ART 1: EXPLORING ART



Jon McCallum
Shasta College

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EXPLORING ART

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Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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1: THE LANGUAGE OF ART

THE LANGUAGE OF ART introduces you to fundamental terms and concepts used when discussing and describing the nature of art and human creativity. The major items to look out for and understand in this section (and throughout the course) are...

- the **Definition of Art**
- the **7 Elements of Art** (the "building blocks" of art)
- the **7 Principles of Design** (the "rules" of art)
- the **6 Functions of Art**
- **Form vs Content**
- **Degrees of Representation**
- **Analyzing Art**

Developing an increasingly clear understanding of these items allows you to see and describe works of art in intelligent and insightful ways, and will provide the foundational language essential to succeeding in this course.

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1.1: What Is Art?

What Is Art?

by Jon McCallum

The New Oxford American Dictionary describes art as “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.” (New Oxford American Dictionary via Apple Dictionary App, March 23, 2024)

While this definition is a good beginning, understanding art is a complex endeavor in which many questions can arise:

- What makes one artwork good and another not good? Who is to say one way or the other? Based on what factors?
- If “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” then isn’t art just whatever someone wants it to be?
- What gives a particularly meaningful artwork its special power to grab our attention, to provoke our thoughts and emotions, even through centuries of time and differences of place and culture?
- What causes certain art works to be valued at millions of dollars, while other artworks are deemed essentially worthless?

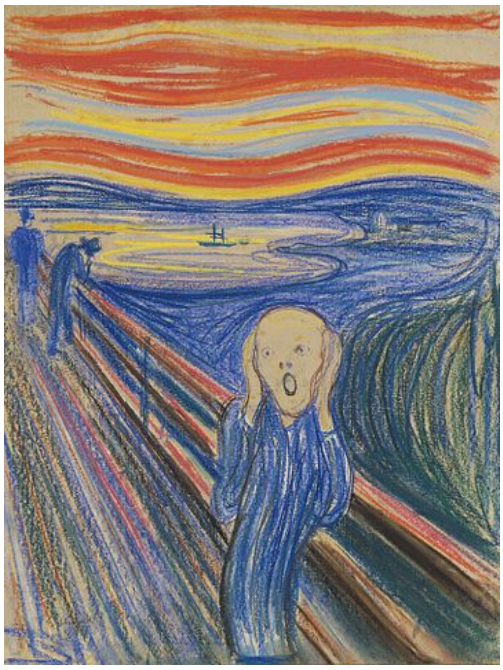
The complexity of art lies in the fact that art is made by humans. And humans are inherently complicated creatures constantly pushed and pulled by the forces of life… basic needs, relationships, personal aspirations, political pressures, economic forces, societal structures, ethics, beliefs, tragedies, injustices, joys, passions… the list goes on.



Hieronymous Bosch, *Ecce Homo*, 1490, oil on canvas, 61 x 52 cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art, Public domain.

Many times our human experience is so deep and complex we fail to find words to describe it. Fortunately, human beings are not limited to words for expression. We have other forms, such as music and the visual arts, to help us voice what words cannot say. This is what makes art essential to human being. Art, therefore, is not a mere luxury. It is not just entertainment. Art is a fundamental aspect of our human experience.

As humans, we carry an underlying desire to better understand our world and our selves. It is part of our human nature to somehow communicate our personal experiences and perceptions to others. The processes of creating works of art and appreciating them support these fundamental human instincts of knowledge-seeking and expression.



Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1895, pastel on cardboard, 79 x 59 cm. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

"The truth is," states Nicholas Wolterstorff (1932 –), an American philosopher and theologian, "that in discussing the arts we are discussing something universal to humankind. We know of no people which has done without music and fiction and poetry and role-playing and sculpture and visual depiction. Possibly some have done without one or the other of these; none to our knowledge has done without all. Indeed—to single out just one of the arts—none to our knowledge has done without visual depiction" (Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action*, 1980).

Since art is such a significant part of our humanity, let's explore more deeply what it is and what it does.

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1.1.1: Looking vs Seeing

Looking vs Seeing

by Jon McCallum

We use our eyes to look at thousands of images and objects everyday. And yet, how often do we really *see* them? Looking is a basic, often subconscious, act. Seeing, in contrast, is an intentional exercise. With seeing, we slow down. We focus. We experience what we are looking at on another level. We let what we are seeing "speak" to us. We engage our mind and heart. We make discoveries.



Laura Muntz Lyall, *Interesting Story*, 1898, 81 x 100 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario. Public domain.

Many students who take this course will feel like they are learning to see in new ways, and the visual world will become more alive, more rich, more interesting. We shift from being passive "zombies" to being engaged seers. For some of us this will at first be painful, like going to the gym after being out of shape for some time. Our eyes and brains may get sore, but the more we do it, the stronger our ability to see will become, along with the ability to better describe what we are seeing to others.

This difference between looking and seeing can be related to other art forms, such as music. We might hear a song on the radio and even know some of the words and melodies, bob our heads or snap our fingers with the beat. This basic level of "hearing" in the sonic realm is like "looking" in the visual realm. However, one can go deeper, really listen to the lyrics, maybe even write them down. listen for the chordal structure of the music, the key, the repeating patterns, the tempo, the instruments used, and so on. Deeper levels of insight and understanding may come from the background stories of the band members, the time period and location of where the song was written and recorded, etc. The more we engage and explore, the more we come to realize that there are many more layers of meaning and insight in an artwork, whether musical or visual, than we may have ever thought possible when we were merely participating in a more casual way.

This same kind of deep exploration can be applied to watching movies, reading literature, and most anything art-related, along with other fields as well, such as science, where we observe creatures and aspects of the natural world much more closely than we do in day-to-day living. Another example regards food — when something is good, we have the simple responses of "*yum, tastes good, I like it*," which can be adequate. But we can also improve our skills of taste-related attentiveness, developing our taste buds to notice the varying factors that create "yumminess" — the certain kinds and degrees of spice, sweetness, saltiness, texture, consistency, etc. And on top of that, there is the next level of being able to put language to our experience so that we can well describe our culinary enjoyment with others.

When it comes to Visual Art, this course will teach you what to look for and help you to develop language for describing well what you are seeing, especially through key terms and ideas known as the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design.

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1.2: The Elements of Art

The Elements of Art

by Jon McCallum

The Elements of Art are known as the “building blocks” of art. The elements can be likened to the alphabet. Similar to how each letter of the alphabet can be put together to form words which convey meaning, so can each of the Elements of Art be put together to create visual expression. Learning how to look for, recognize, and describe how these elements appear in various works of art is a major goal of this course. Take special note of these elements and begin looking for how they are showing up in your everyday world. If something looks good, think about what is going on with the elements that are creating that goodness. If something looks off or overly-busy, explore what changes could be made to one or more of the elements to create greater harmony or beauty.

Different courses and textbooks may or may not include some of these elements, or they may use different terms for them. There are various complexities that keep the list from being super tidy. For instance, Space can refer to actual space, like the surface of a canvas and how the artist engages that space by applying various other elements. Space can also be the "illusion of space" which regards how an artist creates the illusion of depth, the appearance of things going back in space, even though in actuality the image sits on a flat, thin surface. In the actual use of space, Space is more of an element. In the illusion of space, Space is more of a Principle—Principles pertain to how the elements are handled to create certain qualities. Art is seldom a black-and-white science or mathematical formula. Art often resides in and develops from the tensions of humanity. So it should come as no surprise that the categorizations that make up art are not clear cut.

This course considers the following seven Elements of Art as valid features of artistic exploration:

- **Line**
- **Shape**
- **Color**
- **Value**
- **Texture**
- **Space**
- **Time and Motion**

Another factor to note is that not all elements will be present in every work of art. This is consistent with our alphabet metaphor—not every word contains every letter of the alphabet. A work of art can still be a great work of art, even if not all of the elements are included. A black-and-white photograph can be a captivating, thought-provoking image even if the element of color is not present. (The question of whether "black" and "white" can be considered colors is another "gray" area in art — some people consider them as colors, others see them as being void of color.) (Ah, art — so wonderfully and yet painfully subjective!)

Now, let's take a closer look at each of the Elements.

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1.2.1: Line

Line

by Dr. Asa Simon Mittman



Figure 1.2.11.2.1: Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen*, from *The Apocalypse*, 1498. Woodcut, 38.7 x 27.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, public domain)

Line is the most basic visual element. Lines can be used to define shapes and figures, but also to indicate motion, emotion, and other elements.



Figure 1.2.21.2.2: Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen*, from *The Apocalypse* (detail). (Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, public domain)

Contour lines and hatching

In a woodblock print of *The Four Horsemen* from *The Apocalypse* by Albrecht Dürer, contour lines—lines that define shapes—are used to mark the outside of all of the elements of the image.

The outline of the hat on one of the horsemen, for example, is clearly made by a few black contour lines. This simple device is so effective that it is hard to remember that there is no hat here, only a few black marks on a white page.

Note, though, that lines are also used to show shading—the shadows caused when light hits one side of an object, leaving the other in shadow. On the hat, for example, the closely spaced lines, called hatching, show that the left side of his hat is in a shadow. This also helps the hat to look more three-dimensional, giving it a sense of form.



Figure 1.2.31.2.3: Roy Lichtenstein, *In the Car*, 1963. Oil and magna on canvas, 172.00 x 203.50 cm. National Galleries, Scotland. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/DACS 2018. (Photo: National Galleries of Scotland, via Smarthistory)

Contour lines outline all the figures and forms in the image, creating the illusion of shading and form. In addition, there are horizontal lines in the background. While these create shading, they also help create the sense that the riders are moving rapidly from left to right. Motion lines may be familiar to you from comic strips, but they appear in all sorts of work.

Organic and inorganic (geometric) lines

In the Dürer print, we can also divide the lines into organic and inorganic (or geometric) lines (see the section on shape for more on organic and inorganic). Organic lines are loose, curving lines like those found in nature. In the Dürer print, the lines of the horses' manes and tails, the figures' hair, and the ruffled clouds are all organic. Inorganic lines are generally straight or perfectly curving lines, like those found in geometry. In this image, most of the lines are organic, but the horizontal lines in the background are inorganic.



Figure 1.2.41.2.4: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, c. 1483-86. Oil on panel, 199 x 122 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris, France. (Photo: Louvre Museum, public domain)

Implied lines

We can also look for implied lines. These are not actually drawn, but we can connect the dots (literally or figuratively) to create the lines in our minds. Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* contains wonderful examples of implied lines.

Here, the implied lines are sight lines, which guide us throughout the image. These help us know where to look, and show us what is important in the painting. Follow the gazes of the figures as they look and point at one another. The angel in the red cape to the right looks out at us, and then points at the infant John the Baptist, at the left. He looks at the infant Jesus, who in turn looks back again at him. Above, Mary looks down at Jesus, and also gestures toward him with her hand.



Figure 1.2.51.2.5: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, (detail with implied lines). (Photo: Louvre Museum, public domain)

Basically, once we make it into the space of the painting by meeting the gaze of the angel, we become locked in a cycle of movement between the holy figures, guided by their sight lines.

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1.2.2: Shape

Shape and Form

by Dr. Asa Simon Mittman

Shape builds on line and color, as it has to be made of one or both of these. Shape is the property of a two-dimensional form, usually defined by a line around it or by a change in color.

There are two main types of shapes, geometric and organic. While most works of art contain both geometric and organic shapes, looking at those that are more completely divided can serve to clarify these qualities.

Piet Mondrian is an excellent example of an artist who used geometric shapes almost exclusively. In his *Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red* (1937-42), Mondrian, uses straight vertical and horizontal black lines to divide his canvas into rectangles of primary colors.

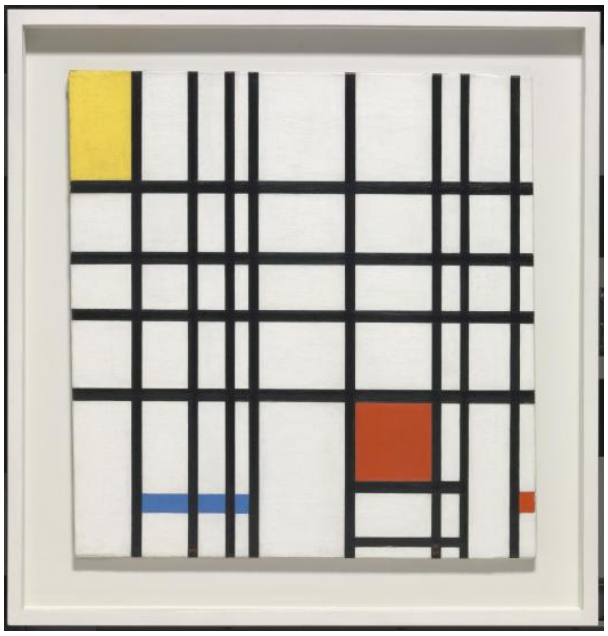


Figure 1.2.61.2.6: Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red*, 1937–42. Oil on canvas, 72.7 x 69.2 cm. Tate Museum, London, England. (Photo via Smarthistory)

Nothing here gives the impression of the natural world. On the other hand, Maori facial tattooing, known as *moko*, uses primarily organic shapes. They are still, like Mondrian's shapes, generally abstract — they do not depict any clear images — but the shapes are like those found in nature, curving, twisting, and spiraling across their wearers' faces. The edges of the lines and shapes are crisp, but the forms are curving and sensuous.



Figure 1.2.71.2.7: Early Maori were highly skilled in Ta Moko, the process of tattooing. Location: Te Kuiti, Waikato. (Photo: James Heremaia, WorldWide licence)

Shape can be either positive or negative. In this photograph from the Cueva de las Manos, we can see both positive shapes (handprints created by dipping the hand in pigment and then placing it on the stone) and negative shapes (formed by applying pigment over the hand, with the resulting shape defined by the absence of pigment).



Figure 1.2.81.2.8: Cueva de las Manos, Perito Moreno, Argentina, c. 7300 BCE. Mineral pigments (iron oxides, kaolin, natrojarosite, and manganese oxide) on cave wall. (Photo: Mariano, CC BY-SA 3.0)

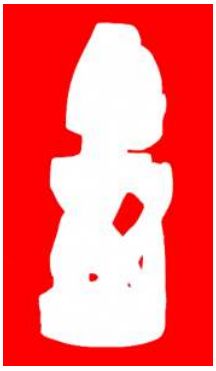


Figure 1.2.91.2.9: Negative space in the photograph below of the Ancestor Figure (*Korwar*). (Illustration by Dr. Cerise Myers, CC BY 2.0)

We can also speak of negative space, which refers to the area around and between the figure and ground. The illustration above shows the negative space around the Ancestor Figure (*Korwar*) as shown in the photograph below. In a painting or drawing, artists often consider both positive and negative space in balancing their composition, as is discussed in the following chapter.

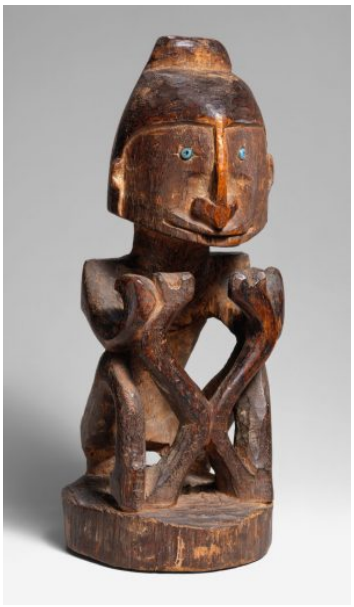


Figure 1.2.101.2.10: Ancestor Figure (*Korwar*), Indonesia, Papua Province (Irian Jaya), Cenderawasih Bay region, in northwest New Guinea, late 19th–early 20th century. Wood and glass beads, 26 cm high. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Photo via Smarthistory)

Form

Form is actual, three-dimensional shape, though it is often used to describe the illusion of three-dimensionality, as well. Like shape, form can be geometric or organic.

A small *korwar* — a representation of an ancestor — from Irian Jaya, New Guinea, mixes these form types well. While the figure is predominantly geometric, with the head shaped like a cube and the nose an arrow pointing downward, the curving organic lines around the eyes soften this effect a bit.

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1.2.3: Color

Color

by Dr. Asa Simon Mittman

Hue

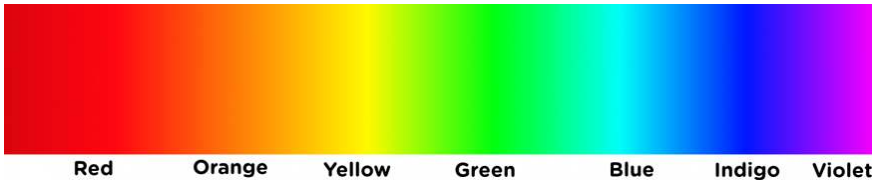


Figure 1.2.111.2.11: Colors of the visible light spectrum. (Image: Meganbeckett27, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Artists can use colors for many reasons other than to simply duplicate reality including setting moods and highlighting importance.

The colors of the world can be divided in different ways. When we use the term “color” casually, what we usually mean is hue. Hues appear on the visible spectrum. On the spectrum, we see the pure hues. These can be divided into primary, secondary and tertiary colors, as on this color wheel.

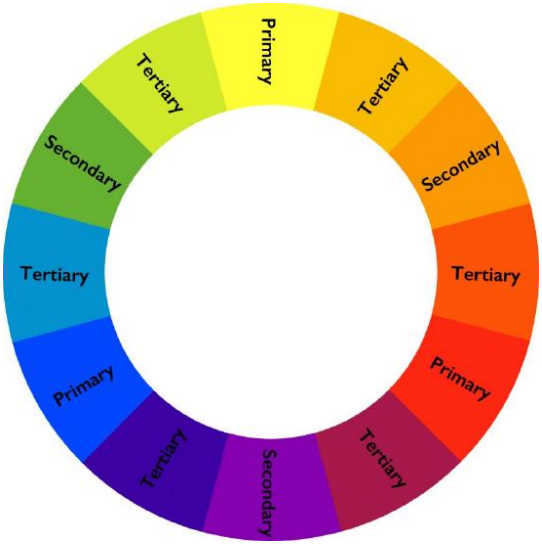


Figure 1.2.121.2.12: Color wheel. (Image: public domain)

Primary, secondary and tertiary colors

Primary colors are, for most art media, red, yellow and blue (the exception is the additive color system, which is used in computer screens, theater lighting and the like, and has red, green, and blue as its primary colors). All the rest of the colors can be made from these.

Secondary colors are made by mixing two primary colors: Red and yellow make orange, and so on.

Tertiary colors are made by mixing a primary color with a secondary color.

