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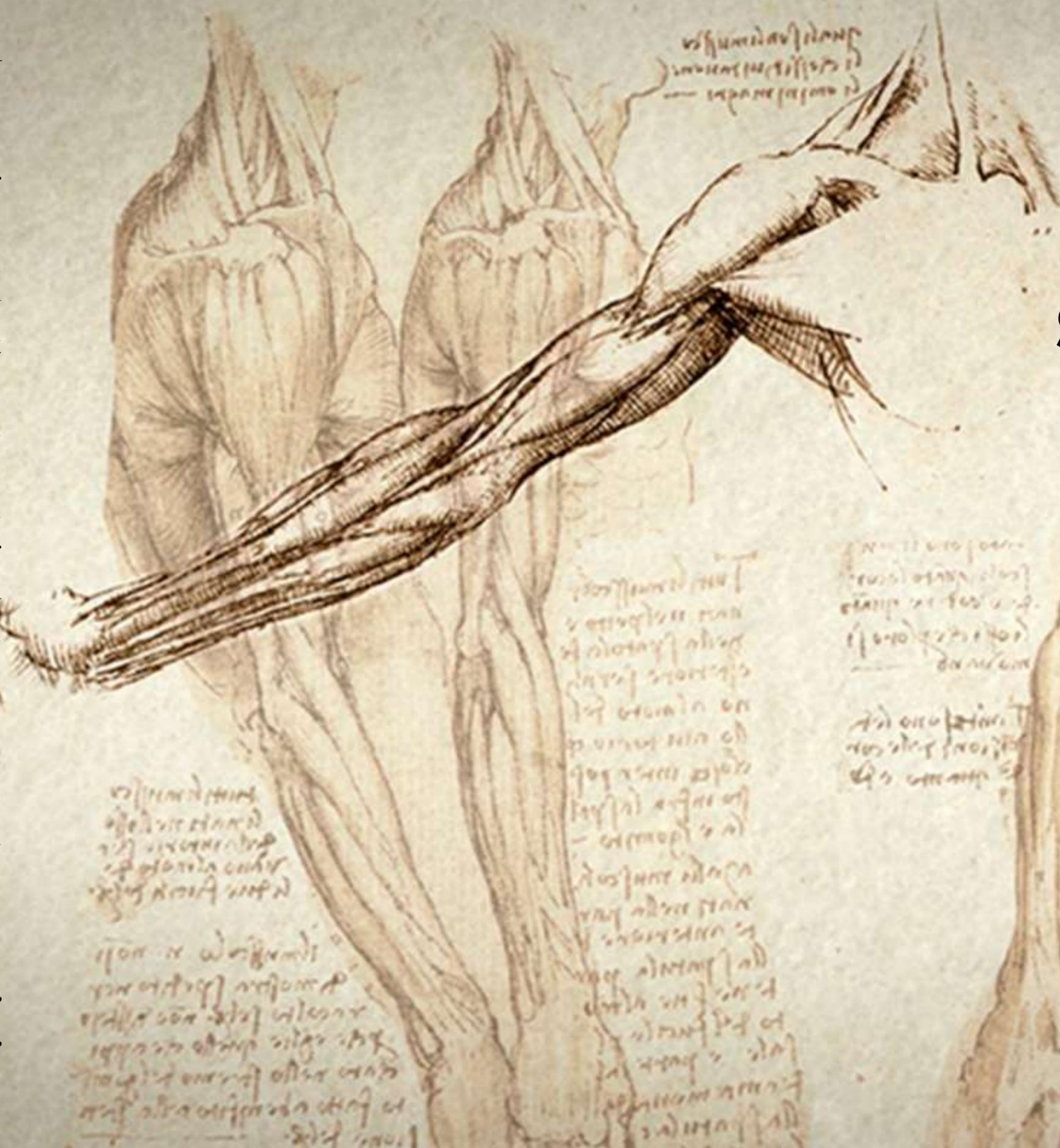
Hegel's struggle for recognition remains one of my favorite passages in the history of philosophy. It shows us how to exist is to be recognized and how getting there is the daily battle. *This can be complemented with Oscar Wilde's dictum: "be yourself, everybody else is taken." It reminds "us" to learn every day "to be us."* From a materialistic perspective, this means: we are shaping ourselves and figuring out who we are.

