

The Art of Mannerism in Architecture from the viewpoint of Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari

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Introduction

The high Renaissance is one of the most influential art movements in history. A time period that brings forward a few of the most well-respected artists like Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci. Praised for their architecture, sculptors and paintings. These artist had a big influence on the next generation of artists, some of whom were direct students, while others just were impressed with their work. These artists, like Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari, wanted to surpass the great artists of the High Renaissance. Because of this, a new art-movement was born called 'Mannerism', after Maniera or 'Stylishness' This period was first seen as a late version of the High Renaissance before the Baroque-era started and was not even acknowledged until the late 18th century when researchers believed that there were indeed significant differences between the High Renaissance and the period that followed, now called 'Mannerism'. Since Mannerism was acknowledged 150 years ago, a lot of studies have followed discussing the art movement. Because of that, a lot is known about the art and architecture during this period and the artist who lead Mannerist art.

An area within Mannerism that hasn't received much attention is the comparison of these Mannerist artists. Although their works are grouped within the same category, they can be vastly different. By comparing these works, it becomes clear what the artist's starting points are and to what extent these works correspond or differ.

Two of the most important artists of the mannerist movements were Giorgio

Vasari and Giulio Romano, both courtier and architects as well as painters. Vasari being best known for his design of the Uffizi and his book 'The lives of the artists' and Giulio Romano for his works in mantua like the Palazzo del Te

This thesis will dissect the history and multiple projects of these mannerist painters to look at visible mannerist aspects. The architectural design, as well as paintings inside these buildings will be analysed. Furthermore, the upbringings of these artists will be discusses. This with the purpose of finding what defines mannerism to these artists and how different aspects of their paintings are reflected within their architectural design.

The projects for Giulio Romano being:

Palazzo del Te

This is Giulio Romano's most well-known work as an architect and the first big assignment of his time in Mantua.

Casa Pitti / Casa Giulio Romano

His personal residents in Mantua and one of his last projects.

The projects for Giorgio Vasari being:

The Uffizi Gallery

Vasari's first big architectural design and also his most well-known project, located in Florence.

Palazzo Vecchio

Near the Uffizi, for which Vasari renovated the building and was responsible for paintings inside.

With the gathered information about these projects a comparison will be made between Giorgio Vasari and Giulio Romano, comparing their paintings and

architecture and reasons for their possible similarities or differences. With this, an answer will be given to the main Research question: 'To what extent do the characteristics of Mannerism manifest in the artistic and architectural works of Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari in 16th-century Italy?'

Introducing the Artists

Giorgio Vasari



Fig. 1: Portret of Giorgio Vasari

Giorgio Vasari, born in Arezzo in 1511, is a Italian architect, painter and writer well-known for his work on the Uffizi and his book 'lives of the artists' for which he was the first person to write biographies of different Italian renaissance artists. In his youth, people around Vasari already saw his potential and when the chance came, his father presented Vasari to Cardinal Silvio Passerini when he was passing through Arezzo in may 1524. The cardinal was impressed with the fact Vasari could recite long passages from Aeneid and for that reason was brought to Florence where he first came in contact with the Medici family as he continued his studies with Ippolito and Alessandro Medici. He learned a lot during the next period where he was studying painting under Andrea del Sarto. Vasari himself also suggests he studied under Michelangelo for a time but (Boase, 1979) states that it would be unlikely that Michelangelo had time for and unknown boy, and that 'distant admiration was probably the only contact that Vasari had as yet with the man who was to dominate his thoughts'.

Around 1543, Vasari returned to Arezzo after imperial troops had seized Rome and the Medici's had to leave the city, depriving Vasari of his protectors. Back in Arezzo, he found his town plague ridden which killed his father on 24 august 1527 and made him man of the house. This motivated him to study hard and was obligated to start earning money to support his family at 16 years old. And so he started painting saints in the churches of surrounding villages.

Vasari conducted his affairs in a highly businesslike method as prices and contract were already a speciality for him. From the moment his father died he began to keep records of all his paintings and the prices he received for them. He kept doing this till his death.

In 1529 he came back to Florence, and in 1531 the Medici came back to power. Vasari hated war as it deprived him of the chance to work. When he went through the country he even avoided the fighting areas. Vasari was present at the crowning of Charles V for which he later made a painting in the Palazzo Vecchio.

When Vasari went back to Florence in 1532 he brought with him a painting of the Entombment that the cardinal had commissioned to test him on a more serious subject. This is one of the first times mannerist features are visible in his work such as elongated bodies, muscular emphasis and closely posted groupings. Something that would return in a lot of his works from this point on.

The next years he travelled around the country a lot with his main residents

being Rome. This is where he came to know Michelangelo personally. (Boase, 1979) states that Vasari probably was probably acting as a general factotum for any odds jobs. He furthermore states that during this time, Michelangelo insisted Vasari to turn to Architecture. (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993) however, writes that Vasari already begun the study of architecture in his early twenties, but that the initial study did not have an encouraging outcome. In 1543 Vasari got the proposition to write a book describing Italian artists of his time which is now known as the lives of the artists, with his first publication being in 1550. In this same year, Vasari got a wife, something he never thought about getting as one brings pain and grief. He married Nicolossa Bacci to watch over his house in Arezzo. It was not a relationship born out of love, and no children came from it either. In 1559, Vasari was commissioned to design the Uffizi, his largest architectural project for which he is still known to this day.

