



# GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDO

## KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER






### Biography

- Giuseppe Arcimboldo was an Italian painter.
- He lived between 1527 and 1593 in Milan, Italy.
- Arcimboldo is most well-known for painting imaginative portrait heads made entirely of objects such as fruit, vegetables and flowers.
- He also drew portraits for Roman Emperors, produced religious artworks, and drew exotic animals.
- He is most famous for works such as *Vertumnus*, *The Librarian* and *Four Seasons in One Head*.
- Arcimboldo's portraits arranging lifeless objects into human forms were deliberately grotesque – designed to amuse members of the court. Whilst his more traditional works have largely been lost, his fun portraits remain a source of fascination today.



### Significant Works

<b>The Librarian (1566)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-In <i>The Librarian</i>, Arcimboldo used oil on canvas to Wolfgang Lazius, a famous historian from the time.</li><li>-Arcimboldo is thought to have been celebrating books. He was also mocking the upper class people of the time who wanted to own books, but did not read them!</li></ul>
<b>Vertumnus (1591)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Vertumnus</i> is Arcimboldo's most famous work. It shows the Rudolf II reimagined as Vertumnus, the Roman God of metamorphosis (changing shape).</li><li>-The fruits and vegetables symbolise the wealth and abundance of the Golden Age of the Emperor's rule. It is created from flowers and fruits from all seasons.</li></ul>
<b>The Jurist (1566)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>The Jurist</i> is also known as <i>The Lawyer</i>.</li><li>-It shows someone from the legal profession, whose facial features are created using meat and fish, with a body made of legal papers. The sneering face and frowning eyes cast the profession in a negative light.</li></ul>

### Key Vocabulary

Arcimboldo

Italy

Milan

Portrait

Court

Vertumnus

The Librarian

The Jurist

Symbolism

Portrait




Surrealism

Mannerism

Collage

Europe

### Styles and Techniques

<b>Mannerism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Mannerism painting is also known as 'Late Renaissance.'</li><li>-It is a style that emerged in the later years of the Italian Renaissance around 1520.</li><li>-Mannerism was a reaction to earlier painters such as Leonardo da Vinci, who painted using measured proportion and balance. In contrast, Mannerism aimed to exaggerate certain qualities, producing paintings that are deliberately asymmetrical or even grotesque. Artificial qualities were created using unusual colours/ shapes.</li></ul>	
<b>Surrealism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Arcimboldo is often known as the 'Great Grandfather of Surrealism', mostly because Surrealism was not an art movement until around 1920!</li><li>Surrealism uses strange figures and shapes to show people's dreams and thoughts. Objects and shapes are often put together in strange orders. Some famous Surrealist painters include Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali.</li></ul>	
<b>Symbolism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Symbolism is evident when artists express ideas through symbols, rather than giving a realistic view of the natural world. It became a major movement far after Arcimboldo's time, in around the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.</li><li>-Arcimboldo attempted to present important messages through the application of shapes and colours. In <i>Four Seasons in One Head</i>, for example, he creates a darker tone in the winter of his life, musing over seasons gone by.</li></ul>	

### How do I create art like Arcimboldo?

**Step 2:** Decide if you are going to draw your fruit/ vegetables or use images.

**Step 3:** Draw or select your fruit vegetable images and cut them out carefully. You will need lots of shapes!

**Step 4:** Move the different objects around on the page in different orders to create your portrait. Consider how the shapes create facial expressions, and experiment with different colours together.

**Step 1:** Decide which fruit/ vegetables you would like to include in your piece. Think about what the colours/ objects may symbolise.

**Things you'll need:**  
Pencil, A3 drawing paper, crayons/ pastels, glue, scissors, images (if needed).



*A child's Arcimboldo collage*

**Step 5:** When you are sure of that your shapes create the portrait that you want, use your glue to stick each of the shapes down firmly on the paper.