This issue is the story of how painting has interpreted the **role of "figures"** and how Leonardo Da Vinci is in great measure the one who made that possible. Many other artists have shared this aspiration, commemorating or celebrating tangible subjects, **using their own points of view to reflect reality.** In this month's issue, we introduce Santiago Pani, who works in plastics and textiles, and feature Eduardo del Valle's Pornposition. These figurative artists prove that the human figure remains an inspiration for creativity even today.

Our minds may be like time machines connecting us from present to past, but our figures are attached to the present, *being the windows for recognition.*

Origins of Anatomy

Da Vinci is most famous for being a leading Renaissance artist, but he was also a student of the human shape. He began anatomy studies in 1489 as an art apprentice under Andrea del Verrocchio, who insisted all his students study anatomy to improve their art skills, even gaining better understanding of the human figure as a subject of art. He, along with other artists of the time, studied the works of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman army general born ca. 80, who designed and constructed machines, and also wrote about architecture. His works were discovered in the 1400s, *where it became part of the inspiration which led to the Renaissance.*



DA VINCI'S DISCOVERY OF THE HUMAN FIGURE: SCIENCE OR ART?

One aspect of Vitruvius' writings which impressed da Vinci and others in his "circle" was **the analogy between man and earth, exhibited in the similar proportions of a church and that of a human figure with outstretched arms.** This, perhaps, is the origin of da Vinci's fascination and discovery of the human shape as both an **inspiration of art and wonder of science.**

Vitruvius Man

“The ancients called man a lesser world, and certainly the use of this name is well bestowed, because his body is an analog for the world.”