Complementary and analogous colors

The colors opposite one another (like red and green or blue and orange) are complementary colors, which tend to stand out boldly next to one another. These are therefore often used for university colors and sport team logos. Colors next to one another (like red and orange or blue and green) are analogous colors, and these tend to blend together more smoothly.

Warm and cool colors

The colors on the left of this wheel are called cool colors and those to the right are warm colors. Using cool or warm colors in an image can create moods. Pierre Auguste Renoir used warm colors for his *Mother and Child*, 1886, creating a warm, cheerful, inviting scene. The oranges, pinks and yellows dominate the image.



Figure 1.2.131.2.13: Left: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Mother and Child*, 1886. Pastel, 79.1 x 63.5 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Right: David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Peasant Mother*, 1962. Oil on burlap, 249 x 180 cm. Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City. (© David Alfaro Siqueiros) (Photos via Smarthistory)

Diego Alfaro Siqueiros presents a similar subject in his *Peasant Mother* (1929), but through the use of cool colors, instead creates a sad, cold scene dominated by figures of blues and greens. Neither of these artists was worried about portraying the world as it really looked. Instead, they used color to inspire feelings in the viewer.

Value (tint and shade)

Color can also be considered in terms of value, which is the degree of lightness or darkness of a color. If we add white to a hue, we get a tint. If we add black, we get a shade. As we might expect, tints tend to be more cheerful—pastel colors are all tints. Shades tend to be gloomier. Indeed, our terms for moods are based on these properties, so that we say that we are lighthearted, or in a dark temper. There are many tints in the Renoir's *Mother and Child*, and many shades in Siqueiros' *Peasant Mother*.



Figure 1.2.141.2.14: Henri Matisse, *Red Room (Harmony in Red)*, 1908. Oil on canvas, 180.5 x 221 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia. (Photo via Smarthistory)



Figure 1.2.151.2.15: Zhou Chen, *Peach Blossom Spring*, 102.5 x 161.5 cm. Suzhou Museum, China. (Photo via Smarthistory)

Saturation

Finally, intensity or saturation is how bright or dull a color is. Henri Matisse tended to use very saturated colors, as in *Red Room (Harmony in Red)* (1908), whereas in *Peach Blossom Spring* (1533), Zhou Chen relied on a much more muted palette with very little saturation of colors.

The landscape is almost entirely in shades of brown and beige. The grey-green of the trees is low in saturation, leaving the single splash of red on the child's clothes the only moment of high saturation in the image. Therefore, we notice this tiny detail within this large painting. The Matisse painting, on the other hand, is a blaze of colors. The vibrant red of the wall and tablecloth dominates the image, in sharp contrast with the green grass showing through the window and the blues and purples curving throughout the image.

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1.2.4: Value

Value

Value refers to the use of light and dark in art. Value can be subdivided into tint (light hues) and shade (dark hues). In painting, which uses subtractive color, value changes are achieved by adding black or white to a color. Artists may also employ shading, which refers to a more subtle manipulation of value. The value scale is used to show the standard variations in tones. Values near the lighter end of the spectrum are termed high-keyed, while those on the darker end are low-keyed.



Value scale: The value scale represents different degrees of light and dark used in artwork.

In two-dimensional artworks, the use of value can help to give a shape the illusion of mass or volume. It will also give the entire composition a sense of lighting. High contrast refers to the placing of lighter areas directly against much darker ones, so their difference is showcased, creating a dramatic effect. High contrast also refers to the presence of more blacks than white or grey. Low-contrast images result from placing mid-range values together so there is not much visible difference between them, creating a more subtle mood.

In Baroque painting, the technique of chiaroscuro was used to produce highly dramatic effects in art. Chiaroscuro, which means literally “light-dark” in Italian, refers to clear tonal contrasts exemplified by very high-keyed whites, placed directly against very low-keyed darks. Candlelit scenes were common in Baroque painting as they effectively produced this dramatic type of effect. Caravaggio used a high contrast palette in such works as *The Denial of St. Peter* to create his expressive chiaroscuro scene.



Caravaggio, *The Denial of St. Peter*, 1610: Caravaggio’s *The Denial of St. Peter* is an excellent example of how light can be manipulated in artwork.

Artists use the contrast between light and shadow to create the sense of three-dimensional form on a flat surface—and to shape viewers' perceptions. The terms "value" or "tone" are often used to describe this quality lightness and darkness. The artist may use light strategically to direct attention, create a particular mood, or communicate a message with an artwork. This video examines how three artists, using painting, printmaking, and installation, have used light to particular effect in their work.



Art Institute of Chicago, "Art Explainer 3: Light and Shadow"

The following works from the Art Institute of Chicago appear in this video:

Tanner, *The Two Disciples at the Tomb*

Kollwitz, Battlefield

Flavin, “monument” for V. Tatlin

Contrast

Contrast is the amount of variation between the highest and lowest values in a work. This is perhaps most commonly used to talk about photography, but can be applied to any work. Hiroshi Sugimoto’s *Cliffs of Moher* (1989) has very low contrast. There are no dark blacks, no stark whites; everything is in very similar shades of gray.

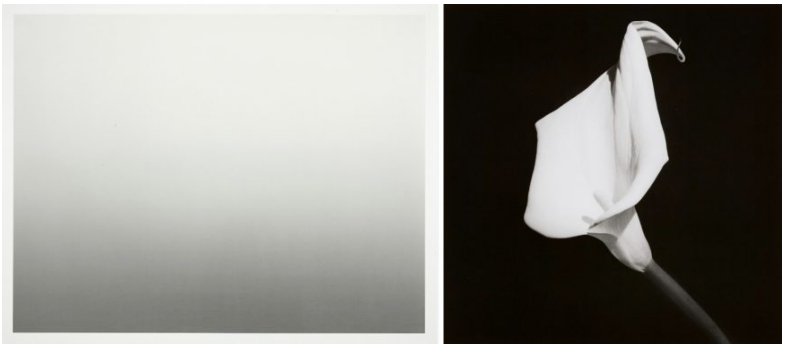


Figure 1.2.161.2.16: Left: Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Atlantic Ocean, Cliffs of Moher*, 1989. Offset lithograph, 24 x 31 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois. (© Hiroshi Sugimoto); Right: Robert Mapplethorpe, *Calla Lily*, 1987. Gelatin silver print, 17.94 × 17.78 cm. Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota (© Robert Mapplethorpe / The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation) (Photos via Smarthistory)



Figure 1.2.171.2.17: Kara Walker, *Untitled (from Testimony)*, 2004. Cut black paper with pencil, pressure-sensitive tape, metal fasteners, and synthetic polymer film on paperboard, 52.7 x 38.1 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. (Photo via Smarthistory)

The low contrast conveys the soft and gentle feeling of a heavy mist over quiet water. On the other hand, Robert Mapplethorpe photograph, *Calla Lily* (1987) has much higher contrast, meaning that the difference in the whites and blacks is much greater. The effect is much sharper and crisper, making this simple flower appear grand and impressive.

Moving yet further, in Kara Walker's silhouette image, *Untitled (from Testimony)*, the contrast is absolute. We see only black and white (and here, some red).

In this case, the artist is using the power of this contrast to draw the viewer's attention to some of the problems in American race relations, and their origins in the institution of chattel slavery. Therefore, while visual elements produce visual effects, their implications can extend well beyond the purely visual.

Note that Value is not merely the use of black, white, and gray, but it can overlap with the element of Color. For instance, the red color in Kara Walker's image above is lighter than the black and darker than the white and could therefore be called a mid-tone, or middle value.

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1.2.5: Texture

Texture

by Dr. Asa Simon Mittman

Texture is an element that appeals to our sense of touch. Whether the texture is an actual surface or merely the visual illusion of a texture, the sense of touch is triggered in our thoughts and feelings.



Figure 1.2.241.2.24: Jeff Koons, *Balloon Dog*, 1994-2001. Transparent color coating, stainless steel, 320 x 380 x 120 cm. (Photo: Kim, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Surface texture

Jeff Koons' *Balloon Dog* has a perfectly smooth, mirrored surface. Like many textures, it is difficult to resist touching, though we must. Our sense of touch is one of the main ways we understand our world and it is amazing to consider how the sense of touch can still be triggered through what we see, the same psychological and emotional response can occur, evoking feelings and memories of when we have touched similar surfaces in our past.

In contrast to the smoothness above, the coarse, bristly surface of an ancient Shang Dynasty Fang-Ding—a ritual vessel used in worshipping dead ancestors—grants the work a vibrant energy that is, perhaps, less inviting to touch.



Figure 1.2.251.2.25: Fangding Ritual Food Vessel with Abstract Decor, Shang dynasty, China, 14th-11th century BCE. Cast bronze, 21.7 x 17.1 x 15.2 cm. Harvard Art Museums. (Photo: Harvard Art Museums, via Smarthistory)

The illusion of texture

The illusion of texture is no less important to our experience of artworks.

Dutch still life paintings are justly famous for their careful, illusionistic replication of objects. The smooth silver plates and glass goblet of Pieter Claesz's *Still Life* seem to tease us, as do the rougher cookies and breads, and the crumbly pie. The knife handle,

pointing out of the image toward us, seems just beyond our grasp, and therefore makes this magnificent spread all the more tantalizing.



Figure 1.2.261.2.26: Pieter Claesz, *Still Life*, c. 1625. Oil on panel, 48 × 76.9 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois. (Photo via Smarthistory)

When engaging works of art, notice what textures you see and consider how they affect your sense of touch. What does a particular texture seem to convey and how does this relate to what the other elements are bringing to the artwork?

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1.2.6: Space

Space

by Dr. Simon Mittman



Figure 1.2.181.2.18: Left: Raphael, *La Donna Velata*, 1514-15. Oil on canvas, 82 x 60.5 cm. Palazzi Pitti, Florence; Right: St. John the Evangelist in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero D IV, f. 209v. (Photos via Smarthistory)

A convincing illusion of space

Space is used to refer both to depth—real or represented—and also to the general surface area within a work of art. Some periods of art history show a great deal of interest in creating convincing illusions of three-dimensional space in two-dimensional media. Perhaps the most iconic (though certainly not the only) example of this is the Italian Renaissance (c. 1400-1600), when artists very deliberately worked to created convincing illusions of depth.

Look at how Raphael creates an illusion of three-dimensional form in *La Donna Velata*. Through careful variations in value, particularly in shading—the use of darker colors to create the illusion of shadows—Raphael convinces us that the woman in the painting is really there in three dimensions.

Light seems to strike her from her left, casting her right side in shadow. The folds of her voluminous sleeve are a particularly splendid example of the illusion of space. Even examining a small detail of it, it is hard to believe that there is no depth, at all, just thin layers of paint on flat canvas.



Figure 1.2.191.2.19: Details of the sleeve, Left: Raphael, *La Donna Velata*; Right: St. John the Evangelist in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. (Photos via Smarthistory)

For sharp contrast, we can examine a detail of a page of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* . Both images show a person in voluminous robes, looking out at us, but here, the similarities end. Raphael's figure is lit softly, creating highlights and shadows that create a sense of roundness and weight to her body and clothes. The figure of John the Evangelist from the *Lindisfarne Gospels* , on the other hand, is almost totally flat. There is virtually no shading to his body and the folds on his clothes are purely schematic patterns.

If we isolate a small detail of John's sleeve, as we did with La Donna Velata's, it is difficult to even recall that this series of lines and colors is intended to be seen as a three-dimensional form, at all.



Figure 1.2.201.2.20: Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83. Fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet. Vatican, Rome, Italy. (Photo via Smarthistory)



Figure 1.2.211.2.21: Wolf Vostell, *No: Life as a Picture—A Picture as Life* series, 1963. Photograph. (Photo via Smarthistory)

Linear and atmospheric perspective

There are various methods used by artists to create the illusion that their figures exist in three-dimensional space. Among the more effective are linear and atmospheric perspective. Another work from the Italian Renaissance will serve to demonstrate both. Pietro Perugino's *Christ Handing the Keys to St. Peter*, uses both linear and atmospheric perspective to create a very convincing illusion of depth.

Linear perspective is based on the optical illusion that parallel lines seem to converge as they recede into the distance. Railroad tracks are the classic example, as in, Wolf Vostell's photograph from his *No: Life as a Picture—A Picture as Life* series from 1963. If we overlay the lines used on Perugino's painting, we can see how he used this effect. The lines are called orthogonal lines or orthogonals and they meet on the horizon line, at the vanishing point. Note that as all the orthogonals converge, the forms also get smaller.

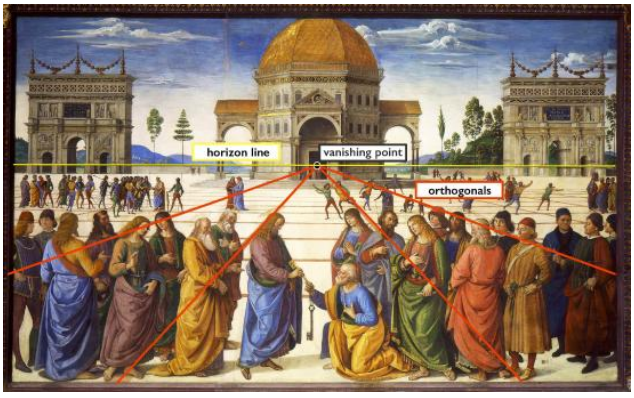


Figure 1.2.221.2.22: Perspective diagram, Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*. (Photo via Smarthistory)



Figure 1.2.231.2.23: Tobias Verhaecht, *The Clivus Scauri in Rome*. Chalk, graphite and ink on paper, 22 x 17.1 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. (Photo via Smarthistory)

Perugino also uses atmospheric perspective. This is based on the optical effect that makes objects in the distance appear paler, bluer, and less detailed that objects that are close to us. Returning to Perugino's painting, we can see that he has replicated this effect, carefully making the figures in the foreground (the portion of the image that appears to be closest to the viewer) bolder in color, the smaller figures in the middle ground paler, and the hills in the background (the portion of the image that appears to be in the far distance) fading off into pale blues.The tool of one-point linear perspective is very simple, and artists can use it to create a convincing illusion of depth with only a few pencil strokes and without the careful measuring and use of a straightedge, as in Tobias Verhaecht's sketch of a Roman ruin. Two- and three-point linear perspective are slightly more complicated, but operate on the same general principles and produce similar results.

An Important Note

It is important to note, though, that the use of various techniques to create a convincing illusion of depth does not make Raphael or Perugino "better" artists than the anonymous medieval monk who painted the page of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, nor does it make their works any "better" or more sophisticated. The illusion of depth is one of the many tools in the artist's toolbox, and it is serves some purposes very well, but it is not always the most powerful or effective way to convey an idea and, indeed, can sometimes be in direct conflict with the intentions of an artist.

Surface and Depth

by Art Institute of Chicago

What makes paintings feel as deep as the view from a window or as flat as a wall?

Online Resource: Surface and Depth

Paintings have both a literal surface and a conceptual surface called the picture plane. The picture plane can act like a transparent window, opening onto what feels like deep, three-dimensional space, or—especially in modern art—may emphasize its own flatness as a surface for paint. In a *trompe l'oeil* painting (from the French, meaning to deceive the eye), the space might not be especially deep, but the objects looks real enough to touch and may even break the picture plane. This video examines how artists can achieve these various effects of depth, and their results.



The Art Institute of Chicago, Art Explainer 2: Surface and Depth

The following works from the Art Institute of Chicago appear in this video:

Poussin, *Landscape with St. John on Patmos*

Harnett, *For Sunday's Dinner*

Mondrian, *Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray*

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1.2.7: Time and Motion

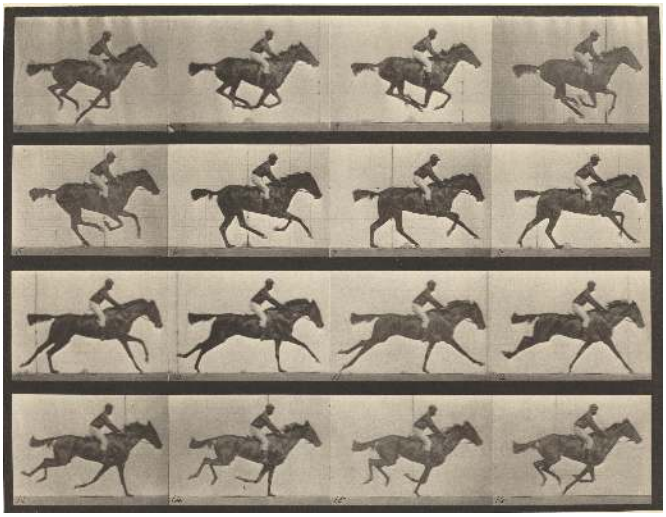
Time and Motion

Time and Motion is a bit tricky when it comes to listing it as an Element of Art. Often time and motion are revealed through how other Elements of Art are handled, such as a blurred line. Some scholars prefer to list Time and Motion as a Principle of Design for this reason. However, some mediums, such as video art, use time and motion as an actual element. Part of what makes art "art" is that things are not always "black-and-white" or "this-or-that," sometimes they are "both/and" depending on the context. When we explore the Principles, we will see the category of Directional Forces, which overlaps with the idea of Time and Motion as an Element of Art.

Time and motion is employed in both static and in time-based mediums and can show a direct action or the intended path for the viewer ‘s eye to follow through a piece.

Techniques such as scale and proportion (also a Principle) are used to create the feeling of motion or the passing of time in static visual artwork. For example, on a flat picture plane, an image that is smaller and lighter colored than its surroundings will appear to be in the background. Another technique for implying motion and/or time is the placement of a repeated elements in different areas within an artwork to suggest the transitioning of an object through space through time, and yet it is contained in a single, still image or a series of still images.

Visual experiments in time and motion were first produced in the mid-19th century. The photographer Eadweard Muybridge is well known for his sequential shots of humans and animals walking, running, and jumping, which he displayed together to illustrate the motion of his subjects.



Eadweard Muybridge, *Animal Locomotion, Plate 626*, collotype photograph, 1887, 24 x 31 cm. National Gallery of Art. public domain.



Umberto Boccioni, *Dynamism of a Biker*, oil on canvas, 1913, 70 x 95 cm, Wikimedia Commons. public domain

Boccioni's repeated lines and shapes exemplifies a feeling of motion along with the "Futurist" idea of man as a machine. Futurism is an early 20th century art movement based in Italy that celebrated the motion and power of machines. (I think I see a figure on a bicycle in there. How about you?)

