



A Free Course on the History of Western Art

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- Welcome. This was going to be the last of my **230 talks** on the **History of Western Art**. However, I just discovered over forty more talks I gave years ago and decided if I could give them completely automatically then I would add them to the history.

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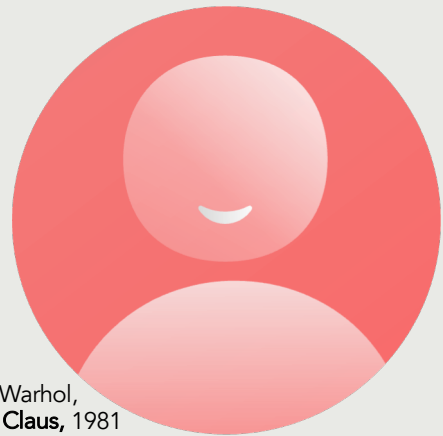
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99-01 CHRISTMAS

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Andy Warhol,
Santa Claus, 1981

Happy Christmas! This art history journey takes us from late antiquity to pop art, tracing how the festive season evolved on canvas. We will explore structural changes in devotion, the shift from sacred nativities to secular traditions, and the social realities of winter. But art history does not always have to be solemn. To keep our spirits bright as we travel through centuries of masterpieces, each painting's formal analysis will be paired with a traditional Christmas cracker joke. Let us begin our tour of midwinter magic over sixteen hundred years ago!

LIST OF ARTWORKS USED

Unknown Artist – Sarcophagus of Stilicho (Nativity Relief), c. 385 AD, approx 120 cm high, Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan

Giotto di Bondone – The Nativity, 1303–1305, 200 × 185 cm, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

Fra Angelico (circa 1395–1455), Annunciation, 1440-45, fresco, 230 x:297 cm, Museum of San Marco

Geertgen tot Sint Jans, Nativity at Night, c. 1490, 34 × 25 cm, National Gallery, London

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Census at Bethlehem, 1566, 115 × 163 cm, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

Caspar David Friedrich – Winter Landscape, 1811, 32.5 x 45 cm, National Gallery, London

Claude Monet – Snow Scene at Argenteuil, 1875, 71 x 91 cm, National Gallery, London

Edward Burne-Jones – The Star of Bethlehem, c. 1887–1890, Approx. 254 × 350 cm (watercolour), Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

James Ensor — Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889, 1888, approx. 14 × 9.5 ft; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Viggo Johansen – Silent Night (Merry Christmas), 1891, 127 x 158 cm, Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen

Luke Fildes, The Doctor, 1891, Tate Britain, London

**Carl Larsson — Christmas Eve (Julafton), c. 1892–1904,
Watercolor; published in Ett Hem (A Home), 1899**

**Käthe Kollwitz — Poverty (Plate I, Ein Weberaufstand [A
Weavers' Revolt]), 1897, Etching and aquatint**

**Henry Ossawa Tanner – The Annunciation, 1898, 144.8 × 181
cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art**

**Stanley Spencer – The Nativity, 1912, 102.9 × 152.4 cm, UCL
Art Museum, London**

**Norman Rockwell – Santa Reading Mail, 1935, 91 x 68 cm,
Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA**

**Andy Warhol – Santa Claus (from the Myths series), 1981, 96 x
96 cm, Various (e.g., MoMA, New York)**

**Norman Rockwell, The Discovery, 1956, Saturday Evening Post
cover, December 29, 1956**

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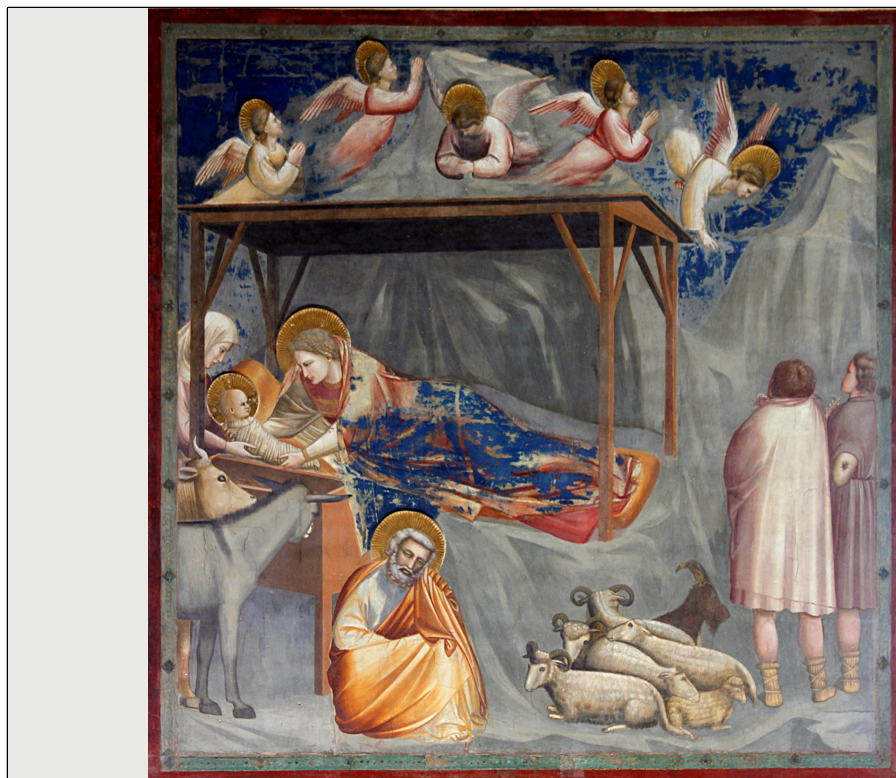
<https://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/>



Unknown Artist – Sarcophagus of Stilicho (Nativity Relief),
c. 385 AD, approx 120 cm high, Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan

Unknown Artist – Sarcophagus of Stilicho (Nativity Relief), c. 385 AD,
approx 120 cm high, Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan

- One of the earliest known depictions of the Nativity. It features the Christ child in a manger with the ox and the ass — symbols that predate most other Nativity figures.
- The strange thing is neither the ox nor the donkey appears anywhere in the Gospels of Matthew or Luke. They were imported from Isaiah 1:3 "The ox knows its owner, the donkey its master's manger" and the apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. Yet by 385 AD they were already considered so indispensable that the sculptor carved them in as a matter of course. They have since appeared in virtually every Nativity scene for 1,700 years — a triumph of tradition over scripture that no theologian has ever successfully reversed.
- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** *So why did the artist add an ox and ass to the Nativity scene? ... Because they added stable-ity to the composition!*



Giotto di Bondone
The Nativity,
 1303–1305,
 200 × 185 cm,
 Scrovegni Chapel,
 Padua

Giotto di Bondone – The Nativity, 1303–1305, 200 × 185 cm,
 Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

- The Scrovegni Chapel in Padua is one of the “must see” works for any art lover. There are 38 main narrative frescoes and I have selected one, the Nativity.
- Giotto’s breakthrough was to move away from stiff Byzantine icons toward human emotion. Mary’s is shown here exhausted, tenderly look at her child. This marks the birth of humanism in Christmas art.
- The Scrovegni Chapel was commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni partly to atone for his father Reginaldo's sins — Dante had placed Reginaldo in the seventh circle of Hell for usury. The result is one of the greatest religious commissions in Western art, funded by banking guilt. Giotto was already so celebrated for his naturalism that Vasari later recorded how he once painted a fly on a master's canvas so convincingly that the owner tried to brush it away with his hand before realising he had been fooled. Whether strictly true or not, the story captures exactly how revolutionary Giotto's realism appeared to contemporary eyes.

- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** *Why did Giotto's Mary look so exhausted? Well, she'd just given birth — and still had another thirty-seven frescoes to sit for.*



Fra Angelico (c. 1395–1455),
Annunciation,
 F1440-45,
 fresco,
 230 x:297 cm,
 Museum of San Marco

Fra Angelico (circa 1395–1455), **Annunciation**, 1440-45, fresco, 230 x:297 cm, Museum of San Marco

- The "beginning" of Christmas — the moment the story starts. Famed for its architectural purity and spiritual calm.
- Fra Angelico was a Dominican friar who, according to Vasari, never picked up his brush without first saying a prayer, and reportedly never depicted the Crucifixion without weeping. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1982 as patron of artists — one of the very few painters to achieve that distinction. This Annunciation was painted not for public display but for the monks' private meditation at the top of the dormitory stairs in San Marco. Look carefully at the background and you will see Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden — the moment of the Fall that this very Annunciation is about to redeem.
- Christmas Cracker Joke: Why did Fra Angelico get so stressed while trying to finish this fresco? ... Because he kept losing his *tempera*! ... *There is a bonus point for you art history buffs here: Fra Angelico famously used egg tempera for his panel paintings, but actually*