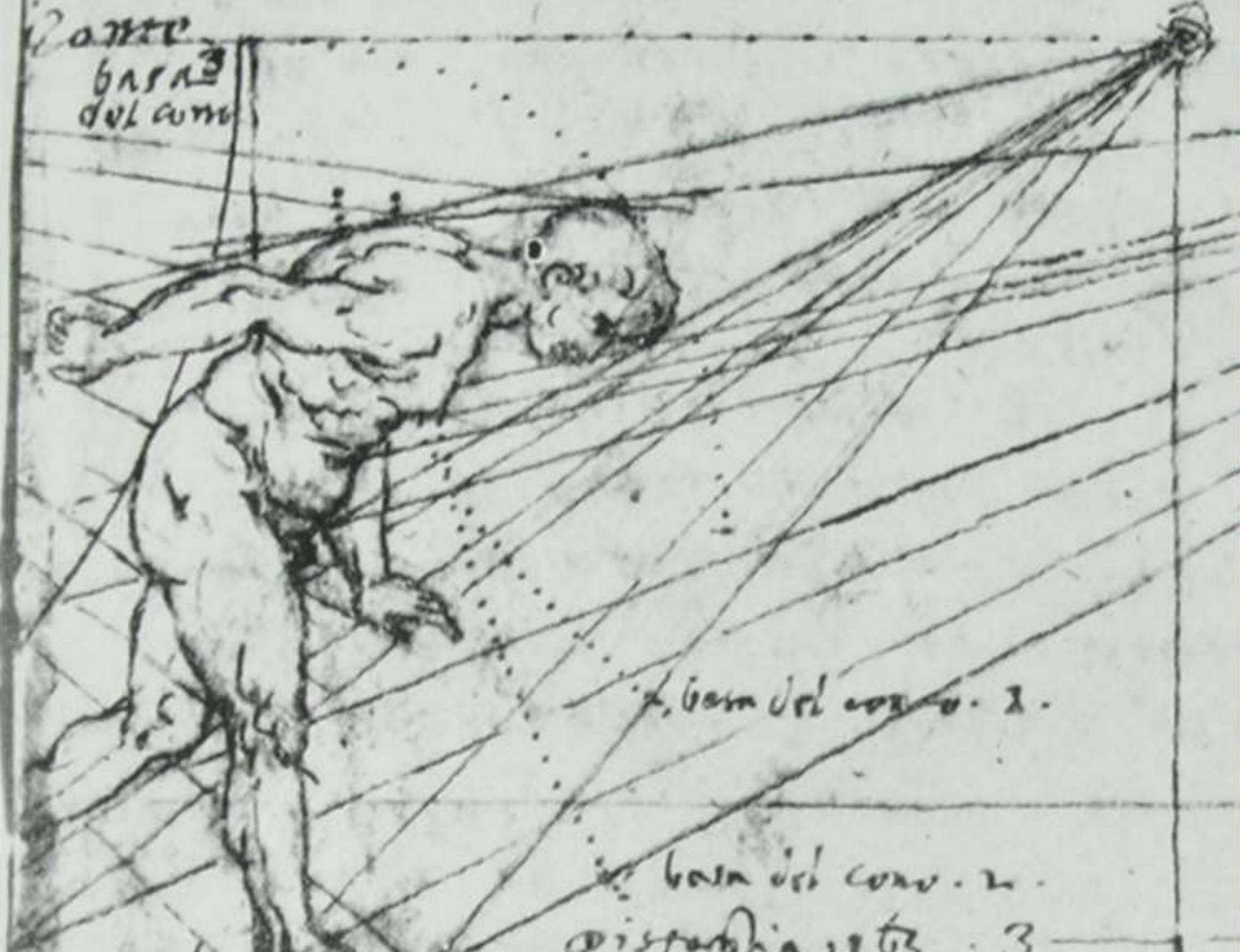
Da Vinci



Other artists of the time took interest in Vitruvius' work, each creating his own version. Da Vinci took a detailed and scientific approach to his version of Vitruvius Man. Additionally, one notes that instead of simply drawing a man within the measurements of the circle and square, da Vinci drew a human with beauty and exquisite shape, a blend of beauty and physical strength. The strong expression on the subject's face, along with physical similarities to da Vinci himself (including a slender build and curly hair) suggest that the artist was painting himself, contemplating his position with the world.

Da Vinci's absolute devotion to empirical observation, preferring his own type of observational learning rather than a formal education, may have allowed him the **freedom to mix the scientific nature of the human form with the emotional nature of human feelings and expressions.**