While static art forms have the ability to imply or suggest time and motion, the time-based mediums of film, video, kinetic sculpture, and performance art are other artforms that also demonstrate time and motion. Film is made up of many static images that are quickly passed through a lens. Video is essentially the same process, but digitally-based and with fewer frames per second. Performance art takes place in real time and makes use of real people and objects, much like theater. Kinetic art is art that moves, or depends on movement, for its effect. All of these mediums use time and motion as a key aspect of their forms of expression.



Will Reiche, *Kunstmaschine*, kinetic art, 2007 (looped gif, 93 frames, 7.4 s)

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1.3: Principles of Design

The Principles of Design

by Jon McCallum

If the Elements (Line, Shape, Value, etc) are the "building blocks" of art, the Principles of Design regard HOW those elements are handled. The Principles give us language for better understanding and discussing the dynamic effects of how the Elements interact with each other and with the work of art as a whole.

Similar to the Elements of Art, not all Principles will be active in every work of art. Often a few of them will stand out as being more significant than the others.

The Principles of Design will often intermingle with each other in a given work of art. For instance, the same element, such as a particular circle in the midst of a drawing, may contribute to a sense of **Unity or Variety**, while also showing **Contrast** from its surroundings, while also being a point of **Emphasis**.

Notice that some of the principles are named as pairs, such as Unity and Variety. Each of these are really just one principle. A common mistake in this course is to discuss one half of the principle — Unity, for instance — and forget to include the other half — Variety. Be sure to explore the principle as a whole and be prepared to describe both halves.

As noted for the Elements of Art, different courses and textbooks may or may not include some of these principles or they may use different terms for some of them. But for this course, we will feature the following seven Principles of Design:

- **Unity and Variety**
- **Balance**
- **Emphasis and Subordination**
- **Directional Forces**
- **Contrast**
- **Repetition and Rhythm**
- **Scale and Proportion**

Now let's take a peek at each one of them!

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1.3.1: Unity and Variety

Unity and Variety

Ultimately, a work of art is the strongest when it expresses an overall unity in composition and form, a visual sense that all the parts fit together; that the whole is greater than its parts. This same sense of unity is projected to encompass the idea and meaning of the work too. One of the ways unity is often created is through the use of repeated elements. This visual and conceptual unity is sublimated by the variety of elements and principles used to create it. We can think of this in terms of a musical orchestra and its conductor: directing many different instruments, sounds and feelings into a single comprehendible symphony of sound. This is where the objective functions of line, color, pattern, scale and all the other artistic elements and principles yield to a more subjective view of the entire work, and from that an appreciation of the aesthetics and meaning it resonates.

We can view Eva Isaksen's work *Orange Light* below to see how unity and variety work together.



Eva Isaksen, Orange Light, 2010. Print and collage on canvas. 40" x 60." Permission of the artist

Isaksen makes use of nearly every element and principle including shallow space, a range of values, colors and textures, asymmetrical balance and different areas of emphasis. The unity of her composition stays strong by keeping the various parts in check against each other and the space they inhabit. One of the main features that is helping to hold this work together, that is, bring unity, is the use of texture and pattern throughout the whole work. No section is left as a simple, solid color or negative space to contrast the use of texture. Instead, several different kinds of texture shows the other half of principle, variety. Another factor creating unity in this image is the recurring use of organic shapes, such as the imperfect, fruit-like circles. In the end, the viewer is caught up in a mysterious world of organic forms that float across the surface like seeds being caught by a summer breeze.



Figure 3.2.113.2.11: Garbhadhatu (Taizokai) Mandala (Womb World) (detail). (Photo via Smarthistory)

A work filled with variety might also have unity. The World Womb Mandala is an excellent example. Unlike the Ming Dynasty Bronze statue of Buddha, where all of the bodhisattvas are more or less identical, the many bodhisattvas on the World Womb Mandala are each individualized. At a distance, they all become one, expressing great unity, but taken one at a time, each as an object of devotional contemplation, they contain more variety than it would at first appear.

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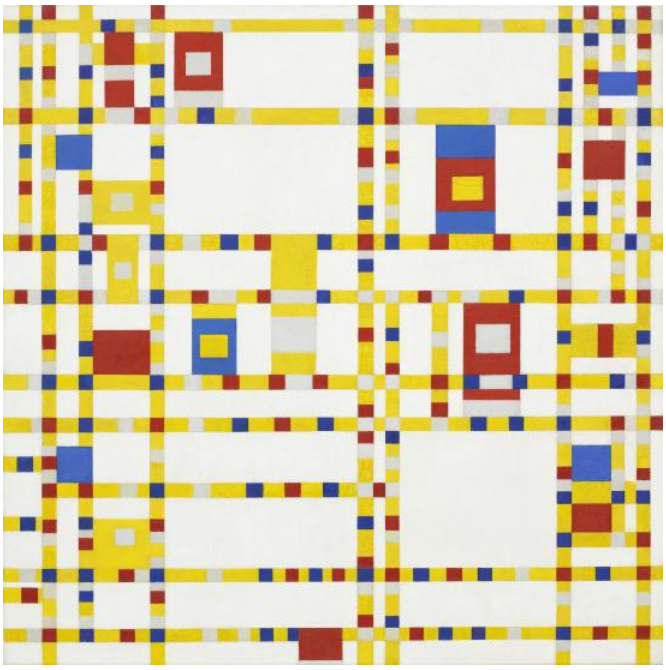
1.3.2: Balance

Balance

Balance is a Principle of Design that regards the handling of visual weight regarding the work of art as a whole. The use of the term here is different than how we use it in everyday conversation. We might want to say that a lop-sided work of art, one that is heavily weighted on one side, is "out of balance." That is somewhat true, and yet all works of art possess some form of balance. Saying that a work of art is "out of balance" in this context fails to recognize that the work simply has a different kind of balance.

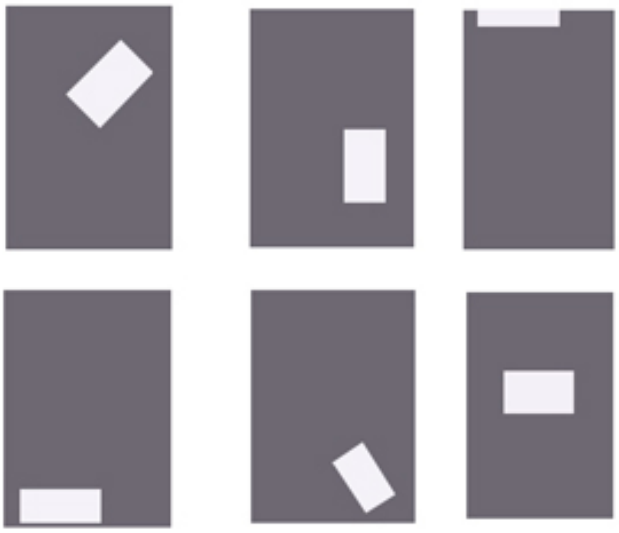
Artists use different kinds of balance to express different kinds of qualities. A work that is evenly balanced, for instance, gives a calm, in-control, orderly vibe, while an offset work creates a sense of drama, or uneasiness. One kind of balance isn't necessarily better than another as long as it supports what the artist is trying to communicate. An off-kilter composition may be more appropriate for communicating a particular message than a more equally weighted one.

Let's consider a work by Piet Mondrian, whose revolutionary paintings of the early twentieth century used non-objective shapes instead of realistic subject matter to generate the visual power in his work. While *Broadway Boogie Woogie* seems very similar from one area to the next with the many repeated squares and rectangles painted in white and primary colors, one side is not exactly the same as the other. The lack of perfect symmetry adds a dynamic, energetic quality to this work that fits its title. If one side was exactly the same as the other, the work might feel too predictable and calm. Instead, looking at this work, one can imagine early 20th century, hopping and bopping, city life with its grid pattern similar to the layout of city streets and blocks, and the pulsating colors similar to the rhythms of lively dance music.



Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, c. 1942-43, oil on canvas, 127 x 127 cm, Wikimedia Commons, public domain

In the examples below, notice how the placement of the white rectangle makes a big difference in how the entire picture plane is activated. Balance can thus have a powerful influence on the overall feeling of a work.



6 Examples of Visual Balance.
Image by Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

The example on the top left is weighted toward the top, and the diagonal orientation of the white shape gives the whole area a sense of movement.

The top middle example is weighted more toward the bottom, but still maintains a sense that the white shape is floating.

On the top right, the white shape is nearly off the picture plane altogether, leaving most of the remaining area visually empty. This arrangement works if you want to convey a feeling of loftiness or simply direct the viewer's eyes to the top of the composition.

The lower left example is perhaps the least dynamic: the white shape is resting at the bottom, mimicking the horizontal bottom edge of the ground. The overall sense here is restful, heavy, and without any dynamic character.

The bottom middle composition is weighted decidedly toward the bottom right corner, but again, the diagonal orientation of the white shape leaves some sense of movement.

Lastly, the lower right example places the white shape directly in the middle on a horizontal axis. This is visually the most stable, but lacks any sense of movement. Refer to these six diagrams when you are determining the visual weight of specific artworks.

There are three basic forms of visual balance:

- Symmetrical
- Asymmetrical
- Radial



3 Examples of Visual Balance.
Left: Symmetrical. Middle: Asymmetrical. Right: Radial.
Image by Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

Symmetrical balance is the most visually stable, and characterized by an exact—or nearly exact—compositional design on either (or both) sides of the horizontal or vertical axis of the picture plane. Symmetrical compositions are usually dominated by a central anchoring element. There are many examples of symmetry in the natural world that reflect an aesthetic dimension. The Moon Jellyfish fits this description, ghostly lit against a black background, and symmetrical in its design. The slight tilt of the jellyfish in

the picture frame, however, isn't perfectly symmetrical. The term "approximate symmetry" is often used to acknowledge the slight imperfection from true symmetry.



Moon Jellyfish, (detail). Digital image by Luc Viator, licensed by Creative Commons

Symmetry's inherent stability can sometimes preclude a static quality, as seen in the 630 foot tall monument, *Gateway Arch* in St. Louis, Missouri. However, the varied cityscape, ever-changing sky, and ever-changing perspective as you maneuver about the city, keep the work interesting just because it is vastly different than its surrounding environment. Another thing to note here is the balance of the arch itself versus the balance of the photograph as a whole, so while the arch itself is symmetrical in design, the photograph should be described as asymmetrical.



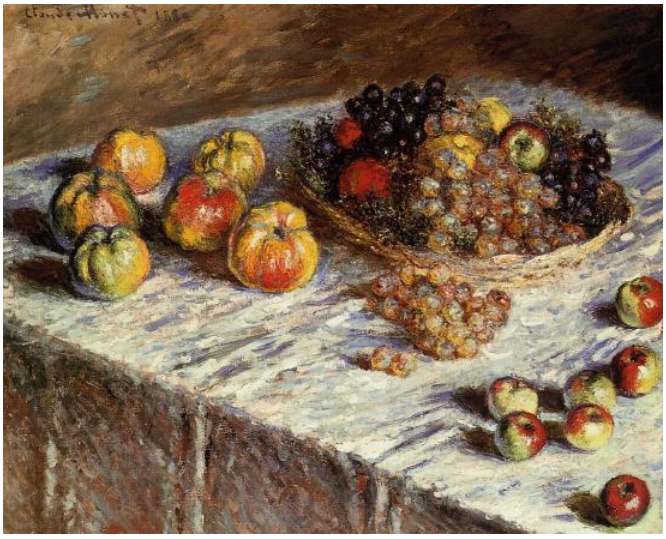
Eero Saarinen, *Gateway Arch*, 1963-65, stainless steel, 630' high. St. Louis, Missouri. Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons.

Asymmetry uses compositional elements that are offset from each other, creating a visually unstable balance. Asymmetrical visual balance is the most dynamic because it creates a more complex design construction. A graphic poster from the 1940s shows how offset positioning and strong contrasts can increase the visual drama of the entire composition.



Theatrical poster for the American release of the 1949 film *Twelve O'Clock High*. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain

Claude Monet's *Still Life with Apples and Grapes* (below) uses asymmetry in its design to enliven an otherwise mundane arrangement. First, he sets the whole composition on the diagonal, cutting off the lower left corner with a dark triangle. The arrangement of fruit appears haphazard, but Monet purposely sets most of it on the top half of the canvas to achieve a lighter visual weight. He balances the darker basket of fruit with the white of the tablecloth, even placing a few smaller apples at the lower right to complete the composition.



Claude Monet, *Still Life with Apples and Grapes*, oil on canvas, 1880, 67 x 83 cm. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

With Balance, we consider how the overall handling of visual weight in an artwork affects the mood, energy, or feeling of the artist's communication. With this in mind, consider the following Rules of Balance:

1. Large forms attract more attention than smaller forms.
2. Forms gather weight as they near the edge of a composition.
3. Complex forms are heavier than simple forms.
4. Warm colors are heavier than cool colors.

5. Intense colors are heavier than pale colors.

Of course, complex nuances can build as these rules begin overlapping one another. For instance, does a less complex large form have more or less visual weight than a small, but complexly textured form that is closer to the edge? The answer depends on many factors, such as the degree of differences, other forms and elements used in the artwork, etc. This is where discussions about art can become very interesting — not necessarily arguments about who is right or wrong, but discoveries in how to better see and how to better understand how others may see differently.

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1.3.3: Emphasis and Subordination

Emphasis and Subordination

Emphasis is an area of primary visual importance and **subordination** is essentially an area that contains opposite qualities so that the area of emphasis has something against which it can stand out.

Emphasis is usually created by using one or more of the three following strategies:

- **Isolation** — putting an object off by itself, away from the rest of the work
- **Placement** — putting an object in a key area where it is easily noticed. This can be done by such strategies as framing a particular object or using directional forces to point to it.
- **Contrast** — using opposite qualities from the surrounding environment to make an area or object stand out as noticeably different from the rest. This can be a contrast of value (light vs dark), color (warm vs cool), texture (rough vs smooth), size (small vs large), etc.

An artwork may have one point of emphasis, several points of emphasis, or no point of emphasis at all.

In terms of the visual Elements of Art, what stands out the most Francisco de Goya's painting *The Third of May, 1808* (below)? Most viewers will recognize the main point of emphasis as being the figure in the white shirt with his arms raised upwards. The figure stands out because the majority of the painting in dark in tone (subordination), while his shirt is bright white. This is a good example of the use of value contrast to create emphasis. A candle lantern at the feet of the executioners acts as a spotlight, and his dramatic stance reinforces his relative isolation from the rest of the crowd. All the figures on the right are pointing their guns directly at him, providing a great example of placement through the use of directional forces to emphasize him. The artist wants us to see that figure, consider his situation, put ourselves in his shoes, so to speak, to feel something of what he might be feeling in this dramatic moment.

In terms of the idea, Goya's narrative painting gives witness to the summary execution of Spanish resistance fighters by Napoleon's armies on the night of May 3, 1808. He poses the figure in the white shirt to imply a crucifixion, a Christ-like figure about to be sacrificed, as he faces his own death and his compatriots surrounding him either clutch their faces in disbelief or stand stoically with him, looking their executioners in the eyes. While the carnage takes place in front of us, the church stands dark and silent in the distance. The genius of Goya is his ability to direct the narrative content by the emphasis he places in his composition.



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

A second example showing emphasis is seen in *The Fall of Icarus*, by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (or one of his circle). There is a multitude of activity recorded in this painting, and there are several points of interest. In a classroom setting one student might say the large boat is the main point of emphasis because it is fairly weighty by being dark valued and its sails sweep outward with very strong and unique curved shapes. Another student might simply say the whole foreground is the most interesting because it is the most detailed area of the work. While that may be true, it is recommended to focus in the most intensely emphasized parts. So looking more closely, we come to recognize the farmer in the red shirt, the only use of the color of red in a painting that is otherwise cool in tone with the many blues, browns, and whites. That farmer is also the largest figure in the painting, even shown

from a point of view that makes him larger than the horse. Arguably then, the farmer, is the main point of emphasis. While this is not necessarily a right or wrong answer, what is important here is being able to see such features and describe them using the key terms and concepts of the Elements and Principles. Considering the artist's message — humorously and yet also tragically, a smaller figure, Icarus, appears to be drowning in the sea while the normal duties of life carry on for others — a man reaps what he sows.



Pieter Brueghel the Elder (or his associates), *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, 1590-1595, oil on panel, 74 x 111 cm, Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

When considering the point or points of emphasis in a work of art, also consider how such emphases connect to the possible underlying message of the work.

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1.3.4: Directional Forces

Directional Forces

by Jon McCallum

When an artwork contains "paths" for our eyes to follow, this is known as the Principle of Directional Forces.

Directional forces can be made up of actual elements that point our attention in a certain way, such as an actual arrow pointing our eyes towards something else, or the forces may be made up of implied, or suggested, lines, such as the gaze of a figure's eyes looking in a certain direction.

The sculptor Randolph Rogers applied incorporated many directional forces into his work *The Last Arrow.* Because of this, even though the work is a solid and still object of metal, it nevertheless feels dynamic and alive. Notice some of these forces:

- both of the rider's hands and head point in the direction of his bow and arrow
- the curved line of the bow enforces the direction of the arrow
- the horse's tail also extends in that direction
- the horse's head and right hoof point in the opposite direction of the arrow
- the other hoof points down to the figure beneath the horse
- the figure beneath the horse looks (an implied line) and reaches upward toward the rider while his right foot also extends in the direction of the arrow

As a result of these many forces, our eyes are kept active in the drama of this moment.



Randolph Rogers, *The Last Arrow*, bronze sculpture, 1880, 112 x 88 x 41 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

A gradual transition of elements from one to the next can also create a sense of direction as seen in the painting *Swifts* by Giacomo Balla. Notice how the slightly curved horizontal lines flow like waves across the work, while many geometric shapes of various kinds repeat again and again to create a strong sense of rhythm and motion even though the work itself is still.



Giacomo Balla, *Swifts: Paths of Movement and Dynamic Sequences*, oil on canvas, 1913, 97 x 120 cm, WikiArt, Museum of Modern Art

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1.3.5: Contrast

Contrast

by Jon McCallum

Contrast is a Principle of Design that regards the degree of difference between particular aspects of an artwork. Contrast is more than just a difference between dark and light (value) — a concept familiar to many people. Contrasts can appear with any of the Elements of Art. For example, several straight, thin lines contrasting one thick and curvy lines. In this basic example, three contrasts are occurring — a contrast of number (several vs one), a contrast of weight (thin vs thick), and a contrast of quality (straight vs curvy)... and all of this using only one element — line.