*Painted the finishing details on this San Marco fresco "a secco"—dry—
using tempera!*



Geertgen tot Sint Jans,
Nativity at Night,
c. 1490,
34 × 25 cm,
National Gallery, London

Geertgen tot Sint Jans, **Nativity at Night**, c. 1490, 34 × 25 cm, National Gallery, London

- A revolutionary nocturne. The only light source emanates from the Christ child himself, illustrating the theological concept of "the Light of the World."
- Almost nothing is known about Geertgen's life except that he lived with the Knights of St John in Haarlem — hence "Sint Jans." He died at approximately 28 years old, making him one of the great tragic prodigies of Northern European painting. This picture, barely larger than an A4 sheet, contains one of the most sophisticated experiments in differential light sources of the entire 15th century: the shepherds outside are lit by a separate angelic light that never mixes with the radiance inside the stable. The two light sources are physically and theologically distinct. For a man who never reached 30, it is a remarkable piece of optical theology.
- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** *What did the Early Netherlandish art critics say about Geertgen's dramatic use of light in the dark? ... They gave it a glowing review! ...* This painting is legendary for being one of

the earliest and most radical examples of using the Christ child as the sole, glowing light source in a nocturnal scene.



Pieter Bruegel the Elder,
The Census at Bethlehem,
1566,
115 × 163 cm,
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Census at Bethlehem*, 1566, 115 × 163 cm, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

- The first major painting to place the Christmas story in a snowy contemporary landscape, anchoring Christmas in everyday winter life.
- This painting is covert political satire. Bruegel set the Biblical census in 16th-century Flanders under Spanish Habsburg occupation, and the officials demanding registration are widely understood as Spanish soldiers extracting taxes from a subject population. The Biblical authority and the contemporary oppressor are one and the same. The danger of saying this openly in 1566 Flanders was considerable. Meanwhile, Mary and Joseph are so tiny in the composition that most viewers never find them on first looking. The central figures of the entire Christian story are hidden in plain sight, lost in the market-day crowd.
- Christmas Cracker Joke: Why was Bruegel's Bethlehem so incredibly busy? ... Because everyone had the *census* to be there!

References

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder_-_The_Numbering_at_Bethlehem_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

https://fine-arts-museum.be/uploads/releases/files/bruegel_unseen_masterpieces_booklet.pdf



Caspar David Friedrich,
Winter Landscape,
1811,
32.5 x 45 cm,
National Gallery, London

Caspar David Friedrich – *Winter Landscape*, 1811, 32.5 x 45 cm,
National Gallery, London

- Romanticism at its peak. A crippled man abandons his crutches before a crucifix in the snow, suggesting a personal, spiritual Christmas.
- Friedrich painted two virtually identical versions of this composition in 1811 — one is in the National Gallery, London; the other in the Staatliches Museum in Schwerin, Germany. They were almost certainly conceived as a pair. Friedrich suffered from severe depression throughout his life and had a complete breakdown in 1801. The abandoned crutches — a man healed by faith alone — represent his most optimistic theological statement. He is widely cited as having said: "The painter should not only paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees within himself." In Friedrich's case, that interior landscape was frequently very dark indeed.
- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** *What do you call a man who leaves his crutches in the snow at Christmas? ... Either deeply faithful — or very forgetful.*

References

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/caspar-david-friedrich-winter-landscape>



Claude Monet,
**Snow Scene at
Argenteuil,**
1875,
71 x 91 cm,
National Gallery, London

Claude Monet – *Snow Scene at Argenteuil*, 1875, 71 x 91 cm, National Gallery, London

- Impressionism captures the "feeling" of a white Christmas. Monet focuses on the physical properties of snow and winter light rather than religious figures.
- Monet painted dozens of snow scenes and was fanatically committed to working outdoors regardless of weather. He wore multiple coats layered over one another and cut the fingers from his gloves to keep painting through sub-zero temperatures. His fellow artist and patron Gustave Caillebotte — himself a considerable painter — recalled Monet becoming so absorbed in observing the quality of light on snow that he seemed to forget about everything else, including where he was standing. Caillebotte also, at various points, kept Monet more or less financially solvent. Friendship among the Impressionists was frequently very practical.
- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** Why did the art critic keep staring at Monet's winter landscape? ... He just couldn't get a clear impression!

