apelles and the Cobbler, 1569–1573, Florence, Casa Vasari

of pictorial representations.⁴¹ Borghini was of a similar opinion. While he attributes to the people a general understanding of questions of proportion and beauty (thus repeating some old advice of Leonardo's⁴²), he criticizes their deficiencies in questions of *diligenza* and *difficoltà*, specific artistic issues which could not be judged by simple cobblers or stonemasons.⁴³ According to Borghini, artists should therefore consider themselves happy if they are only criticized by experts: "Felici gl'artefici, se de l'arte loro giudicassino sempre e' periti."⁴⁴

5.4 The Use of Mirrors and Time

Besides universally valid proportions, an internalized judgement, and external judges, artists also made use of other tools and strategies to improve their works: mirrors proved particularly useful. By looking at their paintings using a mirror, artists manipulated their own perception and were able to dissociate themselves

41 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 134: "Non meno rimase vinto il nostro Paolo Pino ritraggendo una donna, e sopragionta la madre di lei disse: 'Maestro, questa macchia sott'il naso non è in mia figliola'; rispose il Pino: 'Gli è il lume che causa l'ombra sott'il rilievo del naso'; disse la vecchia: 'Eh? come può stare ch'il lume facci ombra?'. Confuso il pittore disse: 'Quest'è altro che fillare'; et ella, dando una guanciattina alla figliuola in modo di scherzo, disse: 'E quest'altro che pittura. Non vedete voi che sopra questa faccia non vi è pur un neo, non che macchie tanto oscure?'" For an analysis of this passage regarding the Venetian *colorito* cf. Koos 2010, pp. 15 f.

42 Leonardo (1995), p. 76: "Deve il pittore fare la sua figura sopra la regola d'un corpo naturale, il quale comunemente sia di proporzione laudabile; oltre di questo far misurare se medesimo e vedere in che parte la sua persona varia assai o poco da quella antedetta laudabile; e, avuta questa notizia, deve riparare con tutto il suo studio di non incorrere ne' medesimi mancamenti nelle figure da lui operate, che nella persona sua si trovano." Also Leonardo (1995), p. 88: "Parmi non piccola grazia quella di quel pittore, il quale fa buone arie alle sue figure. La qual grazia chi non l'ha per natura la può pigliare per accidentale studio in questa forma. Guarda a tórre le parti buone di molti visi belli, le quali belle parti sieno conformi più per pubblica fama che per tuo giudizio; perché ti potresti ingannare togliendo visi che avessero conformità col tuo (...)."

43 Borghini (1971–1977), p. 629: "Ma se noi parleremo delle particolarità de l'arte, di certe sottigliezze, di certe diligenze, di certe difficoltà e particolari intelligenze de l'arti, io dirò bene ch'in questo non abbia il populo giudizio alcuno o pochissimo, e che di questo ne sieno non solo ottimi ma ancora soli giudici gl'artefici, perché quelle sottigliezze non le considera il populo, ma solo chi le fa o è uso a farle." A different opinion is expressed in his *Riflessioni sul giudizio dell'arte*, dating in the same year. For a transcription see Carrara 2006, pp. 566–568.

44 Borghini (1971–1977), p. 629. In a marginal note Borghini ascribed this saying to a certain "Fabio pictore".

from their works, allowing them to spot and amend errors that went unnoticed when the work was uninverted and familiar. Although mirrors consisted of polished metal or convex glass surfaces and began to assume their modern functionality only at the end of the 16th century,⁴⁵ their use was already advised by Leon Battista Alberti, who stated that a painter could gain a great advantage by correcting his paintings with the help of a mirror.⁴⁶ Leonardo underlined the positive effect of the alienation that occurred when a painter looks at his paintings with a mirror. The inversion of the painted surface makes the work appear as if it had been painted by a stranger, giving him the opportunity to recognize errors more easily:

“Noi sappiamo che gli errori si conoscono piú nelle altrui opere che nelle proprie, e spesso riprendendo gli altrui piccoli errori, non vedrai i tuoi grandi. [...] Ma per tornare alla promessa di sopra, dico che nel tuo dipingere tu devi tenere uno specchio piano, e spesso riguardarvi dentro l’opera tua, la quale lí sarà veduta per lo contrario, e ti parrà di mano d’altro maestro, e giudicherai meglio gli errori tuoi che altrimenti.”⁴⁷

Another method for obtaining an incorruptible artistic *giudizio* consisted of the use of time. According to art theorists, temporal intervals between periods of work were helpful for the critical evaluation of an artist’s paintings and contributed to the understanding of individual inclinations. In claiming huge amounts of time for the execution of their works (a habit that drove many patrons to despair), the artists of the Cinquecento were in excellent company. According to Horace (*Ars poetica*, 388–390), poets should leave their completed works aside for at least nine years before re-evaluating them. It might prove better to destroy bad writing than to be confronted with it for the rest of one’s life. Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria*, XI, IV, 1–4) took a slightly different approach. Although he advised his readers to leave their works aside for a while (so that they might lose the sympathy of their creator and appear to be the work of a stranger), he considered constant and time-consuming editing harmful. Not only would the author never finish his work, but he would also risk rewriting felicitous passages of his poems. Alberti, familiar with the works of the Roman orator, applied this technique to painting. Accusing the contemporary painters of *cupidità*, implying that

45 For a history of the mirror in Renaissance Italy see Kalas 2002.

46 Alberti (2002), p. 142: “E saratti a ciò conoscere buono giudice lo specchio, né so come le cose ben dipinte molto abbino nello specchio grazia: cosa maravigliosa come ogni vizio della pittura si manifesti diforme nello specchio. Adunque le cose prese dalla natura si emendino collo specchio.”

47 Leonardo (1995), pp. 200 f.

they would rather start a new painting than finish an old one, he advised them to work with great dexterity and diligence on one painting at a time and warned them not to spend too much time on needless details, at the risk of spoiling their works.⁴⁸

Alberti's advice was motivated by the unstable conditions in Renaissance workshops. Unfinished or abandoned works were part of an economy in which the artists had to meet the demands of their commissioners. Works requested by wealthy merchants or influential rulers often led to a redistribution of tasks, and a change in priorities altered the coherent process of production. Things got even worse when patrons began to compete for the attention of particularly talented artists. The increase in demand put artists in the position of accepting a great number of commissions, often resulting in quarrels with their patrons when they were not able to finish the work in the amount of time committed to in the contract.

Leonardo, well known for his habit of abandoning paintings, followed another strategy, justifying his absence from work by citing his methods of artistic invention.⁴⁹ Amusement, distraction, and interruption were considered reasonable activities because they led to an improvement of the artistic *giudizio* and assured the amelioration of the work.⁵⁰ To go for a walk, to play the violin, or simply sit

48 Alberti (2002), pp. 164 ff.: "In lavorare la istoria aremo quella prestezza di fare, congiunta con diligenza, quale a noi non dia fastidio o tedio lavorando, e fuggiremo quella cupidità di finire le cose quale ci facci abboracciare il lavoro. [...] Vidi io alcuni pittori, scultori, ancora rettorici e poeti, – se in questa età si truovano rettorici o poeti, – con ardentissimo studio darsi a qualche opera, poi freddato quello ardore d'ingegno, lassano l'opera cominciata e rozza e con nuova cupidità si danno a nuove cose. [...] Né in poche cose più si pregia la diligenza che l'ingegno; ma conviensi fuggire quella decimaggine di coloro, i quali volendo ad ogni cosa manchi ogni vizio e tutto essere troppo pulito, prima in loro mani diventa l'opera vecchia e sucida che finita." A similar criticism of artists is shown by Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, XXXIV, 92) when writing on the Attic sculptor and painter Callimachus. Described as being very assiduously and overly critical with his own works, people would pejoratively call him *katatexitechnos*, i.e., someone who dissolves his art in details.