Contemporary scholars regard Vasari more highly as an architect than a painter. As a painter, Vasari's most well-known works consist of fresco's in palazzo Vecchio such as the battle of Marciano. As an Architect, he was responsible for the Uffizi in Florence and the church, palace and monastery that was created for the cavalieri di san Stefano in Pisa. His work of art are outstanding examples of mannerism in the 16th century Italy.

Giulio Romano



Fig. 2: Portret of Giulio Romano

Giulio Romano, born in 1499, was an architect and painter. He began his career as pupil of Raphael, a well-known painter of the high renaissance. Vasari describes in 'The lives of the artists' that Romano was Raphaels best student and that besides his work as an artist, Romano was extremely gentle in conversation, jovial, affable, gracious, and absolutely abounding in the finest manner. Vasari goes further by saying that Raphael must have seen him as a son and let Romano execute a lot of his works. This caused Romano to become an incredible painter very fast. Raphael something let Giulio measure out and enlarge the drawings and sketches of his architectural work, which resulted in Romano taking delight in architecture. This would be the beginning of becoming, besides a well accomplished painting, a 'most distinguished' master. (Vasari, 1550)

After Raphael died in 1520, Romano took it upon him to finish the works Raphael had already begun. Together with Giovanfrancesco, Giulio finished a lot of works in the upcoming years such as Villa Madama. Because of Giulio's excellent qualities, Giulio was celebrated as one of the best artist in Italy after the death of Raphael. During this time Federigo Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantau, was looking for an architect who he could use for his palace and the city. Vasari states that Gonzaga would like Giulio

Romano particularly to take this role who accepted this request. Vasari goes on by saying he was warmly welcomed by Gonzaga who gave him a furnished home with a salary and food, fabric for clothing and one of he famous Gonzaga horses. (Verheyen, 1977) however, refutes this in his book by stating that Romano did not get a horse and in fact had to prove himself for two years (1524-1526). He goes on by saying that in 1526 Frederico was convinced giulio was the artist he was looking for. From that moment he became the main architect for Mantua. Nothing got made without his knowledge and with that he was commissioned to design project he is still best known for to this day: Palazzo del Te. Besides this, Giulio rebuilt many rooms in the castle at Mantua where the duke lived. Other than leaving a single male child that died young, there is no description about his married life, only that his wife also died a few years after him.

When looking at Romano's work its worth noting that a lot of paintings are based on religious figures rather than history, which could mean Gonzaga, who was associated with the image of Jupiter, ordered Romano to work with mythical scenes or that Romano wanted this himself. In his own house, Romano also decorated his walls with depictions of Jupiter, Venus and Poseidon which indicates that he enjoyed painting these mythical scenes himself.

projection of the physical pain of that era. (Morgenthaler, 1995)

Egon Verheyen has a more rational explanation for the choices made in Palazzo del Te. In his book 'The Palazzo del Te in Mantua. He states that some of the discrepancies can be assigned to the fact that The Duke of Mantua wanted the palazzo to be done as fast as possible. Where other researchers, like Sviltana Linda (Linda, 2023) and Hans Morgenthaler (as previously described), accept the fact that the rusticated triglyphs drop down as an intentional architectural element, Verheyen argues that these elements were not supposed to look like this, as 'they were hastily put in place to complete the building'. instead of the keystones dropping down to indicate social or political unrest, he states the reason being that the stones were not measured correctly and for this reason would not fit into the provided space. (Verheyen, 1977)

Spiro Kostoff, in 'A history of Architecture', interprets the palazzo's contrasting surface textures as well as the alteration of details and their place within the façade order as breakdowns of classical decorum, The intention behind these practices is explained either as attempting to make the viewer uneasy through projection of malaise or as using humor and play against unity. Romano's invention for its own sake is seen as causing the moral authority of the classical revival to lose ground. (Kostoff, 1995)

For Isabelle Hyman in, Architecture: From Prehistory to Postmodernism, mannerism is characterized by "the license taken with the serene harmonies of classical forms." She is more focussed on the fact that the Giulio incorporates various (decorative) tricks, surprises, and "unexpected delights." In his design of Palazzo del Te. (Marvin Trachtenberg, 2002)

As shown, there are many interpretations on the choices made by Giulio Romano in the design of the Palazzo del Te. Because there are no logs from the time of Romano describing why certain choices were made in the design of Palazzo del Te, we have to rely on researchers' interpretations, which, as seen, are not always in agreement. However, it should be noted that Giulio's used technique of falling keystones was used after Palazzo del Te which can be seen in the façade of la rustica (Figure 5), as well as his own house, Casa Pitti (Figure 6). This indicates that this was indeed an intentional design choice and could be seen as the political statement Morgenthaler describes. It could be that it was indeed a 'happy accident' which Giulio Romano liked and added to later designs, however, this is unlikely as Romano was known for his well thought out details.



