



THE STORIES OF
**PICTURES &
SCULPTURES**

ŠTEPÁNKA SEKANINOVÁ & JAKUB CENKL

B4U PUBLISHING

BIRTH OF VENUS

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

1484

Come and look at this, kids! Breathtaking, isn't it? You're standing before The Birth of Venus, the most famous work by Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli.

SYMBOL OF BEAUTY

In Roman mythology, Venus was the goddess of love, made of the fine foam of the sea. In the painting, she is standing in a scallop shell, and the two figures blowing on her are wind gods called Zephyrs, who by their breath are trying to carry her to the shore, where Thallo, the goddess of spring, is waiting for her, holding out an ornate cloak. The roses in the picture have been born along with Venus. Can you see them, all around her?



SIMONETTA
A beauty from Florence



O, FOR ANTIQUITY!

Sandro Botticelli painted this famous picture in 1484. You know now that the Renaissance admired Antiquity, so the theme of this work will come as no surprise. Until this time, paintings represented common scenes from the Bible or mythology.



SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi was born in Florence on 3 March 1445, to the family of a tanner. Sandro came by the nickname of Botticelli after a stay at his brother's, who was very – how should I put it? – obese. 'Botticello', his brother's nickname, means barrel; 'botticelli' means little barrel. First, Botticelli trained under another brother to be a goldsmith, but he was very much more attracted to a painter's career, which, fortunately for us, he went on to follow. After some time, he opened his own workshop, where he painted pictures on themes of mythology, frescoes of biblical scenes and portraits.



Doesn't Venus seem rather sad to you?

It's because Simonetta suffered from tuberculosis, a serious disease of the lungs. Nobody with tuberculosis feels like smiling.



AS BEAUTIFUL AS VENUS

The model for the beautiful goddess of love was a real girl of flesh and blood. Her name was Simonetta, and she was so lovely that all Florence was in love with her. She was even named Florence's 'Queen of Beauty'. The great painter Botticelli was among those moved by her appearance – she was the model for many of his representations of the Madonna and Venus.

In Renaissance times, FRESCOS were very popular decorations in chambers and churches

FRESCO

A fresco is a kind of mural created by painting onto wet plaster. As the resulting image dries along with its base, the paints soak into the plaster.



GOLD FOR THE GODDESS

Venus's hair, the leaves on the tree and the roses are interwoven with real gold. That's how precious this painting was. Today it is one of the most beautiful canvases in the world.

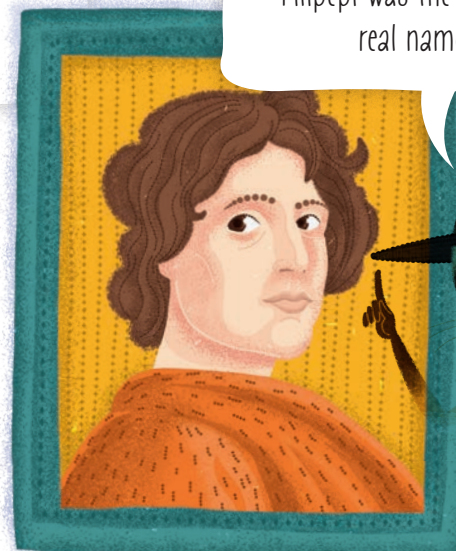


It's divine to be THE GODDESS!

I thought we were going to talk about Sandro Botticelli?!



So we are. Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi was the painter's real name.



THE SISTINE CHAPEL IS DEDICATED TO THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY. FOR MANY CENTURIES, IT HAS BEEN THE SITE OF THE CONCLAVE AT WHICH CARDINALS ELECT A NEW POPE.

TIGER IN A TROPICAL STORM

HENRI ROUSSEAU

1890



Jungle, rain, colour... plenty of colour.

A STORM IS COMING!

Watch out, tropical storm! Lightning flashes across an overcast sky, branches swinging in the brisk wind. On the edge of a lush jungle, a tiger stalks its prey, baring its teeth at the whole world. This is one of Henri Rousseau's crazy dreams, brought to life in a brilliant painting called Tiger in a Tropical Storm.