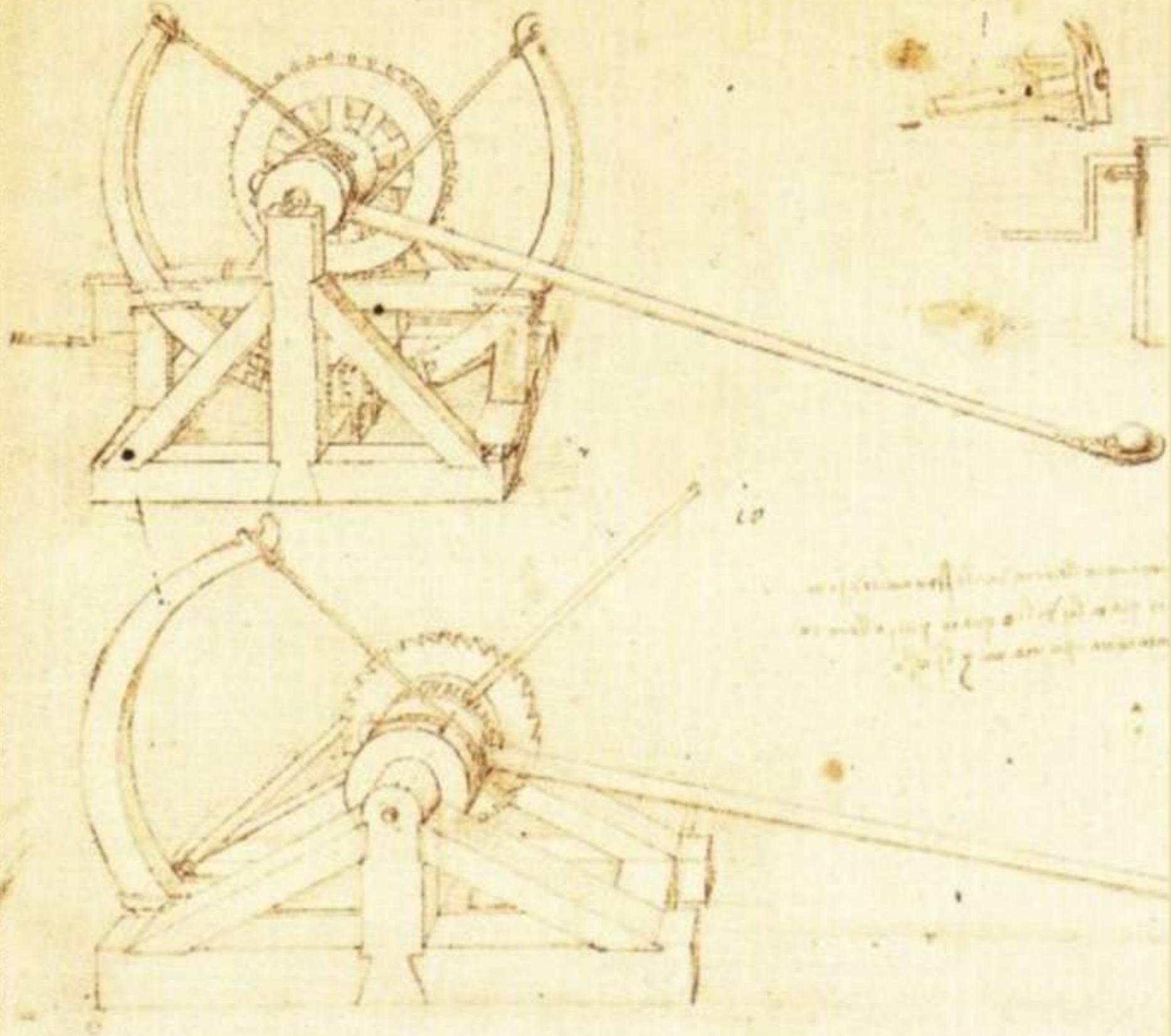
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Da Vinci was many things, including a scientist, mathematician, artist of many mediums, and even an inventor. Some of his statements may suggest a philosophic nature as well. This leads us to ask: is da Vinci a great artist or a great scientist? **Can one man be both?** In today's age, the two cultures seem worlds apart. But during da Vinci's time, curious and talented minds of all types seemed to rise above the rest. Although science had not evolved significantly since ancient Greece, his scientific drawings show such exquisite detail which had never been seen before, especially in anatomical expression.

Some have said da Vinci is never more of an artist as when he was a scientist. His drawings of the human body show every unique detail found in the human shape, a miraculous feat created in a time when no photograph was even possible. His attention to detail has provided doctors, even to this day, with breathtaking images and discoveries which allow them a spectacular view of the human body. However, at times he was noted to have all but given up on art, as he spent days dissecting corpses (and establishing a long relationship with the Santa Maria Nuova hospital in Florence) in his fascination to understand and map the intricacies

Da Vinci's Influence on Figurative Art



Although the Renaissance era was filled with outstanding artists and a resurgence of scientific thinking, da Vinci reached even farther in his artistic methods. The term **"Figurative Art"** may not have come into existence until the birth of abstract art, but the idea of maintaining aspects of reality within works of art was truly mastered by da Vinci. He introduced new ways of painting people (from the waist up), utilizing **new poses**, used new types of canvas, and popularized the techniques of **sfumato** (blurring edges & drawing focus to subject in forefront), **chiaroscuro** (using dark & light colors to add contrast), and the use of tempura paint (which hadn't been used in many years).

Whether you wish to consider da Vinci a scientist-turned-artist, or an artist-turned-scientist, **one cannot deny the revolution he began, and the influence he had—and still has today—on the study and artistic rendering of the human figure.**



Santiago
PANI

FACE TO FACE



Featured collection



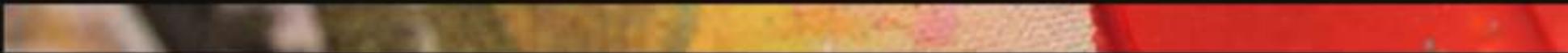
Santiago Pani – *Figurative Art in Paint, Engraving and Sculpture*

Third generation Mexico City artists Santiago Pani never truly had to “discover” art; he simply understood creativity through his father and grandfather, along with the art culture he was exposed to as a child. It was an international trip and the museums he visited throughout this experience, however, **which set his heart and mind to creating his own works. With interests varying from the minute world of bugs to the expansive world of space, Santiago Pani explores the connections humans have with the elements of existence.**

Education

Santiago completed his degree in Fine Arts at the ENPEG (National School of Painting and Sculpture), popularly known as “La Esmeralda” in Mexico City, a place renowned for its artistic history and home to more museums by volume per capita than anywhere else in the world.