In the following photograph by Walker Evans, we can discover many interesting contrasts:

- the round circles of the bicycle (as shapes or lines) vs the angular configuration of the railing (as lines or shapes)
- the many value contrasts of white things, such as the lettering or light on the roofing or ground, versus the walls of darker grays and black
- the rough, gridded texture of the wall made up of bricks versus the smoother surfaces of the doors made up of long, straight boards
- the directional force of the vertical post extending to the top of the composition versus the horizontal lines created by the bright rooftops and walkway
- and so on.



Walker Evans, *Shoeshine Stand, Southeastern U.S.*, black and white photograph, 8 x 10 inches, 1936, Wikimedia Commons, Public domain.

Now let's observe some ways that contrast adds interest to this painting by Mary Cassatt:

- there are at least four distinctly different patterns appearing (note the wallpaper, the dresser, the rug, the dress) — each one contrasts the others in terms of color and style
- the many patterns contrast the few non-patterned areas, especially the smooth, natural skin tones of the child and caretaker, and this helps to add emphasis to the child and caretaker due to this difference
- similar to the previous observation, a contrast of value is evident large areas of the image being relatively dark in relation to the brightness appearing on the figures, especially the skin, the white cloth, and the white lines of the dress
- the directional forces of the caretaker's dress and the positioning of her body, going diagonally from top-left to bottom-right, contrasts the opposite diagonal of the child angled from the top-right towards the bottom-left.



Mary Cassatt, *The Child's Bath*, oil on canvas, 1893, 100 x 66 cm, Wikipedia Commons. Public domain.

When you are observing a work of art, try going down the list of Elements and asking yourself how one or more contrasts may be occurring with each element (assuming that element is present in the given work). For example: "Line — What is going on in this artwork regarding line? What qualities or nuances of the line are the same throughout the work? (The answer for this also supports the Unity part of the Principle of Unity and Variety.) Where does the nature of line differ in the artwork and how does it differ? (The answer here also supports the Variety part of the Principle of Unity and Variety.) You could then explore the next Element on the list for Contrast, and so on and so on.

Special Note: In the previous paragraph, notice how the Principles are overlapping. Contrast connects to the Variety part of Unity and Variety, and, as we noted in a previous section, Contrast can also be a part of the Principle of Emphasis and Subordination. A contrast in size may also be a part of the Principle of Scale and Proportion. This intermingling of qualities is part of what makes art so fascinating.

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1.3.6: Repetition and Rhythm

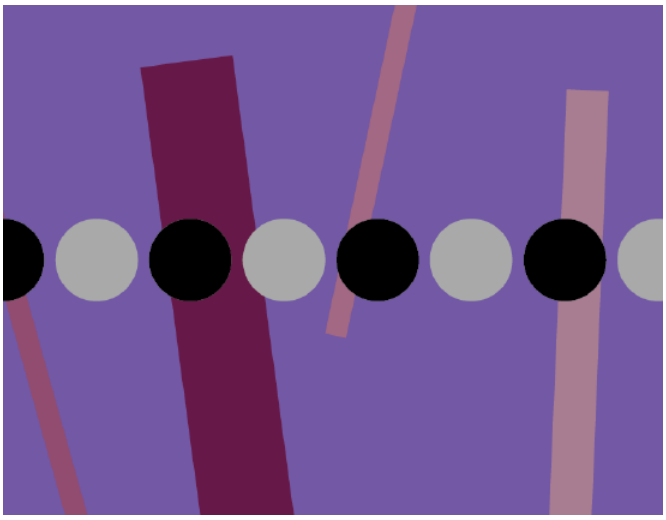
Repetition and Rhythm

by Jon McCallum

Whenever a certain element or quality of an artwork is repeated, some sort of visual rhythm is likely present. **Rhythm** is a kind expressive or organizational strategy that imbues a work of art with a sense of motion-like energy as our eyes dance to the visual "music" of the repeated parts. Just as the human ear loves hearing repeated patterns of a drum beat or a guitar strum, so the human eye loves recognizing the interplay of repeated parts.

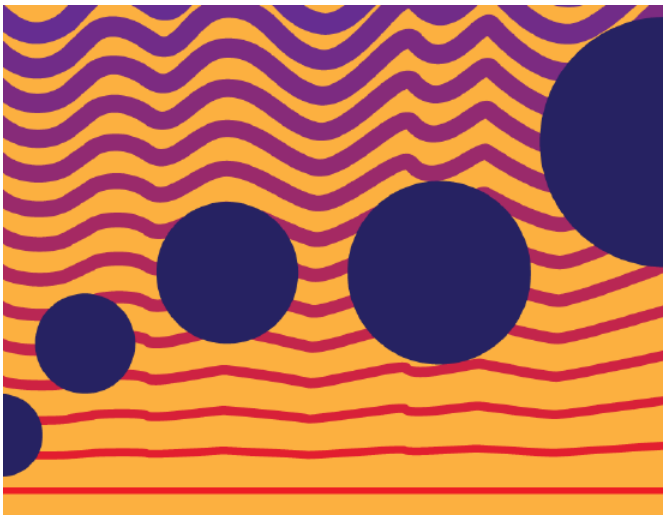
Some different types of rhythm include:

- regular
- progressive
- flowing
- chaotic
- alternating



Rhythm Example 1: Regular, Alternating and Chaotic Rhythms. Image created and contributed by Jon McCallum.

In *Rhythm Example 1* several different kinds of rhythm are present. The pacing of the circles, being equally spaced from each other and equally in size, creates a strong sense of regularity. We can easily expect that pattern to continue on and on exactly the same as it travels beyond the edges of the design. This circles, shifting from a dark value to a lighter value one after the next is a fitting example of an alternating rhythm. In contrast to the even beat of the circles, the long rectangles (or wide lines) feel random — some are tilted one way, some another — some are thicker, some are thinner — some are darker, some are lighter — some are closer together, some more distant. While a repetition does not need so many differences to be described as a loose, wild, or chaotic rhythm, it helps make the example more obvious.



Rhythm Example 2: Flowing and Progressive Rhythms. Image created and contributed by Jon McCallum.

Rhythm Example 2 shows rhythms that are more transitional in nature. The dark blue circles progress from small to large in a slightly curved yet regular paced rhythm. The implied curve could also be described as a flow. In the background, a thick, wavy, purple line transitions from top to bottom, becoming gradually less curvy and less purple and less thick with every step in the sequence. The steps of the sequence are fairly regularly spaced. Notably different that the wavy line at top, the perfectly straight, horizontal, red line has found it's resting place at the bottom of the picture plane.

Moving from the examples above to observe some actual works will reveal that artistic rhythms tend to be more complex to recognize and describe. But learning to do so is worth the engagement.

The most obvious components carrying Rhythm and Repetition in Van Gogh's *Starry Night* can be seen in the glowing yellow orbs, the stars themselves, as the title affirms. Notice how some are larger, some smaller. Notice how some have a larger glowing orb and some have less. See how they are somewhat regularly spaced from each other and yet there are fairly large gaps here and there. The rhythm could thus be expressed as a sort of natural randomness — not really regular and yet not really chaotic either. One could go on to describe how the yellow, triangular shaped reflections on the surface of the water carry a similar kind of rhythm. With this artwork there is a very distinctive rhythm present that has more to do with Van Gogh's technique that a particular element. Look closely and note the numerous brushstrokes. (To zoom in, you may need to click on the "Wikimedia Commons" link given just below the image to open the painting in a new page — you may also be able to click again on that image to zoom in even closer.) Notice how various areas have similar kinds of brushstrokes — similar is size, angle, and direction. Some areas have more of a horizontal rhythm. In other areas, such as the lower left, the brushstrokes are set at a 45-degree angle. So, while brushstrokes are not necessarily an element, although they do have a certain shape to them and could be described in that way, it is more readily understood that the repeated visual quality is bringing rhythm to this work.

(Van Gogh is well-known for thickly globbing his paints onto his canvases. I was shocked by this when I saw some of his works in person. Many of his paintings are literally deep, not just metaphorically deep. Unfortunately, this quality gets significantly lost when viewing flat prints or digital copies of his work. No wonder he was a "starving artist" — he couldn't be frugal with his paints — hah!)



Vincent Van Gogh, *Starry Night on the Rhone*, oil on canvas, 1888, 72 x 92 cm, Wikipedia Commons. Public domain.

Although Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (above) and Käthe Kollwitz's *Self-Portrait* (below) are significantly different from each other, they carry the similar approach of revealing their marks in such a way that an added sense of rhythm is built into each image. Observe the wonder of Kollwitz's work, how the human face is so evident, and so accurately drawn, and so full of a heavy, tired, sad kind of emotion. And yet, the work is made up of numerous, seemingly scribbled lines. It may boggle our sense of logic that so many loose scribbles could add up to something so well drawn and so emotive. Notice the many different kinds of line quality — in some places thick and bold, in other places thin and delicate. On the outer edges, the lines are more random and loose and are understood as mere lines. But in the face, the lines add up to something more. They become shadows, texture, the essence of a particular human being. Rhythm is definitely evident here through the many repetitions of line. What adjectives would you use to describe it — maybe a different adjective for different areas?



Käthe Kollwitz, *Self-Portrait with Hand on the Forehead*, etching and drypoint, 1910, 44 x 31 cm, Wikipedia Commons. Public domain.

As explained in some earlier sections, the Principles often overlap with each other. Think about how the Principle of Repetition and Rhythm is similar to, but distinct from, the Principle of Directional Forces. Certainly, the two may overlap in a given artwork by repeated elements being arranged in a certain way so that our eyes are directed some particular point of emphasis. However, with

Repetition and Rhythm our eyes are not necessarily directed in any particular direction. The Principle of Repetition and Rhythm is more about the energy of the pattern itself.

This Principle often overlaps with the Principle of Unity and Variety, which is largely due to the fact that the more an element or particular quality is repeated, the more it will feel like it belongs in the artwork. The sense of belonging inherently affirms the Unity of a work. And often the repetitions will not be exactly the same — an echoed shape of a circle, for instance, may still appear as a circle, but alter in size, color, value, texture, etc. This brings visual spice to an artwork — the repeated but altered shape possessing qualities of both Unity and Variety all at once. Amazing!

Whenever you see a repeated element or quality in an artwork, pause. Consider what sort of rhythm may be at play. Is the rhythm predictable, wild and unexpected, sequential, more flowy, or something other? How does the "visual music" of the rhythm support the possible mood or meaning of the work?

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1.3.7: Scale and Proportion

Scale and Proportion

Scale and Proportion show the relative size of one form in relation to another. Relationships of scale are often used to create illusions of depth on a two-dimensional surface, the larger form being in front of the smaller one.

The scale of an object can provide a focal point or emphasis in an image, and so this Principle of Design may overlap with Emphasis and Subordination.

Scale can be used to point out relationships of size relative to the human body. Things on a human scale are the size we expect them to be in relation to our normal experience of the world. However, artists sometimes play with our expectations as a way of getting us to see and consider things in a new way. For example, American sculptor Claes Oldenburg and his wife Coosje van Bruggen create works of common objects at an unexpected and enormous scale. Their *Spoonbridge and Cherry* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis weighs almost 7000 lbs and measures over 50 feet from its longest end to the other! As big as it is, the work retains a comic and playful character, in part because of its gigantic size. This kind of sculpture lends itself to public art because it appeals to most viewers of all ages.



Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, *Spoonbridge and Cherry*, 1985-88, aluminum, stainless steel, paint, 354 x 618 x 162 inches. Walker Art Center. Photo by Lois Chattin with permission of the artist.

Scale and proportion are incremental in nature. Works of art don’t always rely on big differences in scale to make a strong visual impact. A good example of this is Michelangelo’s sculptural masterpiece *Pieta* from 1499. Here, Mary cradles her dead son, the two figures forming a stable triangular composition. Michelangelo sculpts Mary to a slightly larger scale than the dead Christ to give her more significance, both visually and psychologically. This helps make the image of a young woman with the body of a grown man in her lap seem believable. The artist thus plays with a distortion Mary's presented age as we would expect her to appear noticeably older than her son. While an untrue representation in that sense, the strategy stirs us to consider the import of Mary's life and the immense emotions she must have carried as the mother of one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the world.



Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1499, marble, 174 x 195 x 69 cm. St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

Some cultures have used scale to indicate relative importance. Ancient Egyptian culture valued this tactic as they pictured their pharaohs as significantly larger than any of the lesser figures pictured around them. This kind of scale is called **hierarchical**. Notice thelarge figure of Pharaoh Narmer defeating his enemies which are pictured as significantly smaller. Smaller still is the servant behind him who carries his shoes.



Palette of Narmer, between circa 31st century and circa 30th century, 64 x 42 x 7 cm. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

When scale and proportion are greatly increased the results can be impressive, giving a work commanding space or fantastic implications. Rene Magritte's painting *Personal Values* constructs a room with objects whose size relationships are so out of whack that it becomes an ironic play on how we view everyday items in our lives. The Surrealists (a group of artists and thinkers that developed in Europe around the end of World War I) often employed the Principle of Scale and Proportion in exaggerated ways to create their unexpected and often unsettling images.



Rene Magritte, *Les Valeurs Personnelles (Personal Values)*, 1952, oil on canvas, 80.01 x 100.01 cm. www.flickr.com/photos/gandalfsgallery/5896709192

While scale and proportion both deal with issues regarding size relationships, they are distinctly different things. Scale has to do with the relative size of something, such as how an object in a work relates to it's actual, real-world size. Proportion is the comparative size of elements or objects within a composition. If a figure is given an oversized head compared to the rest of the body we would say that it is either "out of proportion" or has an exaggerated proportion. The phrase "out of proportion" suggests a mistake and artists often use amplified and unusual proportions intentionally for dramatic and metaphoric effect.

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1.4: Functions of Art

Functions of Art

by Jon McCallum

The language of the **Elements of Art** and the **Principles of Design** help us to look for certain details in art and consider it in a deeper way than just mere "looking" at art. The elements and principles are about the visual language being used and how things are visually expressed. But then comes the question of what the work is about, what is it saying, what is it for?

The answer to these questions usually fall within one or more of the following six categories known as the **functions of art**:

- **Delight** (pleasure, enjoyment, entertainment) The focus is on humanity's inherent desire to delight in beauty and wonder.
- **Commentary** (explanation, interpretation, description, criticism) This function acts like a specific viewpoint or opinion on a particular subject, issue, or happening.
- **Worship and Ritua**l (spiritual practice, beliefs, teaching, symbolism) These kinds of works help people to better acknowledge, experience, and understand unseen worlds.
- **Commemoration** (celebrate, honor, acknowledge, remember) This category celebrates particular values and figures who represent those values.
- **Persuasion** (convince, encourage, entice, argue, cause change) The intention here is influencing others to alter their views or take some action, such as buying a particular product or choosing a certain path in life.
- **Self-Expression** (personal emotions, views, therapy, dreams, getting insides out) Here there is less of an emphasis on the external world in favor of the artist's own unique experience. Of course, the work may still include imagery of the outer world, but the main force of the work is more internally-based. Interestingly, for most of art history, up until more modern times, self-expression was not a main function of art.

When considering which function fits a particular work of art, ask:

- Which one of the six Functions of Art does this artwork seem to best fit?
- What specifically is going on in this image (expressed through the visual Elements and Principles, concept, or the suggested message or story) that connects it to that category?
- What symbols or metaphors might be a part of the work? Artists often use symbols and metaphors to point to cultural and universal concepts.
- What other contextual information can be considered to support or challenge your reasoning? The artist's life, situation, values, culture, location, time period, etc. bring other layers of meaning and insight into an artwork. Sometimes an artist will intend a certain message and sometimes the artist simply follow their intuition and not really be aware of a work's significance. Other times an artist will intentionally obscure the message or meaning of a work, preferring instead to simply raise a question or simply pose a conundrum for viewers solve.
- While we do want to get a right choice for which function is most present in an artwork, there is some degree of subjectivity here. The main point is that we are engaging in the work, asking and thinking about these things, and developing the ability express our views well and better understand the views of others.

Note that it is possible for an artwork to fit into more than one category of function. For instance, a work may express much Delight and also Commemorate a remarkable figure. Both could be equally true. The goal here is to recognize what the work *most* seems to be about and to be able to give reasons for our choice based on evidence seen in the artwork and insights gathered from the artist's life, culture, and time period, etc.

Now let's explore an example for each of these six functions.

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1.4.1: Delight

Delight



Rainmundo de Madrazo y Garreta, *Spring Beauty*, oil on canvas, 36-9/16 x 22-15/16 in, date unknown (late 19th to early 20th century), Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

In Madrazo y Garreta's painting, a young, charming woman, clothed in prettiness, holding a basket of flowers in a lovely natural setting are strong clues that this work is about **Delight**. But that is just "looking." Let's go a bit deeper. What stands out the most in terms of the Elements and Principles, and what do they seem to suggest? Creamy warm yellows, and soft reddish-oranges glow against the muted green of the trees in the distance. There are clear and strong areas of dark and light, revealing good contrast, but most of the image is cheerfully toned, showing mostly a mid to high tonal range. The darker tones of the basket, for instance, causes the flower colors to pop out with joy. The edges of shapes tend to be organic, natural, and flowing in general with the exception of a few areas, such as the straight edges of the steps. Notice the directional forces of her body position, the angles of arms and hands and toes, etc., creating a pleasing flow of movement throughout the composition, somewhat dynamic to keep our attention, but not overly dramatic. One could go on pointing out details, but there is a strong case here for Delight or Beauty as the main function. But to be honest, there is much we don't know. Perhaps this is a specific figure known well to a given time and place. Perhaps she was a model of good, someone to honor, and so the work could be Commemorative. Or there could be other underlying reasons for some other category. However, beauty seems to be a major feature of this artwork and the title, "Spring Beauty," does much to support this. Titles can give helpful context to a work, but titles can also be misleading, applied after the artist has passed, or purposefully obscure to keep us focused more on the artwork itself.

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1.4.2: Commentary

Commentary



Winslow Homer, *The Gulf Stream*, oil on canvas, 1899, 71 x 125 cm. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

The Gulf Stream by Winslow Homer may appear as an image of **Delight** by some — these categories are fairly subjective. The rhythmic, rippled waves made up of many rich blue tones does have a beautiful quality. But as we look closer into the dark, murky area in the foreground of the work, we notice large sharks and bits of orangish-red, possibly blood. We realize the mast on the boat is broken and a stormy, dark gray sky is touching down on the water in the upper-right. Something more than the function of beauty is apparent. Looking to the title, we get a sense of the location. Looking at the date of the work, we get a little clue, but not much. Exploring further, using a reliable resource, some additional insights are revealed. An overview of the work provided by The Metropolitan Museum of Art tells us of Homer's history of exploring opposition "between humans and the natural environment" and points out the connection to the Gulf Stream (the work's title), the stalks of sugarcane on the deck of the boat, and how this connects to "the devastating history of transatlantic slavery." The sharks could thus be metaphoric of humanity's violent lust for sweetness. The work could possibly be Commemorative of the slave as a representation for all slaves. But the work better fits the category of **Commentary**, as it carries a strong sense of criticism and concern regarding the massive, seemingly unstoppable, forces of societal structures that rage like a storm against humanity.

