**5. Albrecht Dürer, German Artist**

Albrecht Dürer (AHL-brekht DOOR-er), who lived from 1471 to 1528, was from the German city of Nuremberg. He earned fame for his paintings, drawings, prints, and essays about art.

**Personality and Training** As a boy, Dürer received a diverse education. The son of a goldsmith, he learned his father’s trade. At 15, he began training with a well-known painter and printmaker. A printmaker uses printing to make copies of works of art. Dürer also studied math, Latin, and classical literature.

As a young man, Dürer traveled through Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. He became friends with many humanist artists, writers, and thinkers. He studied classical sculpture for years to learn ideal human **proportions**. He wanted to be able to show the parts of the human body correctly sized in relation to each other.

Dürer’s self-portraits show him to be a fashionable, confident man. He had an intellectual approach to life and art. He asked himself, “What is beauty?” His art was an attempt to answer that question.

**Talents and Achievements** In his painting, Dürer blended the detailed style of Germany with the perspective and idealized beauty he learned from Italian painting. He encouraged all artists to study mathematics as the key to understanding Renaissance and classical art.

Dürer was especially skilled at making engravings and woodcuts. These are prints made from an original that is specially prepared for printing. The original may be etched, or engraved, in metal or it may be cut into a block of wood. Then it is inked and re-inked to make copies. In Renaissance times, printers used engravings and woodcuts to illustrate books.

Much of Dürer’s art shows religious figures. He also painted subjects from myths. Like other artists of his time, he made many portraits of royalty and wealthy patrons. He worked for years as a court artist for the Holy Roman emperor Maximilian I.

Dürer’s work is widely admired, particularly his beautiful engravings and woodcuts. They set a new standard in print-making because of their clarity, expressiveness, and fine detail.