

# Fresco Painting

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*The above image is my attempt at a fresco. In order to conserve time I simply used one layer of lime plaster spread on a ceramic tile. Though the project was very enjoyable, it increased my respect for artists who use fresco.*

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND FRESCOS

Though fresco paintings may have been around since ancient times, the science behind them is far from simple. When artists create frescos they use the lime plaster for the support, the ground and the binder in their work. The plaster itself is comprised of very few elements. It is a combination of calcium oxide (or quicklime) combined with water.

After creating the plaster for the frescos, the artists spread it in layers onto the surface in which they intend to paint. Then they paint on the damp plaster, grounding the pigments into the quicklime mixture. Due to the plaster's nature it then begins to react with the Carbon dioxide in the air, and begins its transformation into limestone, and a finished fresco.

## THE HISTORY OF FRESCO PAINTINGS

The creation of fresco art is a practice that has been around for thousands of years. Frescos have been dated as far back as 1500 BC. In fact the earliest frescos to be discovered were murals painted on the walls in the palace at Knossos, Crete.

But the painting of murals on buildings did not stop in 1500 BC, the idea of using frescos to adorn walls continued for ages, eventually bringing about the work of one of the most popular fresco painters, Michelangelo. His works displayed in the Sistine Chapel define what most people imagine when thinking of frescos.



## THE SISTINE CHAPEL

*Above is displayed one of the most well known pieces of fresco in modern day time. It is the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Created by Michelangelo, it had to be painted segment by segment in order to let the plaster dry, a process that took 4 years to complete. You can find this image at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lightmatter\\_Sistine\\_Chapel\\_ceiling.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lightmatter_Sistine_Chapel_ceiling.jpg)*