Fig. 5: Façade of La Rustica: falling keystone



Fig. 6: Façade of Casa Pitti: falling keystone

Although the outside of Palazzo del Te is impressive as is, the true beauty of this building lies beyond these columns. Paintings are visible on the ceiling, and the ceiling is adorned with various ornaments. Inside, under the direction of Giulio Romano, the building was transformed into a maze of paintings that took a decade to complete. The most famous fresco in this building is 'Fall of the Giants', located in Camera dei Giganti, a ceiling painting that tells the story of the attack of the giants on Mount Olympus. Various gods can be seen on the ceiling, including Jupiter, who is throwing lightning bolts at the attackers visible on the walls, who are then buried by a collapsed temple. Nikolaus Pevsner states 'this is not just haphazardly insensitive. It obviously is the expression of a new will, a deliberate attack on the Renaissance ideal of the isolation and balance of all parts'. Giulio Romano wanted to make a statement. With different details, he made it look like the building was on the brink of collapsing. A certain instability which was a counterpart of the 'golden age'. The comfort and rest of the Renaissance were changed for restlessness and discomfort.

Painting

Pevsner, who observes the art in the Palazzo, states the fact that Giulio was sometimes panicked in the presence of

nature. Which can be shown in the 'trophy' of Palazzo del Te named salo dei Giganti or 'the hall of the giants' (Figure 7-8). Here you find a depiction of giants being crushed by boulders and buildings on all walls with on the ceiling a depiction of the gods. (Verheyen, 1977) Zeus was associated with the Gonzaga family and the fall of the giants was a very general topic, it was the way Romano executed his version that makes it a spectacle to the visitors and was probably a surprise to many of them as it was located in the corner of the Palazzo. He eliminated the separation of walls and ceiling and with that created a single scene from the entire room. The painting fills up the whole rooms and the giants depicted are literally bigger than person in real life. This truly enhances the depiction. The facial expressions and positions these giants are in speak a thousand words. The mannerism is displayed in this exaggeration of colour, expression and form. (Verheyen, 1977)

Although there is still a debate ongoing regarding the intentions behind the rustications and their purpose, you can't ignore that Romano used them both on the exterior of the building and in the interior of The Hall of the Giants. It could be said that this room and thereby the art, is connected to the architecture. Giulio tried to insinuate the building is on the point of collapsing in numerous ways, with rusticated columns and stones. This with the fact that the Camera dei Gigante shows a literal depiction of a collapsing world, means the deteriorating architecture has a direct connection to the artwork within the Palazzo del Te.



Fig. 7: Wall of Camera dei Gigante in Palazzo del Te; depicting giants getting demolished



Fig. 8: Ceiling of Camera dei Gigante in Palazzo del Te; depicting heaven

Casa Pitti



Fig. 9: Casa Pitti; Mantua

In Mantua, Giulio Romano bought an old building and a plot of land. He partially preserved the existing building and completed it. (Linda, 2023)

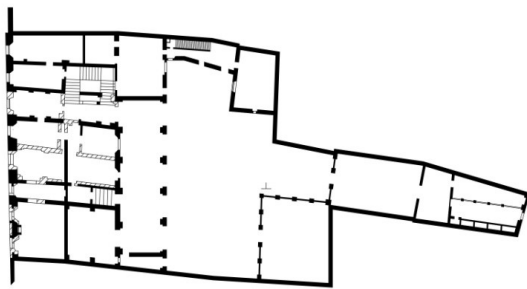


Fig. 10: Floorplan Casa Pitti; Mantua

The timeline (Linda, 2023) may differ from reality. Where she states the house was updated in 1531 and the built was finished in 1535, other sources state the house was purchased in 1538 and remodeling was done between 1540 and 1544. (Magnusson, 1988) The building did not only function as a house but also Romano's workspace which occupied the ground floor. On the second floor the living rooms were located Magnusson argues that in recently discovered documents, it becomes clear that the façade we see today is not a perfect representation of the design Romano made, as it was restored and in part rebuilt by Paolo Pozzo in 1800. Instead of

the 8 bays currently visible, he originally designed 6, with the entrance being in the third, which means two were added to the left in a later stadium. Paolo Pozzo also increased the height of the first row of windows. In present day, the rustication also seems to differ from the first drawings as for more differences mentioned by Magnusson. Although it is hard to differentiate some changes Romano made to the first design and the 1800 renovation, the mannerist features of the first drawings of Romano that are recently found will be studied.

There are indeed unusual features in the façade that could be assigned to mannerism although not many sources talk about the specific details. However, (Sgira, sd) gives a detailed description of the discrepancies of the façade. He states that the biggest irregularity is the string course that follows the peaked course of the voussoirs to form a pedimented portal. Furthermore, the arch of the door is not round like around the windows, but flattened. Another unusual part is the windows on the first floor which trims are peaked like pediments, but the relief decoration is not among the classical motifs generally used for moldings. You can also find a niche above the door which was unusual. Lastly a rusticated arcade on the piano nobile was unusual in the 16-th century, when the walls of that story were generally articulated by the orders or left plain (Sgira, sd). These manneristic features are verified by Edgarda Ferri in his book: *La casa di Giulio Romano*, (Ferri, 2019)

Casa Pitti also has design features that can be seen in Giulio's most notable architectural work, Palazzo del Te. The dropping keystone being one of them which could refer to the political state of

Italy at the time talked about by (Morgenthauer, 1995).