Exhibitions, Both Group and Solo

Santiago has participated in multiple collective exhibitions in Mexico City, including several at the annual Affordable Art Fair from 2010-2012.

His first individual exhibitions were held at Zacatecas and Mexico City, both sites of spectacular Latin American art in communities teeming with art galleries and artists.

He has displayed works across the globe, from Romania, the United States, Nicaragua, Spain, Belgium, Italy, and in locations throughout Mexico, including artistic residences in Kasterlee, Belgium and Almeria, Spain.

He is creator of **Santiago Pani Welcome to My Mind**, a project which includes the offering of a limited-edition print and T-shirt, melding art and fashion. His current combination showcases his fascination with octopi and their unique ability to shield themselves from harm with ink.

Source of Inspiration

Has been influenced by the works of Lucian Freud, Dutch sculptor Theo Jensen, and his father. Santiago Pani finds that art creation is a journey; he may begin his work with rules in mind, and perhaps a plan for completion, but during the journey he is led another direction as the piece takes shape.

His more recent interest in portraits supports his view of humans as a midpoint between the tiny, yet not insignificant world of entomology to the all-encompassing expanse of the cosmos. Additionally, he is drawn to the reality that everyone has a memory, a recollection of the people he or she has encountered in a lifetime. This collection of experiences shapes the future and individuality of each person, building the character over time.



Figurative Art—Commemorating the Human Experience

From time when humans first drew an image on the wall of a prehistoric cave (the oldest known figurate drawing is that of a biberusa pig deer from Indonesia), recreating images seen in real life has been a form of artistic expression. In an effort to describe the world around him, man (and woman) has put pencil/chalk/paint to a surface to draw figures; animals, humans, things of nature and manmade objects. However, this type of artistic expression was no more than what was expected: recreating reality. Giving this type of art an actual name is a more recent event.

Why Figurative Art and its Beginnings

The basis of figurative art is realistic, a recreation of a person or thing by an artist expressing their view (and doesn't have to be EXACTLY realistic). A "figure" can generally realistic, but at the least, must be recognizable as such.

Athenian Greece. Protagoras coined the phrase "**Man is the measure of all things**" and was one of the leading thinkers of the time, a group called the Sophists, whose ranks included Cicero, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Although they were more focused on the individual's place in society, protecting the rights and freedoms of the individual, they are considered the "Future of Figurative Art" when artists in the 1400's and 1500's were inspired by Sophist Greece, their culture and social philosophies.

But when one ponders the birth of figurative art as a style and not by its name, it seems to be the most basic form of artistic expression, the truest way for humans to honor their cultures, their beliefs, and their experiences. Men of more philosophical thinking attempted to explain why memorializing and remembering details of a civilization, a political or religious event, or the existence of a person or group of people is paramount to the evolution of the human experience. But it is truly human nature.

amous Figurative Artists



The 1400's was filled with phenomenal Figurative artists, from Van Eyck to Botticelli, Michelangelo to da Vinci. It seemed the European world of lords and ladies, royalty and peasants, and the interest in Classical Rome and Greece provided all the inspiration which artists need to hone their figurative skills.

Rubens and Caravaggio each presented their own styles of figurative art, and there remained the opportunity for figurative artists to showcase their individuality while keeping the art they created realistic.

The 1800's was ripe with warfare, ideal subjects for figurative art, where the artist could commemorate an important event in a country's history.



