

The Role of the Moon in Art

ANDREA SCHMIDT







SYMBOLISM

Symbolism

- Close to Earth (relatively), but elusive
- The “other,” alien, different
- Mystery and allusion
 - One side is turned away from Earth
- The half, waning, and waxing moons are symbols of fertility, life and death, changing seasons, tides, and the menstrual cycle
- In the west, the moon went from being seen as a light source to a symbol to a natural object that should be documented
- “A proven yet largely still unexplored connection to nature, womanhood, and humankind itself”

Religion

- Mary holding Jesus and standing on a waxing moon is a common religious depiction of the moon in art
 - Represents the apocalypse
 - The moon measures time
 - Common in the late 15th and early 16th centuries in Europe

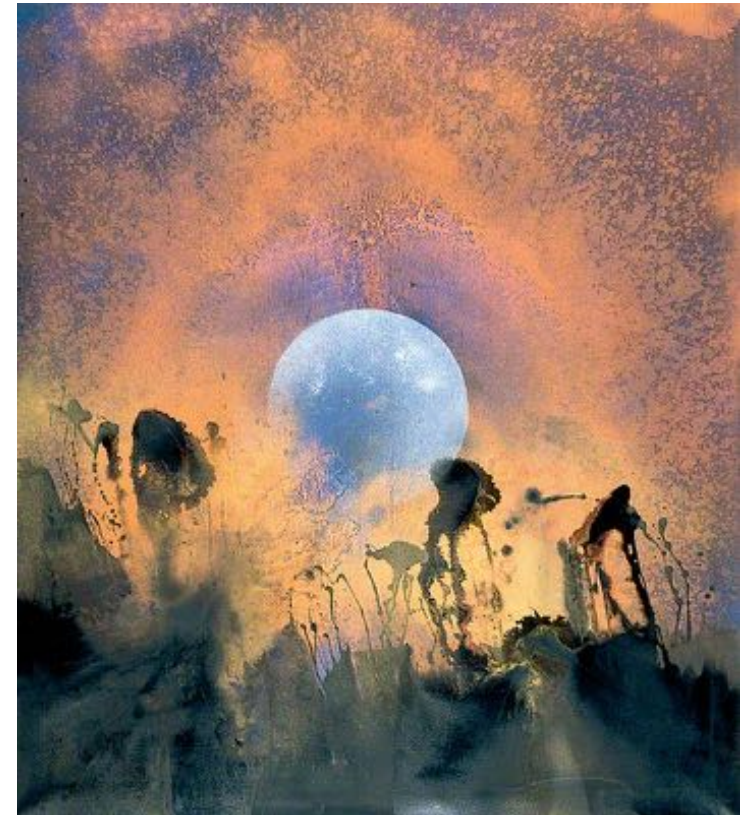


"Virgin and Child on the Crescent Moon"
by Tilman Riemenschneider, c. 1521-1522

Variety

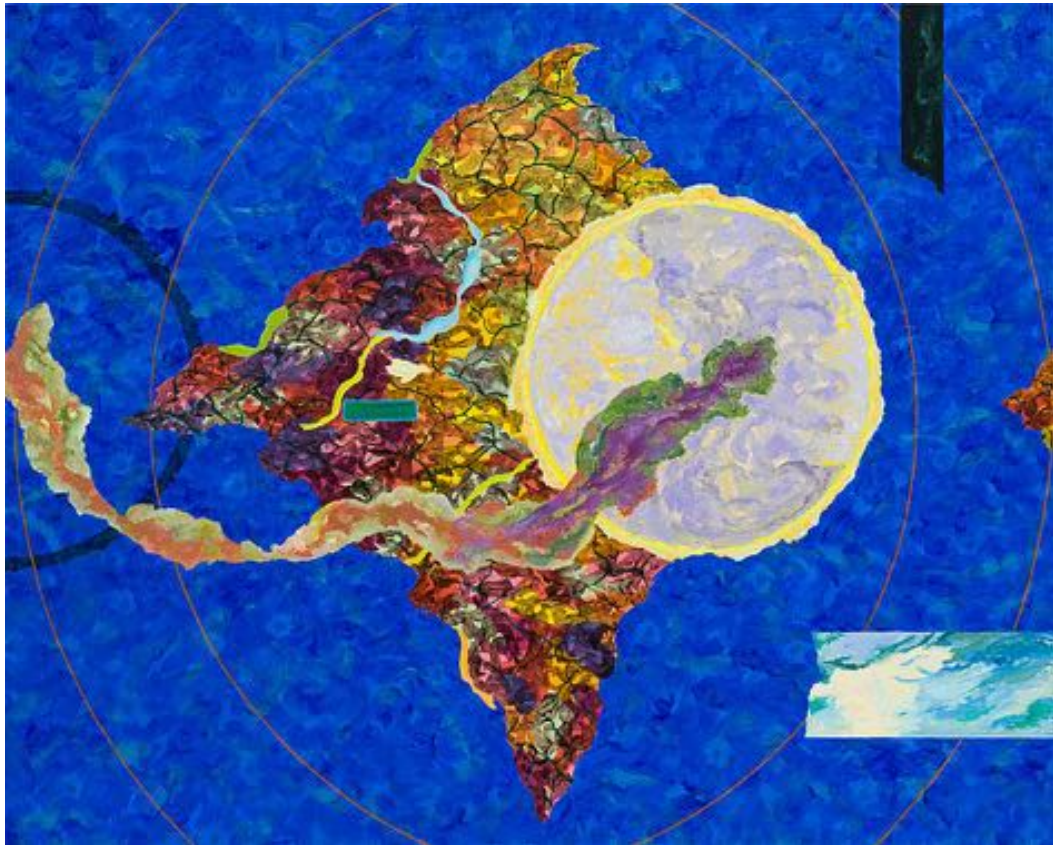


“Moonlight” by Joachim Hirschl-Minerbi, 1880



“Moon Rising” by Denis A. Bowen, 1989

Variety



“Once in a Blue Moon” by Vanda Harvey, 2000



“Baron Munchausen Arrives on the Moon” by Ray Harryhausen, 1948

HISTORY





Nebra Sky Disk

GERMANY, 1600 B.C.



Stele of Nabonidus

BABYLON, 500 B.C.

SIDEREVS