- *Why did Monet paint snow so often? Because he liked to make a good impression*



Edward Burne-Jones,
The Star of Bethlehem,
c. 1887–1890,
254 × 350 cm
(watercolour),
Birmingham
Museum and Art
Gallery

Edward Burne-Jones – The Star of Bethlehem, c. 1887–1890, Approx.
254 × 350 cm (watercolour), Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

One of the largest watercolours ever painted, this Pre-Raphaelite vision of the Nativity translates the scene into a world of jewel-like colour and courtly grace — a high Victorian synthesis of medieval Christian iconography and Aesthetic Movement beauty.

Burne-Jones spent approximately three years on this enormous sheet, and when it was first publicly exhibited it drew crowds that stretched around the building. He and William Morris had been inseparable friends since meeting at Oxford in 1853 — Morris designed the wallpapers and fabrics, Burne-Jones painted the windows and the visions, and together they functioned as a single aesthetic organism. By the time this was finished, Burne-Jones was one of the most celebrated artists in Britain; he was made a baronet in 1894, becoming Sir Edward Burne-Jones. He had declined to become a Royal Academician several times on the grounds that the institution was too conservative. The man who best embodied Victorian idealism was also its most persistent internal critic.

Christmas Cracker Joke: Why did the angel in this massive Pre-Raphaelite painting look so completely exhausted? ... Because holding up a giant glowing star for three years was Burne-ing him out! ... The art historical background is that it took Burne-Jones nearly three years to complete this monumental watercolour.

What do the Three Wise Men and a Pre-Raphaelite painter have in common? Both spent years following a distant light — and both arrived bearing rather extravagant gifts.

References

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_of_Bethlehem_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_of_Bethlehem_(painting))



James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, approx. 14 × 9.5 ft, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

James Ensor — *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, approx. 14 × 9.5 ft; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

- Ensor completed this enormous canvas in 1888, set it a year into the future, and showed what modern mass festivity actually is — a grotesque, dehumanising carnival. The crowd wears masks (Death, buffoons, leering caricatures); banners advertise cheap entertainment and slogans rather than scripture; Christ is buried and barely visible in the crush. Ensor intended a direct critique of Belgian bourgeois society and socialist politics, but the painting's resonance for Christmas specifically is precise: it shows the festival crowd as mob, joy as collective hysteria, celebration as the erasure of the individual. The colour is garish — reds, yellows, carnival green — which makes the horror more insidious, not less. This is what happens to a sacred occasion when consumerism and mass culture swallow it whole.
- Christmas Cracker Joke: Why did James Ensor's festive parade turn into such absolute chaos? ... Because everyone was mask-ing their true feelings!



Viggo Johansen,
Silent Night (Merry Christmas),
1891,
127 x 158 cm,
Hirschsprung Collection,
Copenhagen

Viggo Johansen – *Silent Night (Merry Christmas)*, 1891, 127 x 158 cm,
Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen

- Captures the modern "Family Christmas"—the glowing tree, the interior warmth, and the tradition of the gathering.
- Johansen painted his own wife Martha and their children for this scene — it is literally a portrait of his family's Christmas evening. The carol "Silent Night" (Stille Nacht) that gives the painting its subtitle was composed in 1818, words by Joseph Mohr and music by Franz Xaver Gruber, and was first performed to guitar accompaniment at St Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, Austria — because the church organ had broken on Christmas Eve. The carol that has come to define the quiet, candlelit Christmas was born out of a mechanical failure and a last-minute substitute instrument. There is a lesson there about improvisation and grace.
- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** Why is the family standing still? ... Because if anyone trips, they'll set the house on fire, they're real candles!