Some artists chose to evolve their own styles as the popularity of abstraction grew and they strove to maintain relevance in the fickle world of art. **De Kooning wavered between Figurative and Abstract Expressionism. As abstract art grew in popularity and became the “norm” and most sought-after type of art,** de Kooning returned to Figurative art again, but by now this was met with criticism as Abstract Expressionism had solidified its position as leader in the art world.

Decline of Figurative Art

One cannot say there was a date, a time, or an end to figurative art as a form of expression. However, there was a slow movement towards abstraction when artists started to create “less” realistic representation of figures, experiencing the desire to rebel against more traditional art works. Cubism may be one of the most obvious paths which artists began to follow in a more avant-garde method of expressing creativity in art.

Some even say that Impressionism also led to the downfall of figurative art, as painters began to focus more on the method and overall “impression” created by the works and not the actual subjects themselves.

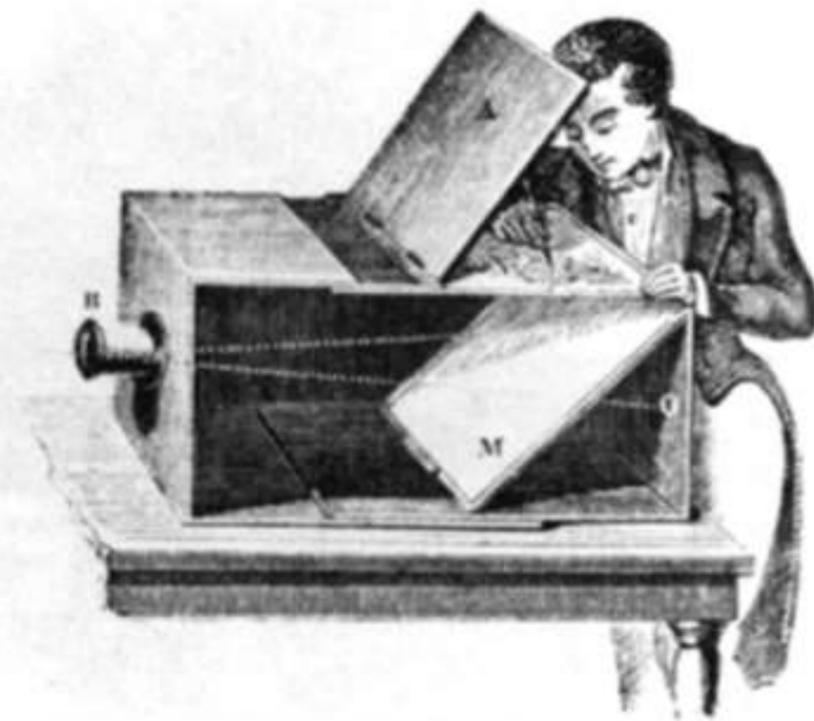




Additionally, **the invention of photography** provided mankind with a VERY realistic expression of figures, and the “need” or demand for figurative art declined rapidly in the mid-1800’s as photographs began to earn recognition.

By 1850’s, there were over 75 galleries in New York City along which featured photography.

This likely provided the support to move away from art which “competed” with photography and to celebrate **the individuality found in abstract art**, where the story was not obvious to the observer and more difficult to critique.



Figurative Art Returns



Starting in the 1970's, there was a re-birth of figurative art. As the modern world began experiencing more social and political battles, abstract art seemed ill-prepared to describe and commemorate the challenges faced by people on all sides of the conflicts, and the more devastating experienced simply could not be exhibited with anything other than figurative art.

In recent years, the growth of caricatures, digital art of all kinds, cartoons and portraits has supported **the resurgence of figurative art.**



We see a more worldwide **acceptance of all types of art;** figurative is particularly popular as art enthusiasts of all types can view art and recollect (or discover) *the story behind the work.*



