

# *Sandro Botticelli*



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# *Biography of Sandro Botticelli*

*Sandro was an Italian painter that was born in Florence around 1445 and began his career during the Italian Renaissance period. Sandro Botticelli, original name Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi, is one of the most esteemed painters of the Italian Renaissance. Sandro Botticelli died at age of 65 at 1510. Botticelli was born in the city of Florence in a house in the street still called Borgo Ognissanti. He lived in the same area all his life and was buried in his neighbourhood church called Ognissanti ("All Saints"). Sandro was one of several children of the tanner Mariano di Vanni d'Amedeo Filipepi and mother Smeralda Filipepi, and the youngest of his four to survive into adulthood.*

## *The beginning of his career*

*After a time, Sandro convinced his father that he wanted to study painting and was chosen to be apprentice to the well known painter Fra Filippo Lippi.*

*Lippi was well known for how he used color on church altarpieces and helped Sandro discover a similar style for his own work. Sandro Botticelli developed tender expressions in his subjects face and in their gestures. He also used decorative details that were influenced by his training. Botticelli quickly became recognized as a gifted artist all by himself. By the time he was 15 years old, he was able to open a workshop dedicated to his own work.*

## Some of his most famous paintings are.

### **The Birth of Venus, 1485**

This is one of the most famous paintings by Sandro Botticelli and demarks the Italian renaissance. The composition of 'The Birth of Venus' has an underlying meaning to it.

It shows the goddess of love Venus, arriving on the island of Cyprus. She is born from the sea spray and blown there by the winds, perhaps Zephyr and Aura. The goddess is shown standing on a humongous scallop shell, denoting her being as pure as a pearl.

On the other side, she is met by a woman holding a cloak covered with flowers, who is identified as either Hora of Spring or one of the Graces



### ***Allegory of Fortitude, 1470***

*In another one of Botticelli's famous paintings is a young woman wearing armour over a very gracefully drawn dress. She also holds a ruler's sceptre, denoting perseverance and strength in the pursuit of goodness. She is depicted as one of the four cardinal human virtues.*

*This panel was the only one painted by Sandro Botticelli in the series of paintings dedicated to such virtues. This series was mainly made for the Tribunal Hall of Piazza Della Signoria in Florence. It is now placed in the Uffizi Galleries.*

*The body of the young woman seen in this painting is supple and long, while the face has a rather melancholic and unenergetic expression. This was a characteristic feature in most of Botticelli's female figures.*



### **Map of Hell, 1480**

More commonly known as 'The Abyss of Hell', this painting was made by Botticelli to illustrate editing of Dante Aligheri's poem 'The Divine Comedy'.

This painting mainly shows a geographic representation of hell in the classical funnel section, which was then later picked up in iconography. Painted sometime between 1480 and 1490, this painting was done using the silvertip technique.



### **Madonna of the Magnificat, 1481**

This painting is said to be Botticelli's most famous painting and was done in a rather unusual way. It was done in circular form and is also referred to as the 'Virgin and Child with Five Angels'. In the painting, you will see Virgin Mary writing the Magnificat with the right hand and a pomegranate in her left. Two other angels in the background are trying to crown her, with an infant Jesus on her lap. Three other angels on her left can be seen crowding the Magnificat, said to be in deep conversation with each other. This painting is located in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence now.

# *Late period*

Amid the Medici's exile, which lasted until 1512 when the family resumed power, the final phase of Botticelli's life coincided with a change in Florence's political climate. With the city experiencing political turmoil, Botticelli's late-career period was defined by his allegiance to the Italian friar and religious reformer Girolamo Savonarola. As the artist's following of Savonarola's moralistic teachings and condemnation of Florentine excess deepened, his style changed. By 1500, the artist focused his artistic output on devotional subjects, creating *The Mystical Nativity* (1500–01), merging the story of Christ's birth and return at the end of the world into one canvas. According to scholars, the picture, which is now owned by London's National Gallery, marks a return to medieval painting conventions. By Vasari's account, Botticelli's work fell out of favor during this period, although other contemporaneous records suggest that Botticelli remained a prominent figure in Florence, continuing to work for the younger Medici branch up until 1497. Botticelli died in 1510, with the Medicis still removed from power. From then on, his work went relatively unnoticed until renewed interest came in the 19th century.