- *Why was the Christmas tree bad at keeping secrets? Because it always let things slip through its branches.*

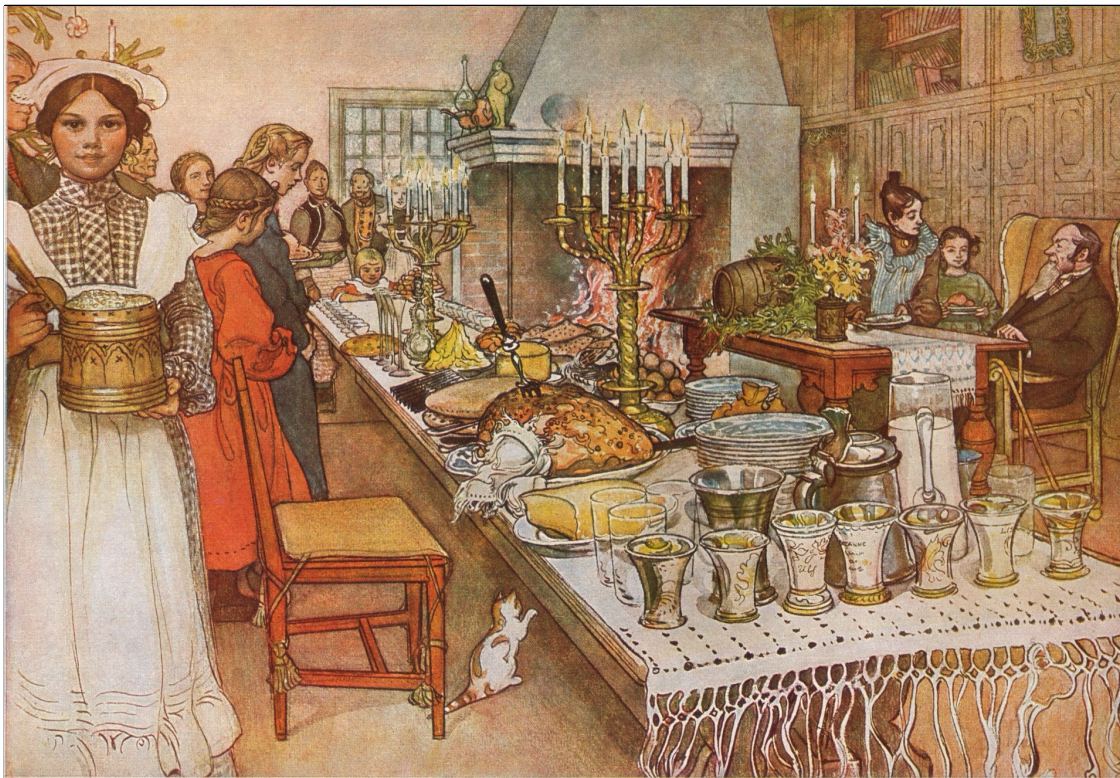


Luke Fildes,
The Doctor,
1891,
oil on canvas,
Tate Britain, London

Luke Fildes, *The Doctor*, 1891, Tate Britain, London

- Fildes based this painting on his own son's death on Christmas morning 1877. A village doctor sits through the night watching a gravely ill child, the parents in shadow behind him, a makeshift bed of chairs improvised in a labourer's cottage. It is a picture of Christmas danger in its most intimate and devastating form: a child dying during the one season when joy is culturally mandatory, in a poor household that cannot command better medical care. The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1891 and became one of the most reproduced images of the Victorian era — precisely because it said what the celebratory Christmas iconography refused to: that for many families, the season brings not comfort and joy but the exposure of every vulnerability. The presence of the doctor as the only heroic figure is also quietly devastating — he is the sole representative of social concern in the frame.
- To lighten the mood, here's a Christmas Cracker Joke: Why did the Victorian doctor pay a house call to this cottage right before the holidays? ... He heard the patient was suffering from an acute case

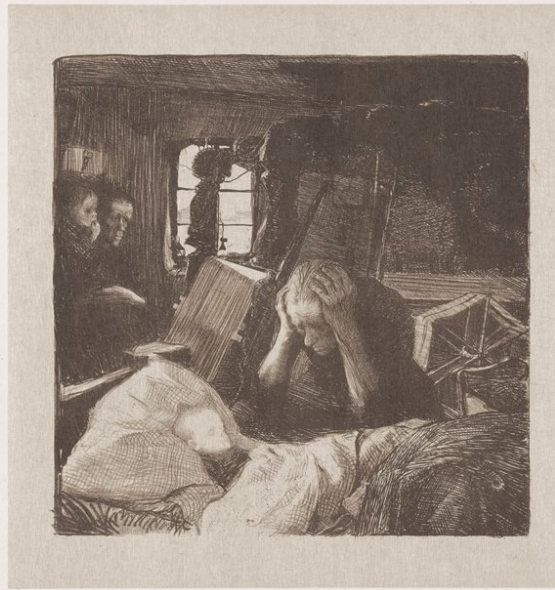
of *tinsel*-itis!