WHERE'S THE PERSPECTIVE?

The critics made fun of this picture and others by the painter/customs officer, calling them silly and childish. They said Tiger in a Tropical Storm lacked perspective, with the leaves in the distance larger than the leaves in the foreground, while the tiger was poised on points of grass which in normal circumstances would not hold its weight.



How silly and childish! My own son could paint it better!

Let's move from the exotic, fairy-tale islands of Polynesia to the multicoloured, perilous jungle, with its tigers, super-strange plants and brightly-coloured birds. Welcome to the wonderful world of painter and customs officer Henri Rousseau.

Please, Mr. Rousseau, wouldn't you like to turn me into a cheetah?



In his eyes, an ordinary park looked like an
EXOTIC SCENERY



The ridiculing of Henri Rousseau, who was untouched by any education as an artist and painted because he felt like painting, in his own way, marked the beginnings of so-called NAÏVE ART.

NAÏVE ART

Naïve art is a term for works by artists without a formal education, who use simple artistic techniques to express themes and produce scenes that are often dreamlike

and magical. Paintings are simple, may seem childish, often lack shade, yet are filled with interesting detail.

DREAMS AND IMAGINATION

Imagination played a big role: Henri Rousseau never actually went near a jungle, indeed he never even left his native France. For the creation of his jungles, his imagination made do with the famous botanical garden in Paris, which was filled with luxuriant exotic plants, and stuffed beasts of prey.



HENRI ROUSSEAU

Henri Rousseau was born in France in 1844. As a child, he was a poor student; handwriting and singing were the only subjects that caused him no difficulty. Having moved from job to job, he became a customs officer, and 'Customs Officer' became his nickname. Rousseau came to painting quite late in life. He was forty when he first transferred his life's desires to canvas. No one attended his first exhibition. Not until his later years did he achieve a measure of success. In debt for most of his life, he became used to living in poverty.

What on Earth was I dreaming about?



! THE PAINTING **TIGER IN A TROPICAL STORM** FIRES OUR IMAGINATION, TOO. AS YOU LOOK AT IT, IMAGINE HOW THE STORY OF THE HUNTING TIGER COULD DEVELOP. WHO IS THE TIGER LYING IN WAIT FOR?

STREET ART

THE PRESENT DAYS

This isn't vandalism – it's a new form of art by which artists try to decorate and enliven their town. This is the work of Hitotzuki, a pair of Japanese artists.

STREET ARTISTS

see every surface in their town as a canvas for their art...



Please don't disturb me. I'm trying to turn these rubbish bins into ladybirds.

WHAT IS STREET ART?

This is about more than just brightening up paint-peeled walls and buildings with a few pictures. Street art relates to everything in a public setting – mosaics, the installation of various objects, even living statues...



Street artist cannot do without
SPRAY PAINTS,
BRUSHES AND
MOST IMPORTANTLY,
IDEAS.



It's important not to be afraid of heights.

Wow!
That's so cool!

A SHORT STREET-ART GLOSSARY

STICKERS – sticky labels with various themes, with which artists decorate objects in the street
STENCILS – objects through and over which artists transfer text or pictures onto a wall
POSTERS – artistic works printed on large sheets of paper
ILLUSTRATION – spray can

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Would you like to know more about the mysterious beauty of Mona Lisa, muscular David, the giant Buddha, Jesus Christ on high and the Little Mermaid, and delight in the splendour of sunflowers in bloom? You would? Then join Mina the cat and her twins Anna and Lana on their journey around the most famous pictures and sculptures. Learn how they came about and something about the artists who created them. Discover nuggets of information about a wide variety of art techniques. After you read this book, there's a good chance that you, too, will become an artist. Just put on your painter's tunic, grab your palette and you're ready to go. Your guide – Mina the cat – awaits.



JOIN
US ON JOURNEY
AROUND THE
WORLD



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WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD
Small parts. Not suitable for
children under 36 months.

