

*Baptism of Christ*, by Andrea del Verrocchio

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

This artwork appears in the [January 31, 2018](#) issue.



*Baptism of Christ*, by Andrea del Verrocchio, in collaboration with Leonardo da Vinci. Photo © Scala / Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali / Art Resource, NY.

Andrea del Verrocchio (1435–1488), created *Baptism of Christ* in Florence between 1470 and 1475, on the cusp of the High Renaissance. Verrocchio, whose name means “true eye,” was known for his ability to observe nature and render lifelike

figures. One of his students was Leonardo da Vinci, who was asked to do a portion of this painting. The leftmost angel, holding Christ's drapery, is attributed to Leonardo. By comparing that angel to Verrocchio's next to it, one sees Leonardo's ability to convey transcendence and softness. This otherworldliness comes to represent the divine and is a distinctive feature of the religious figures Leonardo created in the 1490s.