Carl Larsson,
**Christmas Eve
(Julafton)**,
c. 1892–1904,
Watercolour,
published in *Ett
Hem*, 1899

Carl Larsson — Christmas Eve (Julafton), c. 1892–1904, Watercolor;
published in *Ett Hem* (A Home), 1899

- The archetypal image of Christmas joy in Western art, and arguably more influential on how the modern world pictures a domestic Christmas than any oil painting. Larsson's home at Sundborn, Sweden, glows with candlelight; his children crowd around the decorated tree; the interior is warm, ordered, loving. The image is not merely descriptive — it is prescriptive, constructing the bourgeois Christmas ideal that the entire 20th century then tried and often catastrophically failed to live up to. The danger here is invisible but structural: Larsson's idyll is a standard against which real families are permanently measured and found wanting. Scandinavian influence on global Christmas aesthetics runs directly through this work.
- Christmas cracker Joke: Why did the Larsson family need such a massive dining table for their Swedish holiday feast? ... Because they had a very Large-son to feed!



Käthe Kollwitz,
Poverty
 (Plate I, *Ein Weberaufstand*),
 1897,
 Etching and aquatint

Käthe Kollwitz — *Poverty* (Plate I, *Ein Weberaufstand* [A Weavers' Revolt]), 1897, Etching and aquatint

- The opening image of Kollwitz's six-plate cycle on the Silesian weavers' uprising. A family sits in a desolate interior — dying child, exhausted parents, bare walls. No food, no warmth, no prospect. Kollwitz made this cycle between 1893 and 1897, years when the Christmas charity tradition was at its most institutionalised and most hypocritical in Germany and Britain alike: church collections, newspaper drives, illustrated appeals in the press, all of which left the structural conditions of poverty entirely intact. Poverty is the counter-image to every candlelit Christmas scene ever painted — it shows the family for whom the season's goodwill is an annual reminder of permanent exclusion. Kollwitz's technique — heavy, velvety etching with dense aquatint shadows — makes the darkness physical. You cannot look at Larsson's *Julafton* and then at this without the sentimentality of the former being indicted by the latter.
- Christmas Cracker Joke: Why did I include such a depressing print in a Christmas talk? ... To put the "bah" back in humbug! <break

time="1.5s" />This incredibly grim print was difficult to joke about but I thought I would just try to break the tension.

References

<https://collections.artsmia.org/art/48837/poverty-kaethe-kollwitz>



Henry Ossawa Tanner,
The Annunciation,
1898,
144.8 × 181 cm,
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Henry Ossawa Tanner – The Annunciation, 1898, 144.8 × 181 cm,
Philadelphia Museum of Art

- The first internationally celebrated work from the Nativity cycle by an African American artist, and a radical rethinking of the Annunciation: the Angel is not a figure but a column of blazing golden light, set within a realistically observed, humble Middle Eastern interior.
- Tanner, son of an African Methodist Episcopal bishop, faced such severe racial discrimination in the United States that he relocated to Paris in 1891 after training under Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He visited Egypt and Palestine in 1897, a year before painting this, and the setting reflects genuine observation of the region rather than European studio convention. When this was exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1898, critics praised it without knowing or caring about the artist's background. Back in America, when his identity became known, some reviewers refused to believe a Black artist could have produced it. Tanner once said simply: "I was made to feel I had no right to be a painter." He remained in France for most of his adult life.

- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** Why did the Archangel Gabriel appear to Mary as a beam of golden light instead of wearing traditional wings? ... He wanted to travel light for the holidays!
- *What did Mary say when a column of blazing light appeared in her room at midnight? "Well — this is certainly not what I expected on a Tuesday."*