Painting

Because Giulio Romano died two years after the finishing of his house (Magnusson, 1988) at the age of 46 years old, it can be said that this building was constructed at the end of his lifetime. Casa Giulio Romano never was known for the art that can be found inside, although he did decorate it to a certain extend. One of the frescoes is a depiction of Jupiter, accompanied by Neptune on the bottom left and Venus on the right (Figure 11). Here Romano, well known for his extravagant designs that often depict 'serpentina', shows his figures in a more traditional Renaissance way. That being said, the image of Jupiter shows to have elongated limbs and a small head, mannerist features that come back in more of his works. Jupiter is also a figure used in multiple of his works like Palazzo del Te. This shows that not only did he get the commission to paint Jupiter, but he himself also was inspired by Greek mythology as he uses it in his own house.



Fig. 11: Frescoe of Jupiter, with Neptune in the bottom left and Venus in the bottom right.
Casa Pitti; Mantua

Palazzo Vecchio

Palazzo Vecchio (Figure 12) was first introduced in 1299 when Florentines decided to build the palace. It needed to house the government organizations of the republic and therefore be representative of the power of the public and the people. The construction of palazzo Vecchio took several generations to build. During the 16th century, Cosimo I (also commissioner of the Uffizi) ordered a restructuring and decoration of the building for the purpose of using it as his home (Florence museum, sd).



Fig. 12: Palazzo Vecchio; Florence

Vasari claimed, when faced with renovating the Palazzo Vecchio, that the Salone dei Cinquecento would 'surpass all the halls of the Venetian Senate, as well as everything done by kings, emperors, and popes of all times. He was not the only one, nor the first who renovated the Palazzo Vecchio. A decade long program of decorating the Palazzo Vecchio was already in motion when Vasari came back to Florence in 1555. Names like Bordinelli, Salviati, and Bronzino were already working on different aspects of the Palazzo. Vasari started by decorating quarters of the

elements and Leo X, which needed only minor structural modifications. After this Cosimo asked Vasari to make plans for the entire palace. Palazzo Vecchio did not have a big exterior renovation which meant Vasari was more focused on the interior space and he was also responsible for the courtyard which you wanted to radically modernize and so made changes to a new system of circulation which is still used to this day.

An important part of the circulation were staircases, a component that fascinated Vasari as this element was always visible to visitors which was not the case with most of the structure. Vasari compared stairs with the arms and legs of the human figure that move the body ahead. 'the alternation of vaulted shapes above and the inclination of the steps below propel the visitor gently forward'. This way he constructed an orderly progression through a structure that was complex in layout and dense in meaning, with his design being subtle but intentional (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993).

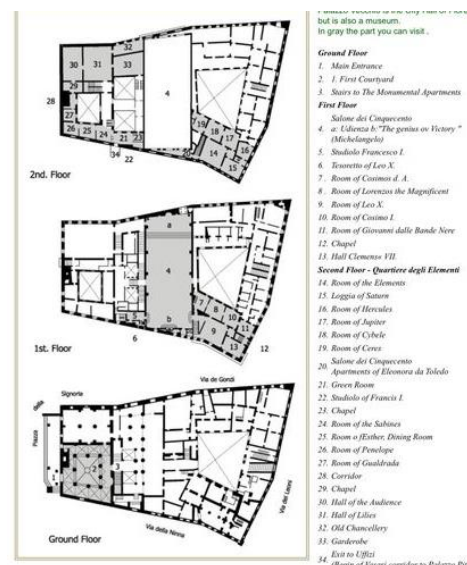


Fig. 13: Floorplan Palazzo Vecchio; Florence

The most fascinating room in the Palazzo Vecchio is The salone dei Cinquecento or Hall of the Five Hundred. An enormous hall inside of the building. Figure 13 shows how big it is compared to the other rest of the building. Vasari was responsible for raising the roof about 7 meters which resulted in more space for the wall decoration. The design of the wooden ceiling in this hall was also his doing. One of the frescoes Giorgio Vasari made is The battle of Marciano. A huge painting for Cosimo I de' Medici located in the Hall of the Five Hundred. It shows the battle of Scannagallo on August 2, 1554 between the French army and Florentine army which was under the command of Gian Giacomo Medici. The battle, that took many hours and cost thousands of lives, was victorious for the Florentines. The battle signalled the decline of the republic of Siena which surrendered in 1559 and was therefore very important to Cosimo I (Florence Inferno, 2017).

Vasari's legacy lives on in these iconic landmarks, reminding us of the enduring impact of his vision and creativity on art and architecture.

Painting

The Fresco shows an immense battlefield where the two armies meet (figure 14). When looking closely however, many details become visible, such as a green flag in the upper middle which says 'cerca trova' or seek and you will find (figure 15), which Cosimo I wanted on the painting. With this he sarcastically referred to the Siena

soldiers who would put Dante's verses on their flags. (Florence Inferno, 2017) (

When looking at mannerist features, the first thing that grabs the attention are the dramatic faces of the horses. A lot of them looking right at the viewer of the painting, showing that they are even scared to be on the battlefield. There are also multiple bodies laying on the floor in very exaggerated positions. This pose is also visible in the left corner when looking at the shirtless soldier on the horse. Apart from these easy to spot elements, Maurizio Arfaoli states in his article (Arfaoli, 2010) that Vasari did a lot more than that to integrate mannerism. According to him Vasari was very familiar with how a war was fought, which tools were used and the different aspects that played a role. Vasari hides a lot of absurd aspects in this fresco that can only be recognised by someone with knowledge of warfare. (Arfaoli, 2010)