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1.4.3: Worship and Ritual

Worship and Ritual



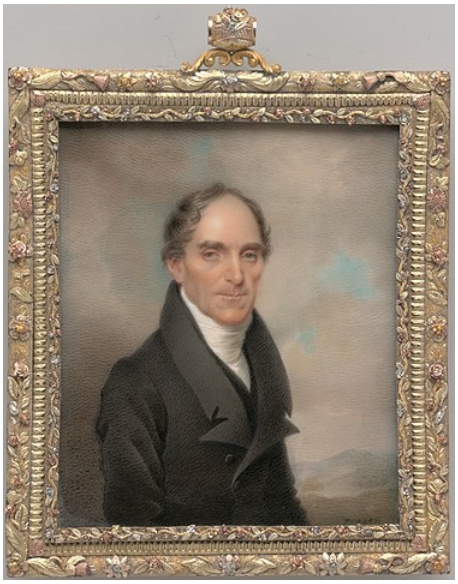
Altar frontal from Avià, mixed media on wood panel, 107 x 177 x 7.5 cm, circa 1200 AD

This medieval alter piece from the church of Santa Maria d'Avià (Spain), features Mary and her son Jesus in the center section, surrounded by scenes from Jesus' childhood. The ability to read and access to books was not as common in our current world as it was in the Middle Ages. Imagine a world without electricity, computers, or even readily accessible books — works like these, rich in strong and vibrant colors and metallic material, perhaps illumined by candlelight, must have been wonderful to see. Presented in church settings where they could view the story with their own eyes and meditate upon its significance, the lives of common people were greatly enriched by having access to such images. Here, the content of the work, the early story of Jesus, is what makes the category of function most obviously **Worship and Ritual**. We could and should discuss further the use of primary colors, the bold use of line giving the figure's a cartoon-like style, the directional forces, unity and variety, how the figures of Christ and Mary are emphasized, and so on. But whatever those may be, the main purpose of this work, largely evident by its subject matter and original location, is for spiritual practices.

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1.4.4: Commemoration

Commemoration



Charles Fraser, *Dr. Francis Kinloch Huger*, watercolor on ivory in a gold frame, 12 x 10 cm, 1825, Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

What do you notice when you look at this work and read its accompanying details? A distinguished figure with a confident and yet caring look, possibly well-to-do, judging by his fancy high collar and the context of the super fancy gold frame. The work is quite small, about 4 or 5 inches, about the size of one's hand. Certainly, a Commemorative work would not be so small, right? — for, if this is a great person, the work should be great in size, or so we might think. Not knowing about the artist or the person, we research for reliable information and discover some insights given by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We were right about the figure being presented in a strong and appealing light, a positive and admirable view. The Met shows that the backside of the work includes an inscription, featuring the artist's name, as well as the recipient and giver of the work. The Met provides a brief history of how Huger, the figure in the portrait, had spent time in prison for his noble attempt to free an important military and political leader, named LaFayette, from prison. LaFayette was a French nobleman who served under George Washington in the American Revolutionary War. This work of art was later commissioned as a gift to LaFayette to honor their friendship. While we could explore the quality of artistry in this work, the handling of values, accurate proportions, painterly skills, and so forth, the main support for choosing **Commemoration** as the main function here comes from the history, the background context, of the work. But with that said, notice again how the artful use of elements and principles also support this function.

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1.4.5: Persuasion

Persuasion



Eastman Johnson, *Wounded Drummer Boy*, oil on board, 67 x 55 cm, c. 1864-1871, Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

The image of a young boy beating a drum as he sits upon the burly soldiers of a solder hiking uphill through a battle scene where many figures seem to be in despair is a striking scene. Notice the many angles and directional forces — the whole background is at a tilt, which coincides and contrasts with the angles of the main figures's body positions. This arrangement of directional forces in itself creates a strong sense of energy in the work, moving our eyes to look all around. Many of the lines lead us right up to the drummer boy, who looks upward and onward into the distance, into the hopes for a better future. The overall value of the image is generally dark, adding to the weight of the somber mood. The many blue tones in the clothing and sky create a strong sense of unity, contrasted by the red drum and skin tones for brief areas of variety and emphasis, highlighting their facial expressions and the significance of the drum. The image, grounded in the grit of war, quickly becomes metaphorical. The youth might symbolize the future and the ongoing struggles of humanity. The drum stands out as an instrument of power, a very different kind of power than military force — notice how the drum sticks and the tip of the rifle visually interact with each other, being in a similar location, and based on the element of line. A gun brings death. But a drum inspires life.

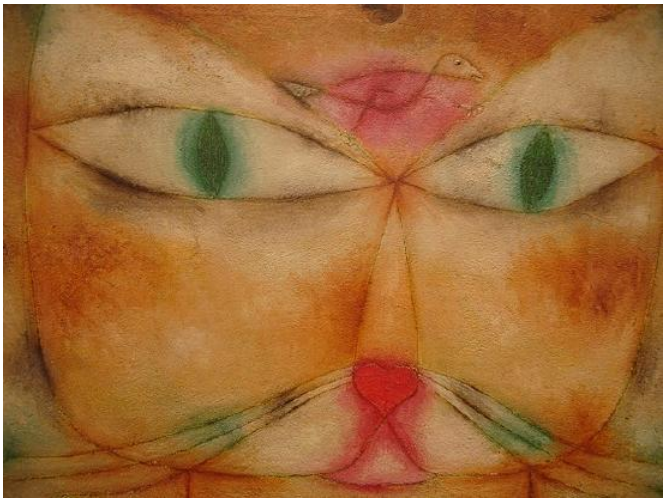
A strong case could be made for Commemoration as the function of art here, especially if the youth was a particular figure. The National Academy of Design claims the image was based on a historical moment in the American Civil War, where the injured boy — notice how the white bandage on his leg is emphasized by the surrounding darker tones — could not walk and was uplifted by the soldier in an effort to persuade the people to keep fighting. Thus, the function of **Persuasion** is a strong fit here. Metaphorically, the image still resonates today, persuading us to help each other and to keep fighting for what is good in the world.

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1.4.6: Self-Expression

Self-Expression



Paul Klee, *Cat and Bird*, oil and ink on canvas, 38 x 53 cm, 1928, Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

The large-eyed cat stares pervasively at the viewer. The "in your face" intensity is created by the cat's head filling the entire format of the artwork. Bright colors of orange, red, green, and pink seem to glow, being dark and strongly applied at the center of various points, but then seeming to melt and expand outwards. The repetition of thin, but clearly evident lines, possessing a gently curving quality and often coming to sharp points, creates a good sense of unity and variety. The nose, being red and heart-shaped, stands out as a strong point of emphasis, as does the curious pink bird on the cat's forehead, perhaps the great desire of the cat's hunger, all it can think about. The style is child-like and whimsical. We see a cat and bird, but the forms are simplified, abstracted, as if the work was created more out of personal joy and interest rather than trying to say anything in particular. However, there is something of a tension between the cat and bird, suggestive of natural desires and the challenges of attaining them.

Investigating the work, nothing credible has yet turned up to directly reveal the artist's purpose in creating this work. While Klee's early work shows that he could skillfully draw complex and detailed forms, over time and through the influence of various modern art movements, such as Cubism and Expressionism, Klee developed his unique, abstracted approach. Much of his work features line, unique combinations of color, and often symbol-like juxtapositions, such as the bird appearing on the cat's forehead. Such qualities seem based on exploring the internal worlds of psychology and spirituality. Or perhaps the focus is on the child-like celebration of colors and forms. An argument for Delight as the main function could be made. But the practice of simply expressing one's self, one's personal world (I read somewhere that he loved cats), and interest in internal tensions could also be the emphasis. This work, therefore, could be a good example of **Self-Expression**.

(I partly wonder if I should have presented an example of Self-Expression that was more obvious. However, it is good to show that un-masking the main function of a work is not always an easy task.)

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1.5: Form vs Content

Form vs Content

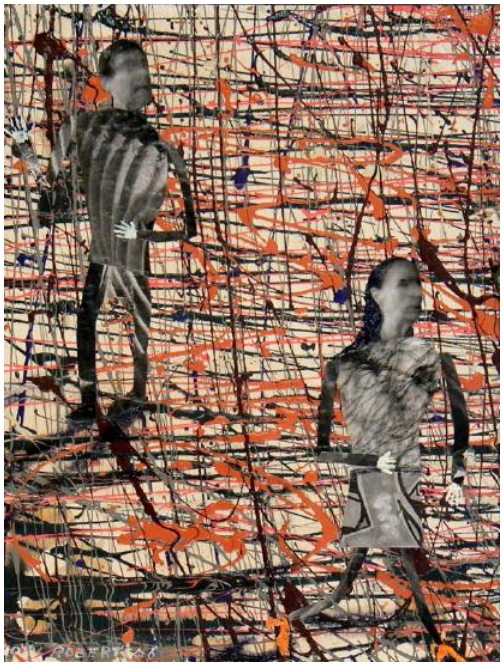
by Jon McCallum

As we have been exploring the Elements and Principles of Art along with the Functions of Art we can notice an important distinction.

There is the formal work, made up of the Elements, Principles, and the particular media (choice of materials and tools), which creates the overall visual effect of the work. This is known as **Form**. (The term "form" can also be used to refer to an actual three-dimensional shape or the appearance of three-dimensionality.)

In contrast, there is also the **Content** of a work, which refers to it's meaning and message, what the work is about.

The two go hand-in-hand. The form communicates the content. The content influences the form.



Holly Roberts, *Quarrel*, acrylic paint and photo fragments on board, 6 x 8 inches, c. 2000-2009, HollyRobertsStudio

Let's investigate the form and content in this mixed media work by Holly Roberts.

The form consists of many parts. Several layers of dripped black and red paint are intensely scattered across the background, many of them appear as horizontal lines going back and forth across the work, varying in thickness. There are some vertical lines, too, plus several random drips and spatters. These lines resound as a chaotic and fierce rhythm. The value contrasts of black versus white in the painted background is bold and clear, whereas the photographic fragments are more gray. The red color pops out against the black and white in a hot-tempered and bloody manner. The positioning of the two figures allows a great space between them, conveying the feeling of separation, which is further affirmed by the lower figure appearing to walk away from the upper figure, creating a strong directional force. The force is supported by the man's elbow pointing down towards her and his mad, yelling face is also aimed in her direction. The figure's bodies are covered in complex and varying textures, adding to the overall sense of a turbulent, emotional moment.

More details could be observed about the form, but even with what is already noted we are getting into the work's content — something to do with the difficulty of relationships and the extreme feelings that people can sometimes experience, even people who are normally in love. If Roberts used different approaches to her form — such as baby blue instead of orange-red color, perfectly measured and equally-sized lines in the background, and allowing less space between the figures or putting them more on the same level — the artwork would express something very different than it currently does. That is the connection of form and content — one affects the other towards a particular expression.

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1.6: Degrees of Representation

Degrees of Representation

We describe art in a number of ways that refer to the manner in which a subject is pictured, or its style. While the term "style" has a broader meaning, what we are considering here is art's relationship to reality. There are three main categories in which we can place any given work of art: **Representational**, **Abstract**, and **Non-representational**. It is best to consider these categories as not being distinctly separate but more of a spectrum with works that are representational on one end (with figures and objects as we see them in our everyday world) and non-representational on the other end (works that are so expressive that they are not recognizable as anything we see in our everyday world). The category of abstraction falls in-between these two extremes, with figures and objects bearing some resemblance to reality but yet they are somehow being more simplified, stylized, or exaggerated in some way. Artists often abstract things, in small or significant ways, to make them more visually interesting and/or expressive.

Here are a few examples and definitions of the main ways imagery is categorized. Pay special attention to these categories so that you can recognize them when viewing works of art. As you grow in this course, you should be able to look at any work of art and describe which category it best fits in along with good reasoning for your choice.

Representational Art

This kind of art seeks to recreate our actual visual experience of the world. We might way it looks “real” or “realistic.” Representational is better because it includes the idea that art is art – not the actual object and is the product of the artist’s hand and eye even though we have no problem recognizing the image.



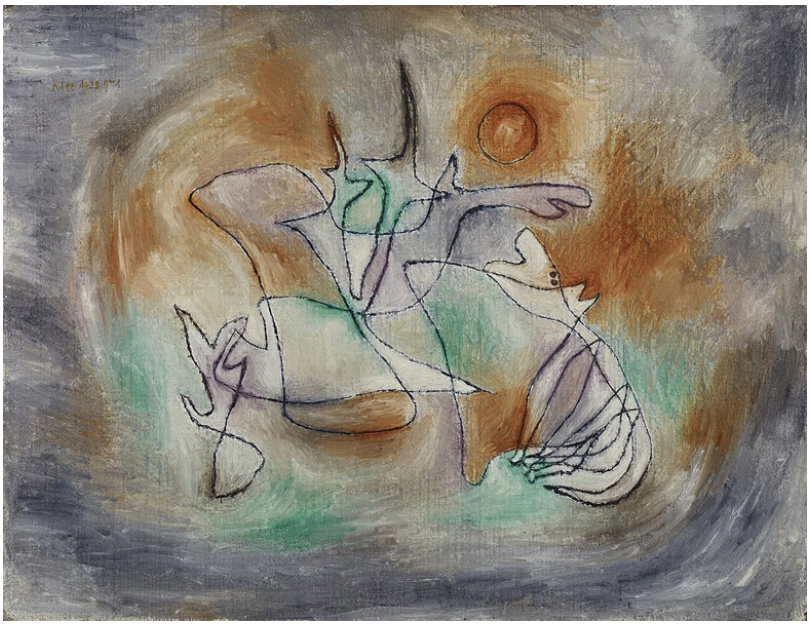
Rosa Bonheur, Study of a Dog, c.1860s, oil on paper. Princeton University Art Museum PD-US Source

Rosa Bonheur (1822 – 1899), a French artist, famous for her animal paintings "may have seen the long-eared terrier that is the subject of this oil study in the Fontainebleau forest, near her home in Thomery, or it may have been one of the many pets she kept throughout her life. Bonheur’s work is characterized by direct observation and careful draftsmanship. Traditional in her approach, she produced numerous preparatory sketches, like this one, before creating a painting. In 1865, Bonheur became the first woman awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, a coveted honor established by Napoleon.”

We understand that this is a picture of a dog even though the bottom is unfinished. The dog's head could be described as representational, while the lower body of the dog slips into abstraction.

Abstract

When we describe an image as “abstract” we mean that it has its roots in the observed world but the artist has exaggerated certain visual elements. We know what it is but it doesn’t look the way we would actually expect that object to look in the real world.



Paul Klee, Howling Dog, 1928, oil on canvas, Minneapolis Museum of Art PD-US https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...te_of_Arts.jpg

Paul Klee (1879 – 1940) was a Swiss-German artist whose work was highly influenced by children's drawings and other non-traditional sources. He wrote about art and taught at the Bauhaus school of art, design and architecture. Here Klee gives us a dog howling at the moon and a suggestion of the howl itself. This would be described as "abstract" because the subject is one we can recognize but painted in a way that exaggerates forms, colors, and its environment.

One aspect of the word "abstract" that you may find confusing is its use in other contexts. The term is often used in our everyday world for describing things we don't readily understand. A common mistake is to use the term "abstract" for work that are really "non-representational." In the world of art, as long as there is some connection to something recognizable in a work of art, it is best classified as abstract.

Non-representation

Art that does not have subject matter that seems to recreate an object from the observable world is called "non-representational."



Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm #30, 1950, enamel on canvas, 105 x 207”, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo Thomas Hawk. https://www.flickr.com/photos/thomashawk/11928812894

While Jackson Pollock (1912 – 1956) created many works in the realm of abstraction, he is most known for his works in non-representation. The only thing representational about Pollock’s work is the title, but little, if anything, in the painting itself suggests the season. It is rhythmic in the swoop and flow of brushwork, or drips, but it remains essentially a painting that is only about its formal qualities. One might argue that this artwork "represents" the artist's emotions at the time of its creation, and that may be true, causing the term "non-representation" to not make sense. However, the category of "non-representation" is about a work's connection to observable, physical reality, regardless of the emotional state of the artist. Confusingly, Pollock's artwork is categorized in the history of art as "Abstract Expressionist"—but this was just a term that caught on for artists creating work like this. It has become part of the reason people accidentally call certain works "abstract" when really they should be called "non-representational."

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1.7: Analyzing Art

Most art is visually compelling. While materials and technique determine the range of what is possible, the final appearance of a work is the product of numerous additional choices made by the artist. An artist painting a portrait of a woman in oil on canvas must decide on the size and shape of the canvas, the scale of the woman and where to place her, and the types of forms, lines, colors, and brushstrokes to use in representing the sitter and her surroundings. In a compelling work of art, myriad variables such as these come together to create an engaging visual experience.

Visual (or Formal) Analysis

Art historians use **visual analysis** to describe and understand this experience. Often called **formal analysis** because it focuses on form rather than subject matter or historical context, this typically consists of two parts: description of the visual features of a work and analysis of their effects. To describe visual properties systematically, art historians rely on an established set of terms and concepts. These include characteristics such as format, scale, composition, and viewpoint; treatment of the human figure and space; and the use of form, line, color, light, and texture.

In describing visual qualities, formal analysis usually identifies certain features as contributing to the overall impression of the work. For example, a prominent linear form might suggest strength if straight and vertical, grace or sensuality if sinuous, or stability and calm if long and horizontal. Sharp contrasts in light and dark may make an image feel bold and dramatic whereas subdued lighting might suggest gentleness or intimacy. In the past, formal analysis assumed there was some elementary level of universality in the human response to visual form and tried to describe these effects. Today, the method is understood as more subjective, but still valued as a critical exercise and means of analyzing visual experience, especially in introductory art history courses.



Figure 1.7.4: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784. Oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m. Painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Photo via Smarthistory) David's style is characterized by clean lines and clear composition that emphasize straightforward storytelling.

While formal analysis will be the main focus of this course, other kinds of analysis are often explored for better understanding works of art.

Contextual Analysis

Contextual Analysis investigates the context of an artwork. This includes many factors, such as the time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. For example, if a work of art was created in Paris, France in 1402, what was happening politically and economically during that time and place? What significant events around that time may have informed the work? What were the values and beliefs of the culture? How does the work affirm or challenge the norms of that time? These are the kinds of questions we ask when considering a work's context.