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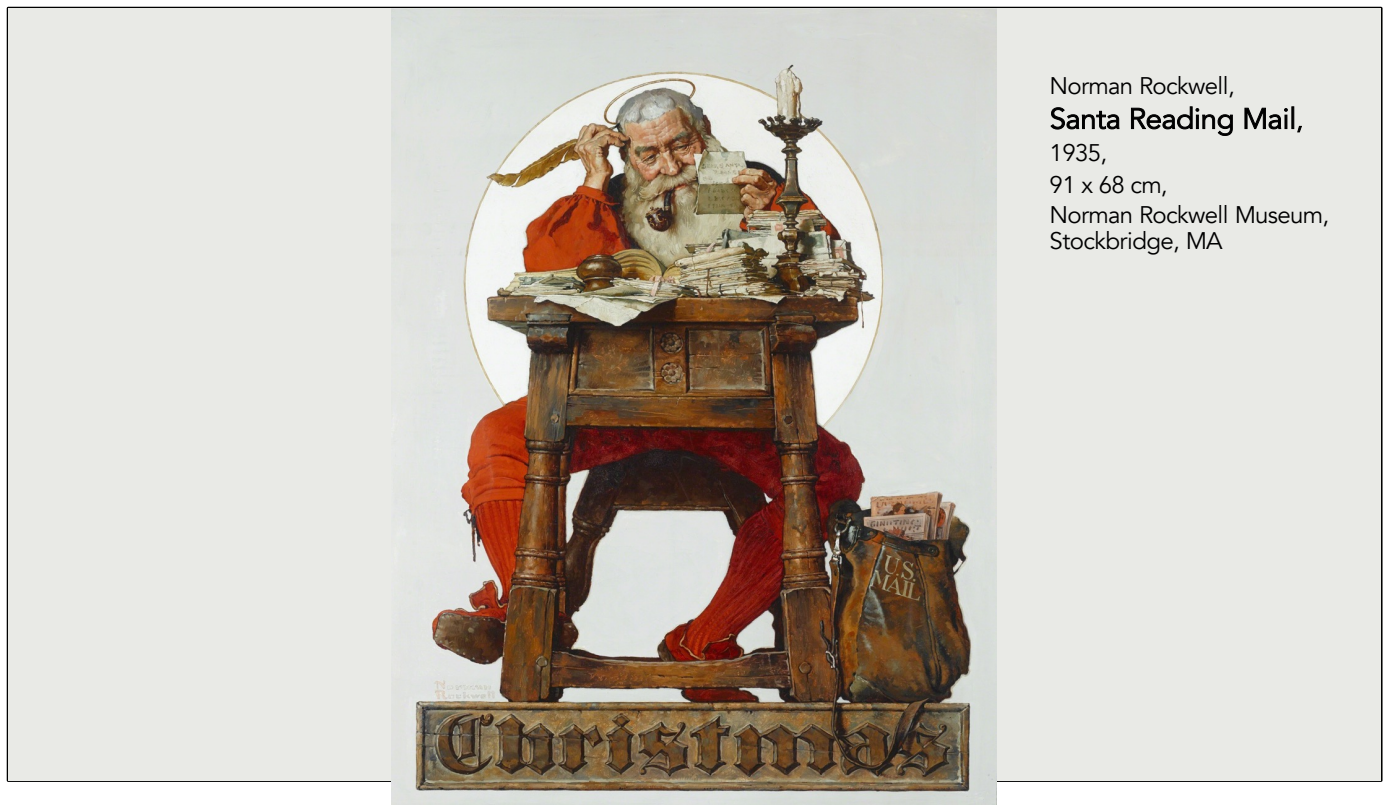


Stanley Spencer,
The Nativity,
1912,
102.9 × 152.4
cm,
UCL Art
Museum, London

Stanley Spencer – The Nativity, 1912, 102.9 × 152.4 cm, UCL Art Museum, London

- Spencer's Slade School prize composition transplants the Nativity to Cookham, his Berkshire village, surrounded by ordinary English people in contemporary dress — inaugurating his career-long project of finding the sacred embedded in the mundane.
- Spencer won the Slade summer composition prize with this painting at 21. He was known to fellow students simply as "Cookham" because of his near-pathological attachment to his home village, which he regarded as literally holy ground. His teacher Henry Tonks — one of the most formidably critical figures in British art education — was reportedly uncertain what to make of the combination of technical accomplishment and eccentric subject matter. Spencer later went further still, setting the Resurrection itself in Cookham churchyard (now in Tate Britain). He once said: "I would cycle back to Cookham knowing that every corner and lane was Heaven." His private life, by marked contrast, was one of the most comprehensively chaotic in British art history.

