

## The birth of Venus

Venus (literally: “love” or “sexual desire”) was a major Roman goddess associated with love, beauty, and fertility and commonly identified with the Greek goddess Aphrodite. Technically, she was the wife of Vulcan (the god of fire) but her son Eros was apparently the son of the god Mars (the god of war). Legend says that she was created from the foam of the waves, fully grown, emerging from a giant seashell, near the island of Cyprus in the mediterranean.

Julius Caesar adopted her as his protectress and Augustus Caesar gave her an upgrade and officially designated Venus as the ancestor of the Roman people, hence a major goddess of Rome. Since antiquity, Venus/Aphrodite was a subject of art inspiration. She was usually created as a magnificent statue of a strikingly beautiful, naked or half-naked woman. From the 15th century to the present she was commonly painted in legendary situations from her life or as an imaginative ceiling decoration in European palaces.

Almost every well known or lesser known artist has his/her “Venus”. The most famous works of Venus are the ancient Greek statue “Venus de Milo” that was discovered on the island of Milo (in the Muse de Louvre, Paris) and the painting “The birth of Venus” by Italian painter Sandro Botticelli (c. 1485–1586) in the Offici Gallery in Florence, Italy.

**What you see** is a contemporary homage to the famous painting of Botticelli “The birth of Venus” as a young woman surfing a huge wave.

### Hidden clues:

- The surfing board is a large seashell, as in the legend.
- The woman is naked, very fair skin (foam of waves) and in perfect Greek/Roman proportions, as in most works of Venus from antiquity.
- The huge amount of foam created by the wave indicates that it is the source of the birth of the goddess.
- As an artistic freedom, the large wave indicates that the birth, at least in this work, did not occur in the Mediterranean, but rather in the Pacific Ocean, which is known for large waves and surfing.
- The hairstyle of Venus is typical Renaissance style as an homage to Botticelli and his time.

(This explanation was written in response to request to explain this work.)