NVCIVS

MAGNA, LONGEQVE ADMIRABILIA
Spectacula pandens, suspiciendaque proponens
vnicuique, praesertim verò

PHILOSOPHIS, atq; ASTRONOMIS, qua à
GALILEO GALILEO
PATRITIO FLORENTINO
Patauini Gymnasij Publico Mathematico

PERSPICILLI

Nuper à se reperti beneficijs sunt obseruata in ISTARUM ET ACIE, FIXIS IN
NUMERIS, LACTEO CIRCVLO, STELLIS NEBVLOSIS,

Apprime verò in

QVATVOR PLANETIS

Circa IOVIS Stellam disparibus intervallis, atque periodis, celesti-
tate mirabili circumvolatis; quos, nemini in hanc vsq;e
diem cognitos, nouissimè Authoe depre-
hendit primus; atque

MEDICEA SIDERA
NVCVPANDOS DECREVIT.



VENETIIS, Apud Thomam Baglionum. M DC X.

Superiorum Permissu, & Privilegio.

M VIII: 22. 1A.



Sidereus Nuncius

GALILEO GALILEI, 1610



Tsuki no Katsura (Cassia Tree Moon)

TAISO YOSHITOSHI, 1886



Starry Night

VINCENT VAN GOGH, 1889

History

- When better images of the moon became available starting in the early 19th century, artists were able to depict the moon more accurately

LUCIEN RUDAUX



Solar Eclipse from the Moon

LUCIEN RUDAUX



The Surface of the Moon

LUCIEN RUDAUX

“The moon in art has changed from symbol to something real, but that hasn’t changed our will to see it.”



Sources

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