49 Leonardo (1995), p. 51: "[...] andando tu per campagne, fa che il tuo giudizio si volti a' varî obietti, e di mano in mano riguarda or questa cosa, or quella, facendo un fascio di varie cose elette e scelte infra le men buone. E non fare come alcuni pittori, i quali, stanchi colla lor fantasia, dimetton l'opera, e fanno esercizio coll'andare a spasso, riservandosi una stanchezza nella mente, la quale, non che vogliano por mente a varie cose, ma spesse volte, incontrandosi negli amici e parenti, essendo da quelli salutati, non che li vedano o sentano, non altrimenti sono conosciuti come se non li scontrassero."

50 Leonardo (1995), p. 200: "Ed ancora sarà buono levarsi spesso e pigliarsi qualche sollazzo, perché nel ritornare tu migliorerai il giudizio; ché lo star saldo nell'opera ti farà forte ingannare. È buono ancora lo allontanarsi, perché l'opera pare minore, e più si comprende in un'occhiata, e meglio si conoscono le discordanti e sproporzionate mem-

and look at flowers were therefore interests devoted to the professional life of a painter, not merely personal proclivities.⁵¹ Leonardo's line of reasoning was not only a self-fashioned demonstration of artistic sovereignty and distinguished behaviour, but also a direct result of his own practice as a painter, visible in the preparatory drawings for a representation of the *Virgin and child with Saint Anne and John the Baptist*. As is shown by his drawings and drafts for the *Burlington House Cartoon*, he corrected the tracings of his pen repeatedly as if fighting against internalized prototypes and craving to discover alternative patterns for the bodily contours of his figures (Fig. 46). His time-consuming drawing technique helped him to overcome automimesis and guaranteed paintings which faithfully represented the great variety of nature.⁵²

Of course, neither Alberti's invitation to hurry nor Leonardo's advice to relax were considered practicable.⁵³ In most cases, artists had to finish and deliver their works in a specific amount of time – even if they were unsatisfied with the final result. One way out of the resulting dilemma was the application of an intellectual ruse. By introducing their individual signatures with the imperfect tense of the Latin *facere* (“to make”), they suggested that they had abandoned their paintings only temporarily and would return soon to complete them. As Pliny records (*Historia naturalis*, I, 26–27), this cunning habit was first practised by Apelles and Polykleitos. Inscribing their works with *faciebat* (meaning “he was making”) instead of *fecit* (meaning “he made”), they implied that art was always in process and never completed. The artists could answer every criticism by saying that, had they not been interrupted, they would have corrected their mistakes. Furthermore, the signature *faciebat* was identified as a humble gesture towards the public. Ac-

bra ed i colori delle cose, che d'appresso.” Matteo Bandello, who observed Leonardo when painting the *Last supper* in Milan, seems to confirm this working method of the master. As quoted in Villata 1999, p. 301: “Se ne sarebbe poi stato dui, tre e quattro di che non v'averebbe messa mano, e tuttavia dimorava talora una e due ore del giorno e solamente contemplava, considerava ed essaminando tra sé, le sue figure giudicava. L'ho anco veduto secondo che il capriccio o ghiribizzo lo toccava, partirsi da mezzo giorno, [...] asceto sul ponte pigliar il pennello ed una o due pennellate dar ad una die quelle figure, e di subito partirsi e andar altrove.”

51 Paolo Pino, familiar with Leonardo's work, suggested similar activities. Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 135: “Non [...] voglio ch'il nostro pittore assiduamente s'eserciti nel dipignere, ma divertisca dall'operare, intratenendosi et istaurandosi con la dolcezza della poesia, over nella soavità della musica di voce et istromenti diversi, o con sue altre virtù, dil che ciascuno vero pittore debbe esser guarnito.”

52 For Leonardo's working practice see Nathan 2005.

53 Cfr. Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 119: “Vero è ch'ambi gli estremi sono biasmevoli, et a questo proposito si dice ch'Apelle biasmava sé stesso perch'era troppo diligente, né mai finiva di ricercare e perficere l'opere sue, la qual cosa è molto all'intelletto nociva.”