PORNPOSITION by Eduardo del Valle

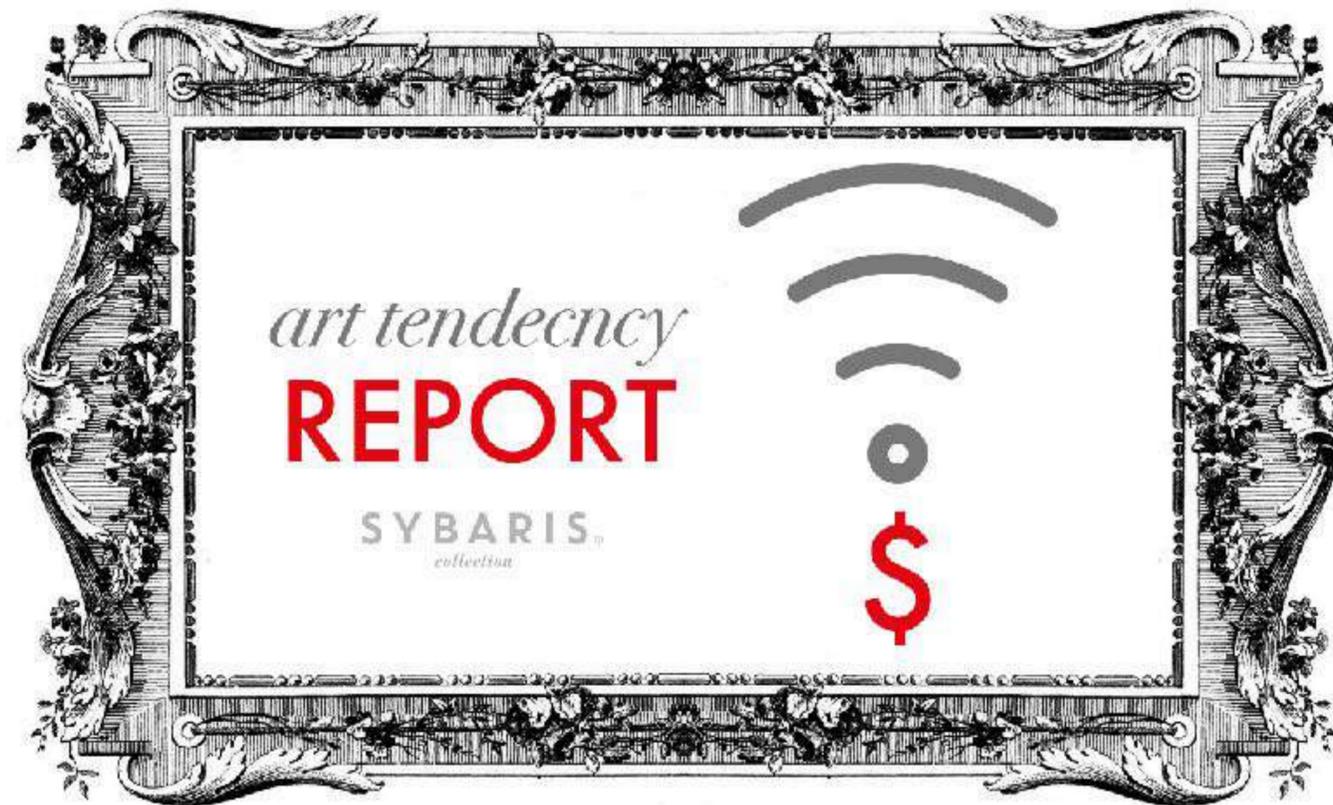
Modern figurative artists used a variety of mediums to tell their stories.

In this issue of ARTMag, we feature both the work of established artist **Eduardo del Valle** and that of emerging artist **Santiago Pani**. Both exemplify the ability of figurative artists to not only provide a somewhat realistic view of the human experience, but to provide their personal unique and creative application of that human experience.



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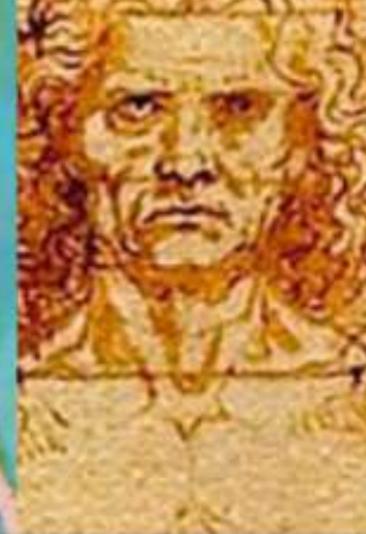
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