Maurizio references the horse visible directly in the middle of the painting (figure 16). The animal is placed between the two clashing formations of pikemen. The worst, most illogical place for a man on a horse to be. Furthermore, very few pikes are visible in this fresco while Vasari was very well aware of its existence in warfare. Although not visible to most people, these aspects are immediately noticed by someone with a military-trained eye. Another detail is the knight depicted on the misplaced horse holds a shield, which was normally not carried by heavy corseletted cavalryman. Lastly in the foreground, a French soldier is depicted with a curved

sword, which were not used anymore at that time (figure 17). Maurizio believes these inconsistencies to be on purpose and a way for Vasari to implement 'maniera' or mannerism. (Arfaoli, 2010)

Another reasons for these specific military mannerist features, apart from Vasari wanting to add them, is that it was a wish of Cosimo I like the use of the word Cerca trova on the green flag. In (Veen, 1992), Van Veen discusses the propagandistic message that Cosimo wished to convey in decorative projects. When looking at the earlier discussed military mannerist features, they have to do with a lack of organisation of the Siena Army. The use of old weapons and the placement of the knight in the middle of the battlefield lets you believe the Siena army did not have everything in order. This could indicate a propagandistic message Cosimo I ordered Vasari to incorporate in the painting.

As these manneristic features can only be understood when being familiar with the zeitgeist of 16th-century Italy, it is not a stretch to think there are even more features where there is no knowledge of. So well hidden in history that is yet to be discovered.



Fig. 14: The battle of Marciano; located in Palazzo Vecchio; by Giorgio Vasari



Fig. 15: Text of Cerca Troya; detail of figure 14



Fig. 16: Knight and horse; detail of figure 14



Fig. 17: Siena army using old swords; detail of figure 14

Uffizi Gallery



Fig. 18: The Uffizi Gallery; Florence; designed by Giorgio Vasari

Although Giorgio had renovated and worked on different buildings before, the Uffizi Gallery was his first major architectural project. To say Giorgio had ambitious plans was an understatement. In his first plan, which was rejected by Cosimo I, Vasari made a free standing structure of approximately 120 meters long and 75 meters wide. It was more property than Cosimo I was willing to acquire as 'It presumed the demolition of the entire area between the Piazza della Signoria and the river' (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993)(Figure 19-20)

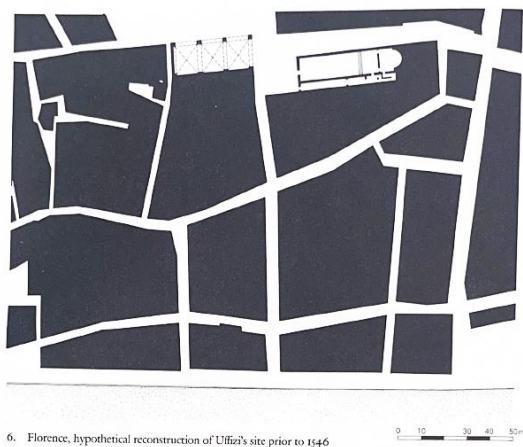


Fig. 19: Strada Nuova Florence before incisions

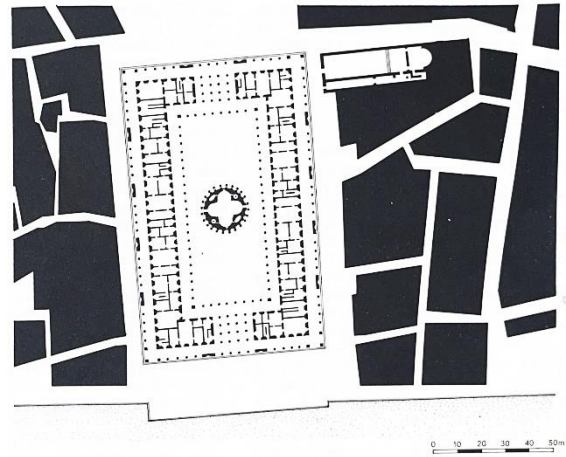


Fig. 20: First design of the Uffizi by Giorgio Vasari

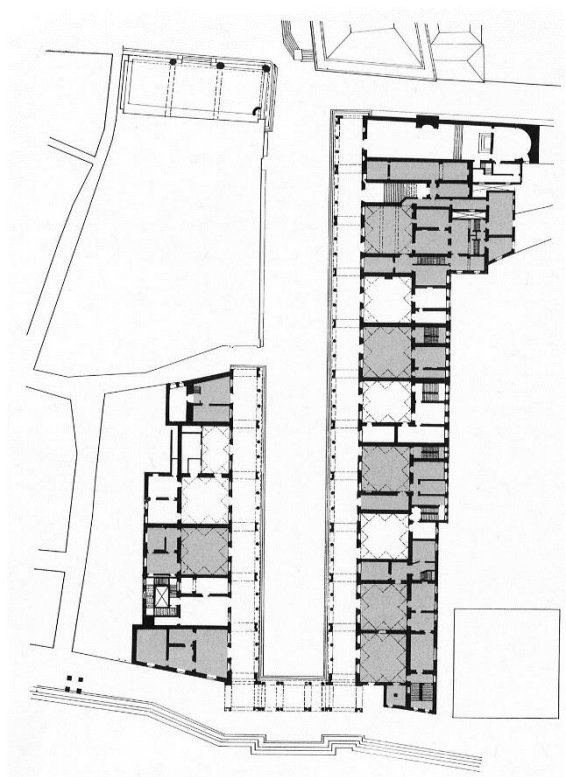


Fig. 21: The Uffizi along the Strada Nuova

In 1559 Cosimo decided he wanted the Uffizi along the lines of the newly widened strada nuova and instead of demolishing the houses along the street, he wanted to utilize the existing construction. With this, Vasari began the design (figure 21). The fact that Giorgio found it hard to let go of the grandiose design he had can be found in a letter correspondence