- **Christmas Cracker Joke:** Why did the Cookham shepherds arrive late to the Nativity? ... Because they took the wrong turning at the village green and ended up at the pub...The art historical context is that Spencer famously set almost all of his epic biblical scenes in his beloved hometown of Cookham.
- Why did Stanley Spencer decide to stage the birth of Christ in a regular Berkshire village instead of the Middle East? A: Because Bethlehem didn't have a good local pub!.



Norman Rockwell,
Santa Reading Mail,
 1935,
 91 x 68 cm,
 Norman Rockwell Museum,
 Stockbridge, MA

Norman Rockwell – *Santa Reading Mail*, 1935, 91 x 68 cm, Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA

- The definitive "American" Christmas. Rockwell helped solidify the modern visual identity of Santa Claus as a jolly, overworked figure of secular joy.
- Rockwell's Saturday Evening Post covers worked in direct concert with Haddon Sundblom's Coca-Cola Santa campaign (begun 1931) to standardise the red-suited, white-trimmed, round-bellied image that now dominates the world. Rockwell himself said: "I paint life as I would like it to be." He was known for almost obsessively careful preparation — photographing models, constructing props, and sometimes spending months refining a single image. For his various Santa pictures he used the same stocky, convivial model repeatedly. He said, "Children want to believe in Santa Claus just as fervently as we adults want to believe in peace on earth and goodwill toward men." In other words a child's faith in Santa is no more foolish than our hope for world peace.
- **A typical Christmas Cracker Joke:** *Why don't you ever see Santa in*

hospital? Because he has private elf care!

Why was Santa so completely overwhelmed by his mail pile in 1935? A:
Because everyone during the Great Depression was writing to ask for a
Rockwell-balanced budget!



Andy Warhol,
Santa Claus (from the
Myths series),
1981,
96 x 96 cm,
Various (e.g., MoMA, New
York)

Andy Warhol – *Santa Claus* (from the *Myths* series), 1981, 96 x 96 cm, Various (e.g., MoMA, New York)

- Warhol explores Santa as a "brand" or "myth," covered in diamond dust. It addresses the commercial saturation of the holiday.
- The *Myths* series placed Santa alongside Superman, Mickey Mouse, the Wicked Witch, Dracula, and Uncle Sam as defining American mythological constructs. Warhol used real ground industrial diamonds on the surface — literal diamonds on an image critiquing consumerism. The prints now sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars apiece. Warhol had thereby created a critique of commodity culture that became one of the most aggressively commodified print series of the 20th century. Whether this is the ultimate irony or the ultimate confirmation of his thesis is left as an exercise for whoever just bought one.
- **A thoughtful Christmas Cracker Joke:** *What do Andy Warhol and Santa Claus have in common? Both use a factory, both wear the same outfit every single day and both have a workshop full of little helpers doing most of the actual work.*



Norman Rockwell,
The Discovery,
1956,
Saturday Evening Post cover,
December 29, 1956

Norman Rockwell, *The Discovery*, 1956, *Saturday Evening Post* cover, December 29, 1956

- A boy, perhaps ten years old, has opened his parents' bedroom cupboard and found his father's Santa Claus suit. The expression on his face — not quite grief, not quite cynicism, somewhere in the narrow space between — is one of the most psychologically precise images in 20th-century American popular art. Rockwell is usually caricatured as a purveyor of saccharine nostalgia, which is a lazy misreading; this painting is explicitly about the moment Christmas joy ends, the precise instant at which the child's enchanted world collapses into the adult world of performance and managed belief. The danger here is not physical but existential: the danger of growing up, of discovering that joy was a fabrication maintained by those who love you, which immediately raises the question of what else they have been fabricating. Rockwell published this on December 29 — after Christmas, when the emotional reckoning sets in — which was a precise editorial decision.
- Not a Christmas cracker joke but the picture reminds me of

something Shirley Temple said, "I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph."



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- That brings me to the end of my five-year project summarising the whole history of Western Art as a series of about 230 lectures. I hope you have enjoyed the ride, and I will be continuing my AI research on my SubStack channel "at laurence shafe".
- I have also found another forty lectures I gave in the past and I have decided to publish them using clone technology every week for the next nine to ten months of 2027. This means it doesn't take a great deal of my time, but it does add to the depth and range of this art channel.
- Thank you for your time and I hope to see you at Tate Britain where I am a guide



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