Figure 46 Leonardo da Vinci, *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and the Infant Saint John*, ca. 1505–1508, London, British Museum

ording to Pliny, Apelles only signed three of his works with the perfect tense *fecit*, implying absolute perfection, which showed his confidence (but made him also appear very conceited).⁵⁴

Known to Petrarch⁵⁵ as well as to Angelo Poliziano,⁵⁶ Apelles' custom became fashionable among the artists of the Renaissance at the end of the Quattrocento, and remained *en vogue* until far into the 18th century. Like many artists who inscribed their works with *faciebat*, including Giovanni Bellini, Titian, and Michelangelo, Paolo Pino not only used the signature on two of his paintings,⁵⁷ but also referred to it in his *Dialogo*. Writing about the difficulty of learning the rules of painting, he advised his readers to use the signature as a sign of modesty and unpretentiousness. Because the limited amount of time at his disposition would never allow a painter to become perfect, he should display his humility by using Apelles' signature.⁵⁸ At the same time, Pino justified the subtle but clear self-identification with Apelles as a means to preserve the painter's *memoria*, thus making him equal to poets. An artist's signature would record his name for posterity, just as a writer's name on his books would ensure his was recorded.⁵⁹ The hardly readable signature on one of Pino's paintings, a portrait made in 1534 representing the Paduan humanist and collector of antiquities Marco Mantova Benavides (Fig. 47), is to be seen in this context. The *cartellino* bearing the artist's name ("Paulus de

54 Land 2000, p. 163.

55 Cfr. Petrarca (1945), pp. 115f.: "Huic simillimum calliditatis genus, licet in longinqua materia, secutus michi videtur artifex, qui operibus suis usque in miraculum excultis nunquam se supremam manum imposuisse dicebat; ut scilicet et sibi semper addendi mutandique libertatem reservaret et suspenso iudicio spectantium animis quiddam de artifice quam de opere magnificentius ac perfectius semper occurreret." For a discussion of Petrarch's particular use of the episode see Baxandall 1971, pp. 64 f.

56 See Hegener 2006, pp. 153 f. Poliziano relates the Plinian episode in his *Liber Miscellaneorum* from 1489, describing an encounter with the Venetian humanist Giovanni Lorenzi in Rome when they were discussing an antique column with the inscription "Lysippus faciebat".

57 Mazza 1992, pp. 53.

58 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 124: "[...] è crudel cosa che niuno mai finisca di farsi maestro. Questo ci avviene perché gli intelletti nostri sono impediti dall'imperfezione corporea, a tal ch'aggiugniamo prima alla morte ch'ai termini dell'intendere. Questo è ch'il nostro Pino scrive nell'opere sue 'faciebat'."

59 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 125: "Dimostra anco ch'egli [i.e., Apelles] aspirava alla sua immortalità: il ch'è il più alto umore, la più degna sete ch'ingombrar possi li petti di noi mortali (e ne dovrebbe sopra ogni altra cosa attendere tutto uomo), e per che s'affaticorno tanti e tanti antichi, fin a' giorni nostri penetrati illesi dalla rivoluzione delle sorti e dalla velocità del tempo mercè degli scrittori che, celebrando le prodezze, negli anni e nelle lettere insieme insieme si resero immortali. E che maggior vituperio di noi, che morire sotterarsi col nome, cosa propria agli animali irrazionali?"



Figure 47 Paolo Pino, Portrait of Marco Mantova Benavides, 1534, Chambéry, Musées d'Art et d'Histoire

Pinis pict faciebat 1534”) is positioned at the edge of a table covered with antiquities, as if it were about to slip off to disappear into oblivion (Fig. 48). This work contrasts with an altar painting in the church of San Benedetto in Scorzè (Veneto),



Figure 48 Paolo Pino, Portrait of Marco Mantova Benavides (detail), 1534, Chambéry, Musées d’Art et d’Histoire

Painted around 1565, which Pino inscribed merely with his name in the style of a *capitalis rustica*, suggesting longevity of the artist’s fame and fortune. The signature on the portrait of Benavides thus points to the ephemeral status of the artist by imitating his handwriting. As perishable as the ink on a piece of paper, his letters are not only a portrait of his individual character as later signaled in treatises on the art of graphology,⁶⁰ but also a self-ironic wink addressing his own artistic capacities.

60 See for example the analysis of handwriting by Baldi 1622.