between him and Cosimo. Here Vasari asks permission to penetrate and demolish a significant amount of buildings, which Cosimo does not understand the reasoning of and does not approve without further elaboration. (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993) Something that shows Vasari's lack of care for the residents if it means integrating his design.

The construction of the Uffizi Palace commenced in 1560 with the intention of accommodating grand ducal offices. Its structure comprises two tall wings along a long and narrow courtyard. The formal aspects, now ingrained, require no special mention: : lack of a clear gradation of storeys, uniformity coupled with heretical detail, long, elegant and fragile brackets below double pilasters which are no pilasters at all, and so on. What necessitates attention is the final touch of the composition facing the Arno River. This is where a loggia opens up in a specious venation window. This is a favourite mannerist way of linking room to room, a way in which both a clear Renaissance separation of units and a free baroque flow through the whole and beyond are avoided. (Pevsner, 1990)

As described, Cosimo had a role in the scaling of the building. (Crum, 1989) argues that Cosimo had more influence on the façade. Ludwig Heydenreich states the Duke decided that Doric orders should be used. (Heydenreich L. , 1974) The Uffizi was intended to be a political statement, a symbolic value of communicating the stability and efficacy of his rule. The façade at the end of the

courtyard is recessed and decidedly less visible than was possible to create. Crum States this placement is not a reflection of mannerism, but more a way to isolate the Uffizi from iconographic conflict with the existing imagery in the piazza (Crum, 1989), something that could be ordered by Cosimo directly.

Bartolomeo Ammannati has a role in the design of the Uffizi. (Crum, 1989) refers to Lessmann who states that Vasari's use of a triumphal arch motif for the facade may reflect a modification for dramatic effect of Bartolomeo Ammannati's apparently unsolicited suggestion to repeat the arch as a structural and decorative motif along the ground level of the lateral wings. Which is something that Vasari would not disagree with as he saw the loggia as an ideal form, that is, a form created with design, rule, and proportion as well with judgement, diligence, and originality to function for the delight of the participants. (Pevsner, 1990) Leon Satkowski acknowledges this and shows a proposal made by Ammannati for the façade of the Uffizi of which some detail may be used in the final design(figure 21-22). He goes on by stating Ammannati could have influenced the end elevation of the portico facing the Via della Ninna. Although he may be responsible for some details, Vasari was undoubtedly the creator of the general concept of the Uffizi and designed the facades. (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993)

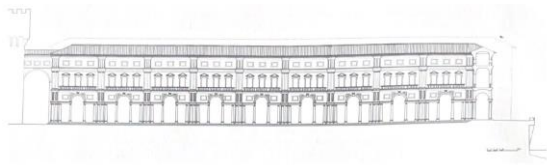


Fig. 22: Ammannati's idea for the façade of the Uffizi Gallery.



Fig. 23: Final design of the façade of the Uffizi Gallery.

Vasari segmented the lengthy façade into sets of three bays. The only different in this rhythm can be found where it passes across the exterior of the old Florentine Mint at the end of the western arm (Satkowski, Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier, 1993). Paired Doric columns and thicker pillars alternated on the ground floor. On the main level, flat wall strips framed each three of windows. Central windows boasted segmental pediments, while side ones were triangular, providing a pronounced central focal point. Shallow cornice projections above the columns and pilasters created a delicate relief crucial for the façade's overall effect. This relief needed to be easily read; stronger projections with rhythmic movements would have induced a sense of restlessness (Heydenreich L. , 1974).

Vasari drew his inspiration from many sources like high renaissance works in Rome, like Michelangelo among others. 'The use of large consoles and multiple planes on the wall areas, pier surfaces, and trims like the window frames, show

the Mannerist influence of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, which Vasari saw being built during his apprenticeship in Florence.' (Palazzo degli Uffizi, sd) The ground-floor loggia's vaulting is illuminated by openings in the mezzanine above the Doric order. Similar windows can be observed in the coffered tunnel vault of Bramante's choir in S. Maria del Popolo and in the cortile loggia of Peruzzi's Palazzo Massimo. Here, Vasari could refer to 'classical' models. However, there's a new twist on the traditional coffering in the tunnel-vault. (Heydenreich L. , 1974)

With these features the Uffizi announced a new approach to the design of public buildings. It departed from castellated prototypes such as the Palazzo dei Tribunal and the Castel Capuano and with that divested itself of associations with tyranny¹⁰. Visible in the façade is that no space remains untouched. Every meter of the façade is used as an opportunity to show details or used for windows. The ground floor is laid back a few meters and shows doric columns which are the least detailed part of the whole outside façade.