Expressive Analysis

Expressive Analysis emphasizes the emotional, psychological, and spiritual states of the artist. What intuitive drives may have been operating in the artist? How did those drives (whether conscious, subconscious, unconscious) come to express something that may not only be personal to the artist but also reflective of the greater culture or of the human condition at large? Of course

Expressive Analyses may overlap with Contextual Analyses as the historical factors of time, place, culture, economics, and so on, also influence the state of the artist.

Iconographical Analysis

Iconographical Analysis seeks to understand the use of symbols within an artwork, which also requires understanding the symbolic meaning within the culture of the work's original place and time. In order for a symbol to work, a society has to agree upon what it represents. However, some symbols are more personal. This type of analysis also overlaps with Contextual Analyses because knowledge about the cultural meaning of symbols is paramount. One challenge of this approach is knowing whether the artist intended the symbols or not.

The section on Visual Analysis was adapted from:

- Dr. Robert Glass, "Introduction to art historical analysis," in *Smarthistory*, October 28, 2017 (CC BY-NC-SA)

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2: THE MEDIA OF ART

THE MEDIA OF ART describe many of kinds of materials, techniques, and technologies that artists use to create, communicate, and express themselves, their culture, and their time. This week explores:

- **Drawing**
- **Painting**
- **Printmaking**
- **Photography**
- **Film**
- **Design**
- **Sculpture**
- and **Architecture**

Some important questions to consider as you move through this section (and throughout the course) are...

- What are the distinct characteristics of each medium?
- What knowledge and skills are required to effectively handle each medium?
- How do the different materials, techniques, and technologies allow or limit creative possibilities?
- What is the potential significance of an artist choosing to work with one medium rather than with another? How significant is the medium itself versus what the artist brings to it?
- How have artists used "old" materials or techniques to do something "new"? Or how have they used "new" materials or technologies to connect with past traditions?

Although the focus this week is on the media of art, continue practicing what was presented in the first section — looking for and describing the **Elements of Art** and the **Principles of Design.**

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2.1: Drawing

Learning Objectives

- Identify and distinguish various drawing media and techniques.

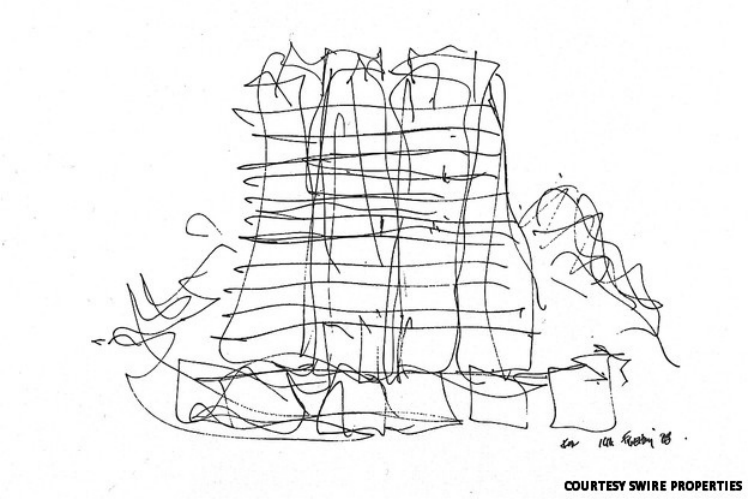
Drawing

For centuries charcoal, chalk, graphite and paper were adequate tools to launch some of the most profound images in art. Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist* wraps all four figures together in what is essentially an extended family portrait. Da Vinci draws the figures in a spectacularly realistic style, one that emphasizes individual identities and surrounds the figures in a grand, unfinished landscape. He animates the scene with the Christ child pulling himself forward, trying to release himself from Mary's grasp to get closer to a young John the Baptist on the right, who himself is turning toward the Christ child with a look of curious interest in his younger cousin.



Leonardo da Vinci, The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist, c. 1499-1500 or c. 1506-8, charcoal, black and white chalk on tinted paper mounted on canvas, 55.7 x 41.2". PD-US

The traditional role of drawing was to make sketches to plan the compositions that would finally be made manifest as paintings, sculpture or even architecture. Because of its relative immediacy, this function for drawing continues today. A **preliminary sketch** by the contemporary architect Frank Gehry captures the complex organic forms of the buildings he designs.



Taken on April 18, 2012, Some rights reserved 準建築人手札網站 Forgemind ArchiMedia | Frank Gehry – Opus Hong Kong 香港豪宅

Types of Drawing Media

Dry media includes charcoal, graphite, chalks and pastels. Most of these drawing media are made by combining **pigment** (the color source from materials like ground charcoal or minerals) with a binder which allows it to be formed into a stick or suspended in a liquid (for wet media like ink), and that let it adhere to the surface of paper. Each of these mediums gives the artist a wide range of mark-making capabilities and effects, from thin lines to large areas of color and tone. The artist can manipulate a drawing to achieve desired effects in many ways, including exerting different pressures on the medium against the drawing's surface, or by erasure, blotting or rubbing.

Artists use drawing in a number of ways. In art school, **gesture drawing** – quick, big movements that develop hand/eye coordination – is a standard. Artists often use similar quick drawings as preliminary sketches to capture the images they will further refine in a finished painting, sculpture or other work. Sometimes artists make finished drawings that are collectable pieces of art in their own right.

This process of drawing can instantly capture the sense of character in an image. From energetic to subtle, the immediate and unalloyed spirit of the artist's idea are apparent in the simplest works. You can see this in the self-portraits of two German artists: Kathe Kollwitz and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.



Kathe Kollwitz, Self-Portrait, 1933, charcoal on brown laid Ingres paper, 47.7 x 63.5 cm, National Gallery of Art. PD US http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Co...page.8139.html

Kollwitz was a German artist of the twentieth century. She was the first woman to be elected to the Prussian Academy of Arts. Her work records the suffering of common people, especially mothers, after WWI and II. Kollwitz' work in this self-portrait shows how expressive charcoal can be with an economy of means such as the quick gestures with which she has drawn her sleeve.

Wounded during the First World War, Kirchner's '*Self-Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine*' from about 1916 presents us with a nightmarish vision of himself wrapped in the fog of opiate drugs. His hollow eyes and the graphic dysfunction of his marks attest to the power of his drawing.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 'Self Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine', around 1916, ink on paper

Graphite media includes pencils, powder or compressed sticks. Each one creates a range of **values** – or range of tones from light to dark suggesting light and shadow – depending on the hardness or softness inherent in the material. Hard graphite tones range from light to dark gray, while softer graphite allows a range from light gray to nearly black. James Ward captures the texture of this old tree using line, hatching, cross-hatching and areas of smudged shadow.



James Ward, an Old Oak Tree, n.d., graphite on medium, smooth, cream wove paper, 5.39 x 7.76", Yale Center for British Art. PD US IgGeQ57T_CImmQ at Google Cultural Institute

Artists buy graphite pencils according to hardness – B suggests a level of softness which allows for very dark darks while HB or H usually indicates a very hard "lead" and a sharper, thinner, grayer line quality. Graphite is a naturally occurring form of carbon that was mined but now is extracted from various ores. Mixed with clay (the **binder**) and encased in a wooden tube it became the drawing medium we know today. As with the other dry media we will discuss, the higher the content of the **binder** the harder or less amount of **pigment** will be left behind on the **support** (paper or other material being drawn upon).

Metalpoint

Metalpoint was historically used in much the same way graphite or pencils are today. Some contemporary artists still work in metalpoint, but it is not common. During the Renaissance artists like Fra Fillippo Lippi made drawings using metalpoint on a prepared surface. The **support,** or drawing surface, must be covered with a **ground** – a preparation made in the Renaissance of bone ash, glue, and white pigment in water. Other pigments can be added to give the surface a pale color like pink or, as in this case, ochre (yellowish brown). The metal – usually a silver wire encased in wood like the graphite in a pencil – would be drawn over the dry surface of the support leaving traces of the metal behind. Silver tarnishes and darkens when exposed to the light, and it does on paper as well. The big issue was erasing – this could only be done by painting over the image with the ground and starting again.



Filippino Lippi, Standing Male Figure, ca. 1480, soft metalpoint, highlighted with white gouache (some touches of black chalk probably added by later hand), on ochre prepared paper, 6 7/8 x 2 15/16", MET. This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication. http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/335191

Charcoal

Charcoal, perhaps the oldest form of drawing media, is made by simply charring wooden sticks or small branches, called **vine charcoal**, but is also available in a mechanically compressed form. Vine charcoal comes in three densities: soft, medium and hard, each one handling a little differently than the other. Soft charcoals give a more velvety feel to a drawing. The artist doesn't have to apply as much pressure to the stick in order to get a solid mark. Hard vine charcoal offers more control but generally doesn't give the darkest tones. Compressed charcoals give deeper blacks than vine charcoal, but are more difficult to manipulate once they are applied to paper.



Left: vine charcoal sticks. Right: compressed charcoal squares.

Charcoal drawings can range in value from light grays to rich, velvety blacks. A charcoal drawing by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe is a good example.



Georgia O'Keeffe, Drawing XIII, 1915, Charcoal on paper, 24 3/8 x 18 1/2 in., MET PD US

Chalk

Artists can get a full range of color from chalk, pastel, and crayon. Chalk comes primarily from finely textured stone that can be combined with binders like clay. Red chalk like that Michelangelo used to create his study for the Libyan Sibyl on the Sistine Ceiling would have been made of iron oxide and clay. Artists often use a touch of white chalk or paint to create highlights in drawings in other mediums. Chalk is not as widely used today as it was in Michelangelo's day, but can still be found. Other varieties of chalk are black, made of a composite of carbon and clay, and the traditional white chalk made of calcite or calcium carbonate.



Michelangelo, Study for the Libyan Sibyl, ca. 1510. Red chalk on paper, MET. Public Domain.

https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibition...7/michelangelo

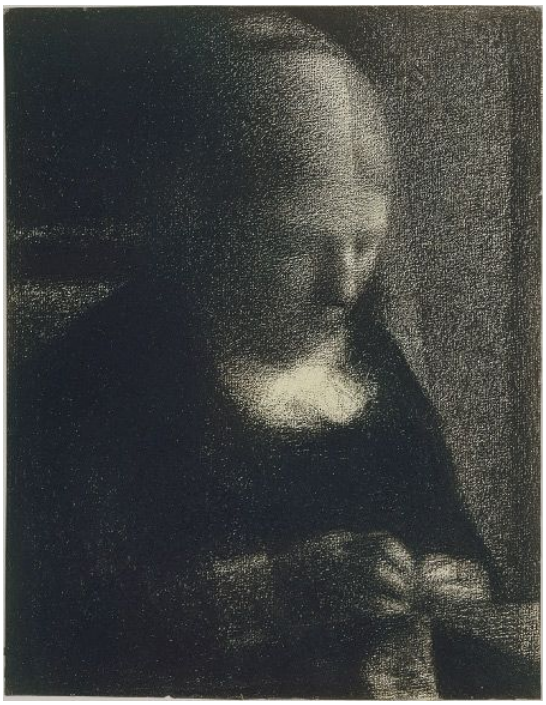
See the above link for a discussion of this image by a curator at the MET.

Crayon

Crayon and Pastels are essentially made of pigment combined with a waxy or greasy binder and usually compressed into stick form for better handling. With these a full range of hues (colors) becomes possible. Crayons use a binder of wax and oil – artists' crayons come in a wider range than childrens' crayons and they are a little more dense, but the idea is the same. Because the binder is more substantial crayon is less easily blended than other media. A crayon with a creamier consistency that is blendable is called oil crayon or oil pastel. And the **conté crayon**, invented in 1795 by Nicolas-Jacques Conté, was created from a combination of clay

and graphite in response to the shortage of graphite during the English blockade of France during the Napoleonic Wars.[1] Conté crayons were relatively cheap to manufacture and could be made in various degrees of hardness. Today conté crayons come in a variety of colors besides black including red and gray.

Georges Seurat, the inventor of the pointillist technique, used conté crayon on paper with a very raised "**tooth**" – or surface texture – to approximate his dot technique in drawing. The waxy crayon sits on the elevated weave of the paper leaving the valleys white creating a kind of automatic dot screen.



Georges Seurat, Embroidery, the Artist's Mother, 1882-83, conte crayon on Michallet paper, 12 5/16 x 9 7/16 in. MET PD-US http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/334652

Pastels

Pastels are like very soft chalk that come in a huge variety of colors. They are characterized by leaving soft, subtle changes in tone or color and give the effect of paint in many cases because of the possibility of blending. Pastel pigments allow for a resonant quality that is more difficult to obtain with graphite or charcoal. Picasso's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* from 1896 emphasizes these qualities.



Pablo Picasso, Portrait of the Artist's Mother, 1896, pastel on paper, Museo Picasso, Barcelona. PD US

You can see where Picasso has blended the pastel in her skin areas especially. It looks very much like an oil painting, but if you look closely at the hair that brushes her neck in back you can get a sense of the soft, dry chalky pigment going down on the paper surface. Paper used with pastels usually has more tooth, sometimes resembling velveteen with tiny hairs that allow the dry pigment to sit between them. Modern pastels are usually fixed with something like a spray-on acrylic to hold the pigment in place.



Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917). Dancer Onstage with a Bouquet, c.1876. Pastel over monotype on laid paper. Plate: 10 5/8 × 14 7/8 in. Private collection. PD-US; image taken from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/...b0c3ef5217b69a with credit to MoMA

Degas used pastels to create soft, painterly images, especially of dancers. The Phillips Collection has an informative short essay on his process here: http://blog.phillipscollection.org/2011/12/20/degas-and-pastels-part-i/



Clementina, ‘Pastels’

More recent developments in dry media are **oil pastels**, pigment mixed with an organic oil binder that deliver a heavier mark and lend themselves to more graphic and vibrant results. The drawings of Beverly Buchanan reflect this. Buchanan was an African-American artist whose work celebrates rural life of the south centered in the forms of old houses and shacks. The buildings stir memories and provide a sense of place, and are usually surrounded by people, flowers and bright landscapes. She also creates sculptures of the shacks, giving them an identity beyond their physical presence.



Beverly Buchanan, Ferry Road Shacks, 1988, Oil Pastel on Paper, 38″ x 50″. Courtesy The Estate of Beverly Buchanan, Jane Bridges

Drawings are also done in wet media. It is the linear quality of the work that determines its genre (drawing) even though the media is more like paint than pencil.

Wet Drawing Media

Pen and Ink

Drawings are also often done with a pen and ink. The ink again uses pigment, both colored and black, but suspended in a liquid medium. Sometimes gum arabic – the hardened sap of the acacia tree – is added to help with adhesion and viscosity. Many different cultures and throughout different periods in history pen and ink drawings have served to capture quick impressions of a scene or put down an artists initial ideas about a larger and more complex work. Some ink drawings are finished compositions in their own right.

Pen nibs are the point of the pen; metal pen nibs like those used today have been around for a relatively short time – only since the 19th century. Earlier versions of pens used things like reeds with one end sharpened to a point, or a bird’s quill similarly sharpened. More technical drawings are made today by a tool known as a rapidograph pen. Here the metal points allow ink to flow through them onto the paper. They come in a variety of thicknesses allowing for lines of varying widths.

Brush and Ink

Soft pointed brushes are also used to make drawings with ink. The artist’s dexterity with the brush allows for the variety in width of line. Drawings made with brush and ink is a tradition in the East in particular.



Bird bathing, Ten Bamboo collection of Calligraphy and Painting, vol. 5 and 6 (birds), leaf 11, ed. Hu Zhengyan, China, Nanjing, 1633, woodblock print of ink drawing. Photo: Daderot, This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

Paper and Erasers

Paper itself can be used to make drawings – or at least very linear images. Erasers also function in the drawing process for many artists. One artist, Robert Rauschenberg, made an entire "painting" or "drawing" with an eraser. We will see him explain it himself in a video in class.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=95

Papermaking has been around for literally hundreds of years. Historically it is traced back to 105 CE when Cai Lun, an official with the Han Dynasty in China, made paper with natural fibers and old fishing nets. From China it spread by way of the Silk Road to the Islamic world, and by way of the Crusaders, most likely, to the West.

Not surprisingly, the Kingdoms of Northern Spain in the 12th century were the first European areas to develop papermaking of their own, probably because of the Islamic heritage in that country. In Italy by the 13th century paper was made using rags, a rigid wire mold and gelatin sizing.[2]

Today papermaking is practiced by artists as a discrete artform. Necessary is some method of pulping organic rag material which is then poured onto the wire mesh frame molds and stacked to dry. The molds are called "deckles" and the word is then used to describe the uneven end that is characteristic of hand-made paper.



The vatman about to dip a paper mould into the vat. From the Encyclopédie of Diderot, 1751-1777. PD US accessed 8/23/17: http://www.wovepaper.co.uk/background.html

Commercial papers are sold today by weight. 500 sheets of paper are called a ream; 500 sheets of a good, heavyweight paperstock weighs more than 500 sheets of a cheaper copy paper stock and costs accordingly. Good paper for wedding invitations and the like might be made on 100 lb. stock while copy paper is about 60 lb. or less.

Good quality paper is thick and holds up well to various wet media. It can also be used to create paper sculpture, a popular illustrative medium. Here are a few examples of the kind of work being done with – as opposed to on – paper.

Collage

Paper itself can become a drawing medium. Picasso and Matisse pioneered the "**papier collé**", or collage, in the early 20th century. In the middle of the 20th century artists like Romare Bearden, an early member of the Harlem Renaissance, used cut and pasted papers in a particularly expressive way to record the experience of African-American culture.



Romare Bearden, Spring Way, 1964, collage on paperboard sheet, 6 5/8 x 9 3/8" Smithsonian American Art Museum. americanart.si.edu/collections/rights/ Taken on March 4, 2010 Some rights reserved

Paper Sculpture

Paper itself can be the drawing medium. Paper, manipulated, glued, and sometimes painted has been a popular medium for illustration and gallery art. In this example, individual pieces of a heavy hand-made paper that could withstand soaking in water were cut out, bent and shaped, then pasted down on a black surface to create a Surrealist-inspired image for an album cover for a string quartet.