Visible on the ground floor are the elongated pilasters and columns used in the Uffizi. Although the façade of the is divided into a tripartite rhythm, there is a lot going on in the façade. The unusual façade composition shows features of different art movements and artist put together into a unconventional composition. Furthermore, mannerism is known for its emotional intensity and theatricality. While this is not directly shown in different details in the façade, it can be said that the overall architectural expression evokes a sense of drama or emotion.

Painting

Vasari was responsible for the overall architectural design of the Uffizi, and although he was more well known for his work as an esteemed painter, he did not paint extensively within the Uffizi itself. One of the paintings Vasari was responsible for was the portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici.

Vasari described Lorenzo several times in 'The lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors and architects'. Vasari also celebrates him in the same way in the frescoes in Palazzo Vecchio. Duke Alessandro commissioned to paint this portrait to commemorate his ancestor and legitimise the family's return to power. Vasari wanted to illustrate the great qualities of this 'extremely rare, very unique citizen' through surrounding ornaments. The description Monica Alderotti gives is as follows: 'Lorenzo is depicted wearing the clothes he wore at home, as per the commissioner's wishes, but the fur lining on his sleeves is an indication of the subject's high social standing. He is leaning on a marble pillar decorated with a mask in relief. The Latin inscription reveals its meaning: "As my ancestors did with me, I too, with my virtue, shall light the way for my descendants". An ancient-style oil lamp, consisting of a porphyry base topped by a bizarre mask, sits on top of the pillar. Vasari clarifies how it works: the oil falls on to the forehead of the mask, gushing forth from the horns to fuel the papyrus wick protruding from the mask's wide, open mouth. He explains that, just as the function of the papyrus was to light up everything around it, in the same way, the eloquence and wisdom of Lorenzo indicated the path for his descendants to follow. On the right, there is another marble base, on which we read "Virtue

triumphs over vices". Vice is symbolised by the monstrous mask laid on top of the pillar and squashed by a finely sculpted vase, identified by the inscription as "the vase of all virtues". Another mask is hanging on the spout of the vase, and this one is defined by Vasari as "clean and very beautiful"; the reward of all virtues". (Alderotti, sd)

As far as mannerism goes, Vasari depicted Lorenzo as his true self without elongated limbs, a dramatic pose or exaggerated expression. It is in the background of the painting however, where mannerism characteristics are visible. As described, in the top right corner, a bizarre mask is visible. The mask, depicting the head of a man, consists of horns and a unrealistically wide open mouth. On the other marble base on the right side another mask can be found with a man with a visible dramatic expression on his vase. Above this a third mask hangs from the spout of a vase with a more neutral but scary look. Lastly on the left bottom a devil like figure is shown. All these elements are painted in a dark tone on the background to not take away from Lorenzo de' Medici (Alderotti, sd).



Fig. 24: Portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici

Comparative analysis

Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari are both extraordinary painters and architects who wanted to match the greatness of their predecessors such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo. They accomplished this by implementing the new mannerist style.

Upbringing

When comparing these two artists, it's important to not only view their most famous works, but also to look at their history. Vasari's history is immensely rich, beginning with the teaching of multiple artists like Andrea del Sarto and Michelangelo. Furthermore, Vasari has visited many places, like Mantua, Rome, Arezzo and Florence, to work himself but also for his work on 'The lives of the artists' which is the next point. He spoke to many artists like him and shared ideas. This together with the fact that he provided for his family of 3 sisters, two brothers and mother, shaped him to the man he would become.

In comparison, Giulio began his work as pupil of Raphael around the age of 16. Not that much is known before this time but it can be assumed that Romano had prior experience with painting and had already been in contact with artists, possibly gaining some recognition, considering Raphael was already one of the most renowned artists of that time. Raphael died in 1520 which gave Romano 4 years until his arrival in Mantua at Gonzaga's request. In these 4 years he completed a lot of works that

were already started by Raphael. From 1624 on Romano was stated as Architect and artist in Mantua where he oversaw every project that came through the city. In The lives, Vasari states Giulio went to Bologna to create a façade for San Petronio. He furthermore states that another try to get Romano back to his native city was rejected as he did not want to leave family and friends.

From this, it can be learned that the life of Giulio Romano was relatively modest compared to Vasari's. Although Vasari experienced the most setbacks, this also meant that he came into contact with numerous artists and visited many cities, which undoubtedly enriched his mind and served as a source of inspiration. Romano, on the other hand, mainly learned from Raphael, and others who he met along his slightly more narrow way

Art

Both Artists are well-known for their art. They both started painting at a very young age and displayed great potential.

Vasari was an excellent painter. This is visible in his works like 'The Battle of Marciano' or his portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici. Most of his work depicted historical events. Vasari was also a Christian and painted a lot of figures referring to religion. His mannerist style goes further than just the surface with an example being 'The battle of Marciano'. This painting, located at the Palazzo Vecchio in Salo dei Cinquecento hides mannerist characteristics only visible when you are familiar with the zeitgeist of Italian warfare in the 16th century. He

puts this into the intricate details of the painting.

When Looking at Salo dei Gigante, Romano, he opts for a more direct approach. With the enormous, winding, serpent-like bodies and dramatic facial expressions, it is immediately clear he is trying to portray. Unlike Vasari, Romano depicts the Greek gods in his works, of which he portrays Jupiter multiple time. This can be linked to the Gonzaga family who saw Jupiter as a symbol of their house.

So as where Vasari's style often reflected the classical ideals of the Renaissance, while also incorporating elements of Mannerism. Giulio Romano embraces Mannerism more boldly in his works. His paintings and architectural designs often feature exaggerated proportions, dramatic poses, and intricate details, challenging the traditional norms of the Renaissance.

Architecture

Vasari as well as Romano are most well known for their first big architectural design, Romano's being Palazzo del Te in Mantua and Vasari's being the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

Knowing these buildings could be both noted as mannerist architecture, the difference between them are no less than remarkable. Where Romano uses rustication and heavy stones that seem overly big for their necessary load (Figure 24), Vasari uses dramatic colours and columns that almost seem too small for the load they have to carry (Figure 22). This shows that mannerism, although it

can be defined by some characteristics, can be interpreted in many different ways. It could be said that mannerism is defined by the way it differs from the Renaissance. The artists of the mannerist movement tried to outgrow their masters such as Michelangelo and Raphael, who were the greatest artists of their time. By doing so they combined, what were in their eyes, the most beautiful elements. These elements were elements from the renaissance but could also be other art-movements. Furthermore, the elements were adapted to make a even more perfect element. This is the reasons for the minor changes in style but also the reason why it was seen late renaissance style before it got recognized as its own art movement



Fig. 24: Facade of Palazzo del Te;
Mantua

When looking at the projects individually, it can be seen that the characteristics of Mannerism are clearly visible within the paintings, as well as the architecture. Were Giulio Romano stays closer to the high renaissance style in his architecture, the true exaggeration of mannerism is visible inside in his paintings, Giorgio Vasari does the

opposite. The Uffizi shows a truly dramatic façade without any empty spots, he uses the façades to their limits but still makes it a unity. He displays the mannerist drama and exaggeration in the facades by the use of colours and shapes. Vasari shows this in a very direct way while Romano hides it more in the details of his architecture.

Vasari's architectural contribution showcases his skill of blending classical elements in a innovating design with which he creates big but grandiose structures that symbolize power and prestige, something Cosimo I wanted to radiate. Romano showcases in Palazzo del Te the experimentation of unconventional forms. He incorporates asymmetry, irregularities and details that can be characterized to mannerism.

Although very different in certain ways, they both tried to find new ways to express their believes as artist which made them the well-known artists they have become today with many of their works to show for it.

Conclusion

Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari, both well known for their architecture and art in 16th century Italy had a very different upbringing. Giulio Romano began as student of Raphael and shortly after his death, was invited to Mantua to become the main architect and painter of the Gonzaga family. Vasari was born in Arezzo and moved to Florence where he was only a boy. His youth was shaped by war and illness, which caused him to move to many cities, but it also led him to work on various assignments early on, meet many artists, and absorb culture from other regions. The mannerist influence of Romano could be found at Raphael, who in his later life also started using this artform. Vasari's influence can be attributed to his admiration for Michelangelo, who began incorporating Mannerism into his works towards the end of his life, and the diverse array of influences he encountered during his youth and while writing "The Lives".

The design and artistic choices made by Giulio Romano's most well-known work in the Palazzo del Te have sparked extensive debate and interpretation among researchers and scholars. Various perspectives have been presented, ranging from interpretations rooted in historical context to analyses of artistic expression and intentionality. Romano's innovative approach to architectural design, characterized by discrepancies and creative exploitations, reflects the transition from Renaissance ideals to the emerging style of Mannerism. The

Palazzo del Te is an example of this, showing both the classical influences of the Renaissance and the experimentation of Mannerism.

Romano's use of unconventional elements, such as falling keystones and exaggerated architectural details, challenges traditional characteristics of balance and order, inviting viewers to reconsider their perception of the architecture. Through his attention to detail and dramatic artistic expression, Romano transforms the Palazzo del Te into a dynamic and immersive environment, where architecture and artwork come together to evoke a sense of instability and restlessness. These features can be found among various works of Romano including the Casa Pitti.

The fall of the Giants in Camera dei Gigante, further shows Romano's approach to art as well as architectural. The exaggerated scale, expressions and dramatic scene depicted in the fresco reflect the spirit of mannerism. With Palazzo del Te, Giulio Romano depicts the instability inside and out, by using the rustication on the outside and his description of the fall of the giants on the inside.

Giorgio Vasari left his mark on the Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi Gallery, shaping them to their now known significance. Through his renovations and architectural innovations, Vasari not only transformed these buildings but also influenced the trajectory of Renaissance and Mannerist architecture. His portraits, like that of

The battle of Marciano capture the spirit of the era, Showing that mannerist details can be hidden anywhere and even people who lived during that time maybe did not see the connections..

The comparison between Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari reveals their different upbringing and shows a reasoning for the style of there later work with Vasari often reflecting classical elements in mannerist style, while Romano uses rustication and dramatic compositions to embrace Mannerism. They both left their marks in history with their pieces such as Palazzo del Te and The Uffizi Galary. Their experimenting with new, more beautiful form, showed a new path away from the Renaissance towards something new. With that, The legacy of Vasari and Romano with their now iconic landmark, reminds us to find new ways and with that shows the impact of their vision and creativity on art and architecture.

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