Muffet Jones, illustration for the Naumburg Foundation. Courtesy the artist

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1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cont%C3%A9
2 http://www.wovepaper.co.uk/background.html

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2.2: Painting

In his *NaturalisHistoria*, Pliny the Elder tells of a painting contest between the great Greek painter Zeuxis and his rival Parrhasius to decide who was the greatest artist. Zeuxis painted a still life of grapes that appeared so real birds flew down to peck at them. Parrhasius concealed his painting behind a curtain, and asked Zeuxis if he would please unveil it. When Zeuxis tried to pull the curtain aside it proved to be a painted illusion. Parrhasius was the winner, and Zeuxis was said to have generously exclaimed, "I have deceived the birds, but Parrhasius has deceived Zeuxis." This historical anecdote is probably not entirely true, but it seems that Zeuxis, at least, was a great Greek painter. Sadly, the only examples of painting from the Greeks that survive are those on ceramics and in the wall frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but descriptions of the work of Zeuxis suggests it was well-developed and innovative, exhibiting many of the skills artists would only rediscover during the Renaissance. This chapter will introduce the materials and techniques of painting, both historical and still employed today.

Painting is the application of pigments to a support surface that establishes an image, design or decoration. In art, the term 'painting' describes both the act and the result. Most painting is created with pigment in liquid form applied with a brush. Exceptions to this are found in Navajo sand painting and Tibetan mandala painting, where powdered pigments are used. Painting as a medium has survived for thousands of years and is, along with drawing and sculpture, one of the oldest creative mediums. It's used in some form by most cultures around the world.

Three of the most recognizable images in Western art history are paintings: Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, and Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night*. These three art works are examples of how painting can go beyond a simple mimetic function – that is, to only imitate what is seen. The power in great painting is that it transcends perceptions to reflect emotional, psychological, even spiritual levels of the human condition.

Painting mediums are extremely versatile because they can be applied to many different surfaces (called *supports*) including paper, wood, canvas, plaster, clay, lacquer, concrete and more. Because paint is usually applied in a liquid or semi-liquid state it has the ability to soak into porous support material, which can, over time, weaken and damage it. To prevent this a support is usually first covered with a *ground*, a mixture of binder and chalk that, when dry, creates a non-porous layer between the support and the painted surface. A typical ground is called "gesso".

There are six major painting mediums, each with specific individual characteristics:

- Encaustic
- Fresco
- Tempera
- Oil
- Watercolor and Gouache
- Acrylic

All of them use three basic ingredients:

- Pigment
- Binder
- Solvent

Pigments are granular solids incorporated into the paint to contribute color. The **binder**, commonly referred to as the *vehicle*, is the actual film-forming component of paint. The binder holds the pigment in solution until it's ready to be dispersed onto the surface. The **solvent** controls the flow and application of the paint. It's mixed into the paint, usually with a brush, to dilute it to the proper viscosity, or thickness, before it's applied to the surface. Once the solvent has evaporated from the surface the remaining paint is fixed there. Solvents range from water to oil-based products like linseed oil and mineral spirits. Let's look at each of the six main painting mediums:

Encaustic

Encaustic paint mixes dry pigment with a heated beeswax binder. The mixture is then brushed or spread across a support surface. Reheating allows for longer manipulation of the paint. Encaustic dates back to at least the first century C.E. and was used extensively in funerary mummy portraits from Fayum in Egypt. The characteristics of encaustic painting include strong, resonant colors and extremely durable paintings. Because of the beeswax binder, when encaustic cools it forms a tough skin on the surface

of the painting. Typically, the support used for encaustic must be rigid, like the wooden panels of the Fayum portraits, to keep the wax from cracking. Some modern artists have used more flexible supports, however, with mixed results.



Mummy-portrait, wax-tempera-made on wood. A young man in roman clothing. He belongs to the greco-roman upper-class. Early 3d Century, 37.5 cm high, Inv.-Nr. 15013. Photo by Matthias Kabel, Gnu Free Documentation License

The twentieth-century American artist, Jasper Johns used encaustic techniques in his compositions. In his work, '*Flag*' (1954-1955), Jasper used a combination of encaustic, oil, and collage on fabric mounted on plywood. In other works he used crumpled newsprint soaked in the encaustic, applied to the canvas, allowed to dry and then painted over. This technique, for Johns, suggested the exaggerated brushwork of the Abstract Expressionists without actually having done the brushwork. It was a cool, ironic employment of medium as "gesture."



'Flag', Jasper Johns, encaustic, oil, and collage on fabric mounted on plywood. CC by SA 2.0. Photo by Ed Schipul, taken at MoMA March 2007. https://www.flickr.com/photos/eschipul/2126206600

Tempera



Duccio, ‘The Crevole Madonna’, c. 1280. Tempera on board. Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy. PD

Tempera paint combines pigment with an egg yolk binder, then thinned and released with water. Like encaustic, tempera has been used for thousands of years. It dries quickly to a durable matte finish. Tempera paintings are traditionally applied in successive thin layers, called glazes, painstakingly built up using networks of cross hatched lines. Because of this technique tempera paintings are known for their detail.

In early Christianity, tempera was used extensively to paint images of religious icons. The pre-Renaissance Italian artist Duccio (c. 1255–1318), one of the most influential artists of the time, used tempera paint in the creation of ‘*The CrevoleMadonna*‘ (above). You can see the sharpness of line and shape in this well-preserved work, and the detail he renders in the face and skin tones of the Madonna (see the detail below).



Contemporary painters still use tempera as a medium. American painter Koo Schadler uses traditional methods and materials to create her poetic paintings of rabbits, flowers, and other still life and portrait objects. She prepares the surface of the support with multiple layers of gesso, dried, sanded, and reapplied to create a velvety smooth surface on which the egg-based tempera is applied.



Koo Schadler, White Rabbit & Zinnias for Dorothy, Egg tempera, on true gesso panel, 11 ¼ x 10 ¾". Permission of the artist

Fresco

Fresco painting is used exclusively on plaster walls and ceilings. The medium of fresco has been used for thousands of years, but is most associated with its use in Christian images during the Renaissance period in Europe.

There are two forms of fresco: **buon** or "wet", and **secco**, meaning "dry".

Buon fresco technique consists of painting in pigment mixed with water on a thin layer of wet, fresh lime mortar or plaster. The pigment is applied to and absorbed by the wet plaster; after a number of hours, the plaster dries and reacts with the air: it is this chemical reaction that fixes the pigment particles in the plaster. Because of the chemical makeup of the plaster, a binder is not required. Buon fresco is more stable because the pigment becomes fused with the wall itself.

Domenico di Michelino's '*Dante and the Divine Comedy*' from 1465 (below) is a superb example of buon fresco. The colors and details are preserved in the dried plaster wall. Michelino shows the Italian author and poet Dante Aleghieri standing with a copy of the Divine Comedy open in his left hand, gesturing to the illustration of the story depicted around him. The artist shows us four different realms associated with the narrative: the mortal realm on the right depicting Florence, Italy; the heavenly realm indicated by the stepped mountain at the left center – you can see an angel greeting the saved souls as they enter from the base of the mountain; the realm of the damned to the left – with Satan surrounded by flames greeting them at the bottom of the painting; and the realm of the cosmos arching over the entire scene.



Domenico di Michelino, ‘Dante’s Divine Comedy’, 1465, buon fresco, the Duomo, Florence, Italy. Photo by Sailko Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported

Fresco secco refers to painting an image on the surface of a dry plaster wall. This medium requires a binder since the pigment is not mixed into the wet plaster. Egg tempera is the most common binder used for this purpose. It was common to use fresco secco over buon fresco murals in order to repair damage or make changes to the original.

Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting of ‘*The Last Supper*‘ (below) was done using fresco secco.



The Last Supper: Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper, although much deteriorated, demonstrates the painter’s mastery of the human form in figurative composition. PD-US

Unfortunately, Leonardo also experimented with other processes and media as he painted the work and almost immediately it began to dry and flake from the wall. It has been “in restauro”, or under restoration, for many years.

Oil

Oil paint is the most versatile of all the painting mediums. It uses pigment mixed with a binder of linseed oil. Linseed oil can also be used as the vehicle, along with mineral spirits or turpentine. Oil painting was thought to have developed in Europe during the 15th century, but recent research on murals found in Afghani caves show oil based paints were used there as early as the 7th century.

Some of the qualities of oil paint include a wide range of pigment choices, its ability to be thinned down and applied in almost transparent glazes as well as used straight from the tube (without the use of a vehicle), built up in thick layers called **impasto** (you can see this in many works by Vincent van Gogh). One drawback to the use of impasto is that over time the body of the paint can split, leaving networks of cracks along the thickest parts of the painting. Because oil paint dries slower than other mediums, it can be blended on the support surface with meticulous detail. This extended working time also allows for adjustments and changes to be made without having to scrape off sections of dried paint.

In Jan Brueghel the Elder's still life oil painting you can see many of the qualities mentioned above. The richness of the paint itself is evident in both the resonant lights and inky dark colors of the work. The working of the paint allows for many different effects to be created, from the softness of the flower petals to the reflection on the vase and the many visual textures in between.



Jan Brueghel the Elder, Still-Life with Garland of flowers and Golden Tazza, 1618, oil on panel, 18.7 x 20.7", Museum of ancient Art. PD-US

Richard Diebenkorn's *Cityscape #1* from 1963 shows how the artist uses oil paint in a more fluid, expressive manner. He thins down the medium to obtain a quality and gesture that reflects the sunny, breezy atmosphere of a California morning. Diebenkorn used layers of oil paint, one over the other, to let the under painting show through and a flat, more geometric space that blurs the line between realism and abstraction.



Cityscape #1, Richard Diebenkorn, rocor; https://learn.saylor.org/mod/page/view.php?id=4371

Rembrandt was a master of paint-handling, and made more self-portraits than practically any other artist in history. This painting from around 1662 shows the technique of **impasto** used to build up a wrinkled and cratered surface that suggests the weathered skin of the artist in old age.



Rembrandt, Self-portrait, c. 1662, oil on canvas, 32.5 x 25.6”, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum. PD US

The Abstract Expressionist painters pushed the limits of what oil paint could do. Their focus was in the *act* of painting as much as it was about the subject matter. Indeed, for many of them there was no distinction between the two. The work of Willem de Kooning leaves a record of oil paint being brushed, dripped, scraped and wiped away all in a frenzy of creative activity.



Willem de Kooning, Woman I, 1950-52, oil on canvas (MoMA). Photo Steven Zucker taken May 7, 2014. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Acrylic

Acrylic paint became commercially available in the 1950’s as an alternative to oils. Pigment is suspended in an acrylic polymer emulsion binder and uses water as the vehicle. The acrylic polymer has characteristics like rubber or plastic. Acrylic paints offer the body, color resonance and durability of oils without the expense, mess and toxicity issues of using heavy solvents to mix them. One major difference is the relatively fast drying time of acrylics. They are water soluble, but once dry become impervious to water or other solvents. Moreover, acrylic paints adhere to many different surfaces and are extremely durable. Acrylic impastos will not crack or yellow over time as oils sometimes do.

Beatriz Milhaze is a Brazilian artist who uses the unique properties of acrylic to create her intricate patterned surfaces. She paints a design on a sheet of plastic and presses it to a canvas which may already contain other painted areas or designs. When it has dried she peels away the plastic sheet leaving the acrylic form attached to the canvas.

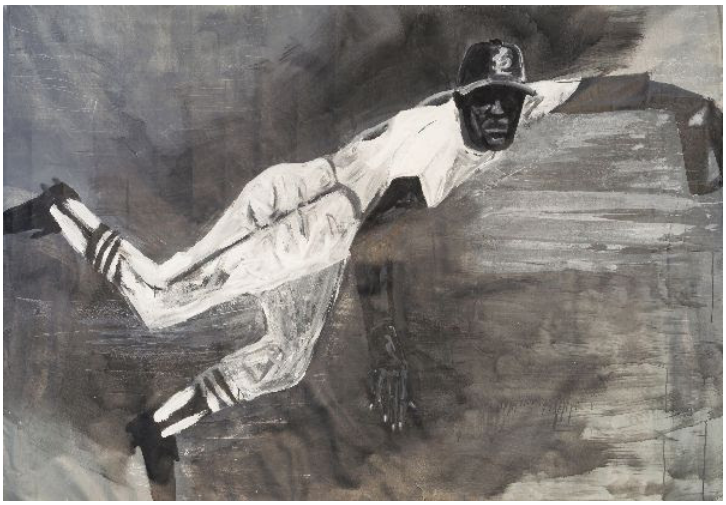


BEATRIZ MILHAZES, Mariposa, 2004, Acrylic on canvas, 98 X 98 in. Photo courtesy of James Cohen Gallery, New York.

Mixed Media

Portland artist Troy Mathews uses latex paint, acrylic paint, and welding crayon on an unstretched drop cloth in this painting of St. Louis Cardinal's pitcher Bob Gibson from 2016.

The painting is titled *The Black Body Problem*, a scientific term that refers to objects that absorb light without reflecting light back. German theoretical physicist Max Planck in ca. 1900 created a theory regarding "black-body radiation." His work was useful to Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Mathews uses the term to refer to America's "black-body problem" of race. Gibson played from 1959-1975 and was a nine-time All-Star, Two-time world Series champion and was awarded two Cy Young Awards during the era of the Civil Rights Movement.



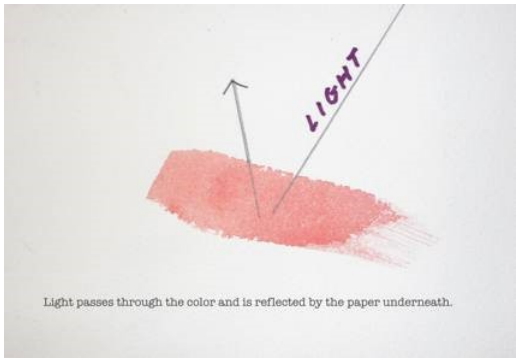
Troy Mathews, The Black Body Problem, 2016. Latex paint, acrylic paint, welding crayon on unstretched drop cloth, 183 x 153 cm. Permission of the artist

He was also subjected to discrimination by rival teams, fans, and some of his own team-members during his career. Mathews uses opaque paint media that tend to absorb light on a porous support – the canvas drop cloth – that also absorbs paint. His figure captures the dynamic energy of the athlete just after the pitch and the determination that the historical figure exhibited in confronting his social circumstances. Contemporary artists use various media to deepen the meaning of the images and subjects they represent, and Mathews' painting is a good example of how that works. See more of Mathews' work at https://www.hyperaccumulator.com/the-black-body-problem

Watercolor

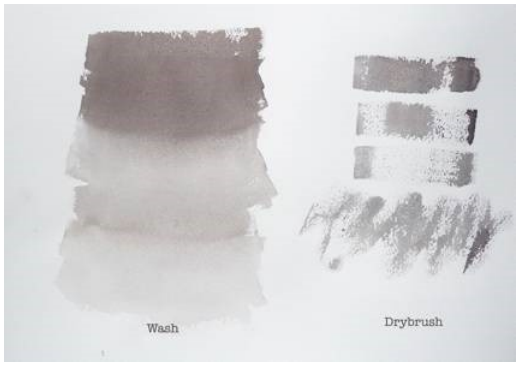
Watercolor is the most sensitive of the painting mediums. It reacts to the lightest touch of the artist and can become an over-worked mess in a moment. There are two kinds of watercolor media: **transparent,** and **opaque** or **gouache**. Transparent watercolor operates in a reverse relationship to the other painting mediums. It is traditionally applied to a paper support, and relies on the whiteness of the paper to reflect light back through the applied color (see below), whereas opaque paints (including gouache)

reflect light off the skin of the paint itself. Watercolor consists of pigment and a binder of gum arabic, a water-soluble compound made from the sap of the acacia tree. It dissolves easily in water. There is no white watercolor, but white gouache can be used to add highlights if necessary. Using the white ground of the paper is preferable.



Chris Gildow, 'Light passes through the color and is reflected by the paper underneath'

Watercolor paintings hold a sense of immediacy. The medium is extremely portable and excellent for small format paintings. The paper used for watercolor is generally of two types: hot pressed, which gives a smoother texture, and cold pressed, which results in a rougher texture. Transparent watercolor techniques include the use of **wash**; an area of color applied with a brush and diluted with water to let it flow across the paper. **Wet-in-wet** painting allows colors to flow and drift into each other, creating soft transitions between them. **Dry brush** painting uses little water and lets the brush run across the top ridges of the paper, resulting in a broken line of color and lots of visual texture.



Chris Gildow, 'Wash, Drybrush'; https://learn.saylor.org/mod/page/view.php?id=437

Examples of watercolor painting techniques: below, a painting done in the wash technique by John Marin. The Cezanne is created with more dry brush effects.

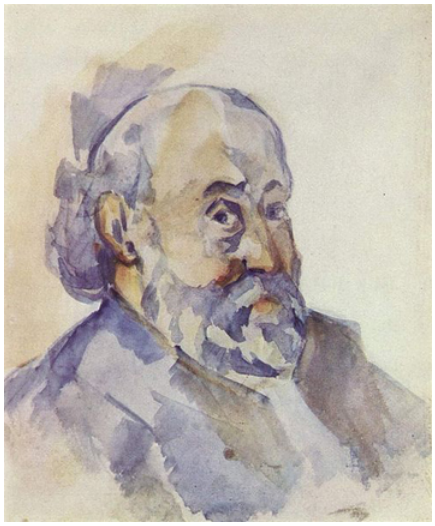


John Marin, Brooklyn Bridge, 1912, Watercolor and graphite on paper, 15 1/2 in. x 18 1/2 in. Gift of John Marin, Jr. and Norma B. Marin , Accession Number: 1973.042 http://www.colby.edu/museum/?s=John%...?sid=37&x=7627

John Marin's Brooklyn Bridge (1912) shows extensive use of wash. He renders the massive bridge almost invisible except for the support towers at both sides of the painting. Even the Manhattan skyline becomes enveloped in the misty, abstract shapes created

by washes of color.

Self-portrait by French painter Paul Cezanne builds form through nuanced colors and tones. The way the watercolor is laid onto the paper reflects a sensitivity and deliberation common in Cezanne's paintings. The more planar areas of color and tone creates distinct shapes and can be done on dryer surfaces.



Paul Cezanne, Self-portrait, c. 1895. Watercolor on paper. PD_US; The reproduction is part of a collection of reproductions compiled by The Yorck Project. The compilation copyright is held by Zenodot Verlagsgesellschaft mbH and licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License

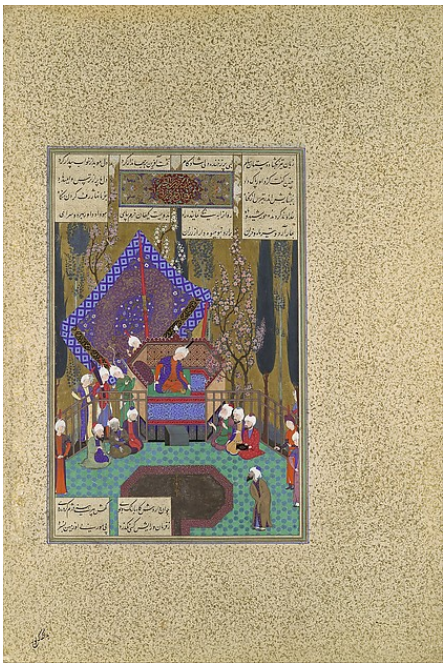
Opaque watercolor, also called **gouache**, differs from transparent watercolor in that the particles are larger, the ratio of pigment to water is much higher, and an additional, inert, white pigment such as chalk is also present. Because of this, gouache paint gives stronger color than transparent watercolor, although it tends to dry to a slightly lighter tone than when it is applied. Gouache paint doesn't hold up well as impasto, tending to crack and fall away from the surface. It holds up well in thinner applications and often is used to cover large areas with color. Like transparent watercolor, dried gouache paint will become soluble again in water.



Jacob Lawrence, Self-Portrait, 1977, Gouache and tempera on paper, 23 x 31", National Academy of Design, New York, Artwork copyright Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence, courtesy of the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation. http://whitney.org/www/jacoblawrence...43x251self.jpg

Jacob Lawrence's paintings use gouache to set the design of the composition. Large areas of color – including the complements blue and orange, dominate the figurative shapes in the foreground, while olive greens and neutral tones animate the background with smaller shapes depicting tools, benches and tables. The characteristics of gouache make it difficult to be used in areas of fine detail.

Gouache is a medium in traditional painting from other cultures too. *ZalConsults the Magi*, part of an illuminated manuscript form 16th century Iran, uses bright colors of gouache along with ink, silver and gold to construct a vibrant composition full of intricate patterns and contrasts. Ink is used to create lyrical calligraphic passages at the top and bottom of the work.



attr. Sultan Muhammad asst. by Abd al-Aziz, Zal Consults the Magi, Folio 73v from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, ca. 1530-35, Iran, opaque watercolor (gouache), ink, silver, & gold on paper, 11 1/16 x 7 ¼". PD –US http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452117

Other Painting Mediums

Enamel paints form hard skins typically with a high-gloss finish. They use heavy solvents and are extremely durable.

Powder coat paints differ from conventional paints in that they do not require a solvent to keep the pigment and binder parts in suspension. They are applied to a surface as a powder then cured with heat to form a tough skin that is stronger than most other paints. Powder coats are applied mostly to metal surfaces and are often seen in automotive or furniture contexts.

Epoxy paints are polymers, created mixing pigment with two different chemicals: a resin and a hardener. The chemical reaction between the two creates heat that bonds them together. Epoxy paints, like powder coats and enamel, are extremely durable in both indoor and outdoor conditions.

These industrial-grade paints are used in sign painting, marine environments and aircraft painting among other uses.

Painting Beyond Painting

Historically other mediums have served the same purpose as painting in religious contexts and in the courts of nobility. Two of those are **mosaics** and **tapestries**.

Mosaic

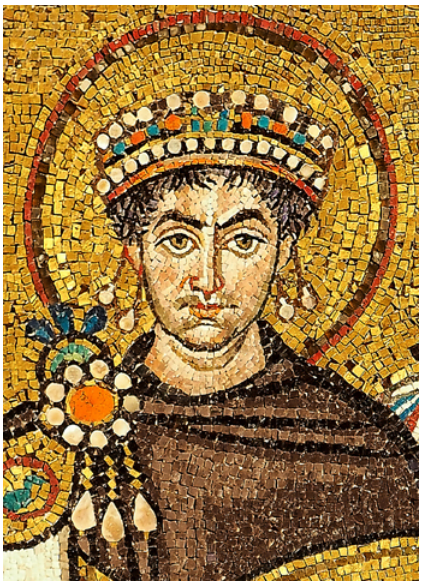
The Greeks and Romans used mosaics to decorate the floors of their homes and basilicas. Intricate designs made of small, individual bits of stone or glass called **tesserae** were embedded in plaster, mortar or cement. Later Byzantine churches were richly ornamented with tesserae fashioned from small bits of marble, stone, or glass with gold leaf sandwiched between the layers. During the Renaissance artists like Ghirlandaio and Raphael also designed mosaics, but the work was most likely carried out by their workshop artists. Fresco proved to be a faster and less costly form of wall decoration from that period forward, although mosaics continue to be made today.



Roman (?) mosaic from the Vatican Museum, Rome. PD-US. Photo: Wknight94 under GNU Free Documentation. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...m_mosaic_4.jpg



Emperor Justinian, Bishop Maximian and Retinue, ca. 547, mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna. PD US



Emperor Justinian (detail), ca. 547, mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna. PD-US

Tapestry

These fabric wall-hangings in Europe rivaled paintings in detail and preciousness. They were, in addition, practical in that they kept some drafts out of old castle walls. Many important artists have created the **cartoons** – or preliminary drawings/designs – for tapestries including Raphael, Goya, and Charles le Brun. Tapestries were often exchanged between kings as tokens of good will. There were royal tapestry factories like the Gobelins in France where the work was woven by hand with wool, silk, and precious metal-wrapped thread.



The Battle of Zama, Gobelin tapestry after Jules Romain, manufactured for Louis XI:V in 1688-90. Louvre. PD-US https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobeli..._1688_1690.jpg

Some artists today still work in tapestry or other fiber arts, but now a loom is more likely to be programmed digitally to produce the object. Many other examples of fiber art can be found. Traditionally dismissed as “women’s craft”, works made of woven, tied, crocheted, or other processes are now a major and respected part of art-making.

In front of the NuEdge gallery in Montréal, Polish artist Olek creates a crocheted cover for an existing sculpture turning it into a colorful hybrid.



Photo Jeangagnon, CC-SA-SH-3.0

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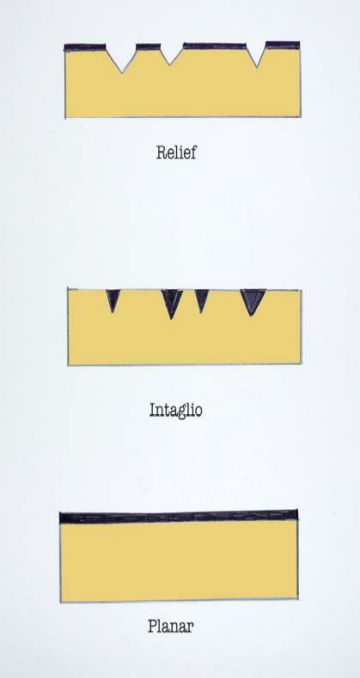
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2.3: Printmaking

Printmaking is a process of multiples. It uses a transfer process to make multiples from an original image or template. Each image, or individual print, is called an **impression**, and multiple impressions are printed in an **edition**, with each print signed and numbered by the artist. All printmaking mediums result in images reversed from the original. Print results depend on how the template (or **matrix**) is prepared. There are three basic techniques of printmaking: **Relief**, **Intaglio**, and **Planar(Lithography)**. You can get an idea of how they differ from the cross-section images below, and view how each technique works from this site – https://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html – at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

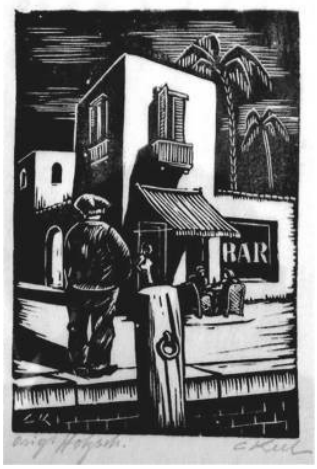


Chris Gildow. An illustration of the basic techniques used in printmaking. The black areas indicate the inked surface

Other printmaking processes are silkscreen printing and digital ink jet printing.

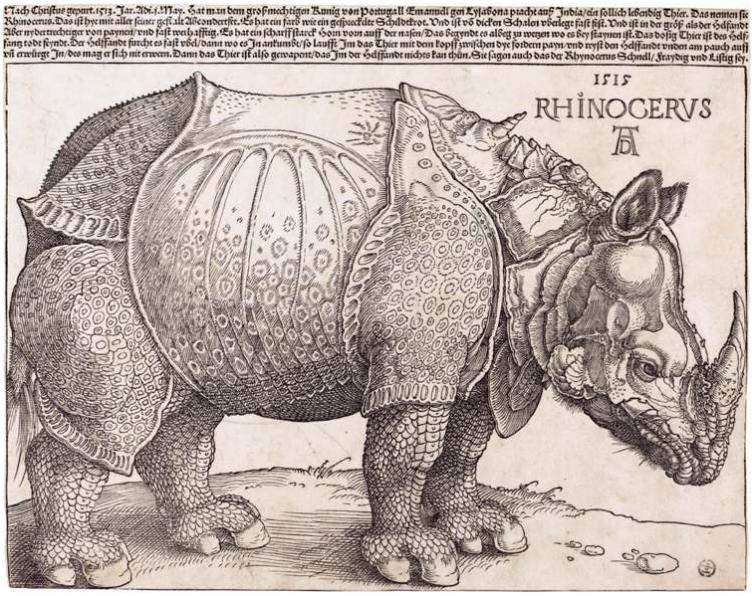
Relief Painting

A **relief print**, such as a woodcut or linoleum cut, is created when the areas of the matrix (plate or block) that are to show the printed image are *on the original surface*; the parts of the matrix that are to be ink free having been cut away, or otherwise removed. The printed surface is in **relief** from the cut away sections of the plate. Once the area around the image is cut away, the surface of the plate is rolled up with ink. Paper is laid over the matrix, and both are run through a press, transferring the ink from the surface of the matrix to the paper. The nature of the relief process doesn't allow for lots of detail, but does result in graphic images with strong contrasts. The bottom of your sneaker makes a relief print on the floor after you walk through mud. A rubber stamp makes a relief print. Carl Eugene Keel's '*Bar*' shows the effects of a woodcut printed in black ink.



Carl Eugene Keel, 'Bar', 2006, woodcut print on paper. Image from www.bucarotechelp.com/expressions/82101001.asp; Stephen Bucaro. Image provided by Carl Eugen Keel under Creative Commons Attribution license

In 1515, Albrecht Dürer made a woodcut showing an animal no one on the European continent – including Dürer himself – had ever seen. His *Rhinoceros* was based on a written description and brief sketch done by an unknown artists of an Indian rhinoceros that was shipped to Lisbon that year. Sadly, the rhino died in a shipwreck en route to Pope Leo X and another wasn't brought to Europe until 1577. Dürer's portrayal isn't accurate, but it does suggest the artist conflating an "armored" animal with the kind of armor worn by knights including a 'gorget' at the neck.[1]



Albrecht Dürer, The Rhinoceros, 1515, woodcut, 9.3 x 11/7", National Gallery , Washington DC. PD-US

Block printing developed in China hundreds of years ago and was common throughout East Asia. The Japanese woodblock print below shows dynamic effects of implied motion and the contrasts created using only one color and black. *Ukiyo-e*, or "floating world," prints became popular in the 19th century, even influencing European artists during the Industrial Revolution.

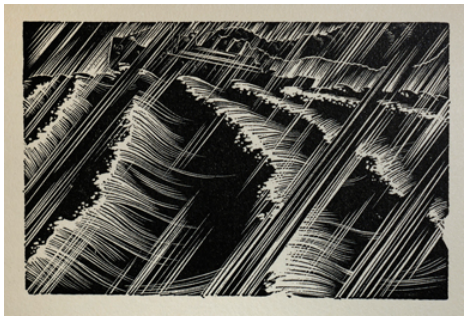
Relief printmakers can use a separate block or matrix for each color printed or, in **reduction prints** a single block is used, cutting away areas of color as the print develops. This method can result in a print with many colors.



Christopher Gildow, ‘Boathouse’, 2007, from the Stillaguamish Series, reduction woodcut print

Wood Engraving

The difference between a woodcut and a wood engraving is the part of the tree that is used as matrix. Instead of the soft horizontal wood a wood engraving is made on the harder end cut of the wood and results in shaper, crisper lines. Rockwell Kent’s image of a worker from the days of the labor union in the U.S. fighting back against the agents of capitalism (note the bayonets on the right) is much darker with greater contrasts of light and dark that you might expect to see in an ordinary woodcut.



Lynd Ward, Wood Engraving for Alec Waugh’s “Hot Countries”, 1930, wood engraving; Photo by Thomas Shahan, taken on October 5, 2011, CC-BY 2.0

Linocut

A linoleum cut, or linocut, is created using the same process as a woodcut, but the matrix is the very soft material of linoleum. Long a student favorite, many examples of high-quality linocut art can be found. The lines tend to be broad with stark areas of black and white, although linocuts can also be printed in colors.



Oaktree&mirrorimage.png|right|thumb|160px|Linocut, Johnbod 20:02, 2 December 2006 (UTC)

Intaglio Printing

Intaglio prints such as etchings, are made by incising channels into a copper or metal plate with a sharp instrument called a **burin** to create the image, inking the entire plate, then wiping the ink from the surface of the plate, leaving ink only in the incised channels *below* the surface. Paper is laid over the plate and put through a press under high pressure, forcing the ink to be transferred to the paper.

Engraving is the oldest of intaglio techniques and traces its history back to the intricate designs cut into metal armor by medieval armor-makers. This was the process used most often to create and disseminate images before mechanical methods of the 19th century arrived.

Once again, we see artist Albrecht Dürer turning his skill to another medium to create this image of St. Jerome in his study. Prints were a source of additional income for artists throughout history. You could spend months on one painting and sell it once, but you could create a plate and make a hundred prints to sell.



Albrecht Dürer, Saint Jerome in his Study, 1514, engraving, Dresden. PD US Photograph: http://www.deutschefotothek.de/obj30105649.html

In dry point, the artist creates an image by scratching the burin directly into a metal plate (usually copper) before inking and printing. Characteristically these prints have strong line quality and exhibit a slightly blurred edge to the line as the result of burrs created in the process of incising the plate, similar to clumps of soil laid to the edge of a furrowed trench. Today artists also use plexi-glass, a hard clear plastic, as plates. A fine example of dry point is seen in Rembrandt's *Clump of Trees with a Vista*. The velvety darks are created by the effect of the burred-edged lines.



Rembrandt, Clump of Trees with a Vista, 1652, drypoint; second state of two, sheet: 4 13/16 x 8 5/16", MET PD US http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.46.4/

Etched Printing

Etching begins by first applying a protective wax-based coating to a thin metal plate. The artist then scratches an image with a burin through the protective coating into the surface of the metal. The plate is then submersed in a strong acid bath, etching the exposed lines. The plate is removed from the acid and the protective coating is removed from the plate. Now the bare plate is inked, wiped and printed. The image is created from the ink in the etched channels. The amount of time a plate is kept in the acid bath determines the quality of tones in the resulting print: the longer it is etched the darker the tones will be. '*Correccion*' by the Spanish master Francisco Goya shows the clear linear quality etching can produce. The acid bath removes any burrs created by the initial dry point work, leaving details and value contrasts consistent with the amount of lines and the distance between them. Goya presents a fantastic image of people, animals and strange winged creatures. His work often involved biting social commentary. '*Correccion*' is a contrast between the pious and the absurd.

Mezzotint

Mezzotint is the only process the inventor of which is actually recorded. In 17th century Utrecht, in the Netherlands, an artist named Ludwig von Seiden created a unique printmaking process and no one, he claimed, would be able to figure out how he did it. In fact, the image he sent to William VI, a nobleman of Hesse-Kassel, of his mother in 1642 is thought to be the first mezzotint ever made.



Ludwig von Seigen, Amelia Elisabetta von Hessen, mezzotint, 1642. PD US

Mezzotint is a tonal process made with a metal tool called a “rocker”. By rocking the half moon shaped tool with tiny teeth or points across the metal plate areas that proceed from dark to light through a soft progression of values can be created.



https://www.slideshare.net/AimyAnneC...aglio-12150617



Francisco Goya, Correccion, 1799, etching and burnished aquatint on paper. PD US https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...Correccion.jpg

Goya created editions of prints on a number of subjects. *Correccion* is #46 from Los Caprichos (The Caprices), 1799. The subject of this set of prints was the foibles and stupidities of the human race. Here we see him using a combination of etching for the fine line work and aquatint, a process that uses a powdered rosin, to create a tonal effect. The acid resistant rosin is usually dusted across the plate and heated to cause it to adhere. The plate can then be dipped in an acid bath for various periods of time and with different sections of plate exposed causing those areas to be more deeply "bitten" and hold more ink. This also results in a tonal product but areas of highlight usually are marked by a hard edge since it has to be painted or stopped out on the plate.

There are many different techniques associated with intaglio, including aquatint, scraping and burnishing.

Planar Printing

Planar prints like monoprints are created on the *surface* of the matrix without any cutting or incising. In this technique the surface of the matrix (usually a thin metal plate or Plexiglass) is completely covered with ink, then areas are partially removed by wiping, scratching away or otherwise removed to form the image. Paper is laid over the matrix, then run through a press to transfer the image to the paper. Monoprints (also *monotypes*) are the simplest and painterly of the printing mediums. By definition monotypes and monoprints cannot be reproduced in editions. It is a singular print-making process. Kathryn Trigg'shttp://www.kathryntrigg.com/gallery.html monotypes show how close this print medium is related to painting and drawing.

Lithography is another example of planar printmaking, developed in Germany in the late 18th century. "Litho" means "stone" and "graph" means "to draw". The traditional matrix for lithography is the smooth surface of a limestone block.

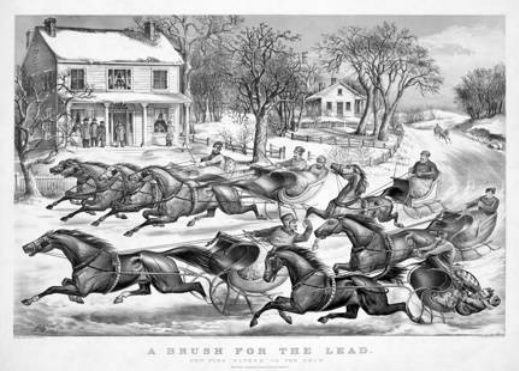


Chris73, Lithographic stone is on the left with the negative image. Printed positive image is on the right

While this matrix is still used extensively, thin zinc plates have also been introduced to the medium. They eliminate the bulk and weight of the limestone block but provide the same surface texture and characteristics. The lithographic process is based on the fact that grease repels water. In traditional lithography, an image is created on the surface of the stone or plate using grease pencils or wax crayons or a grease-based liquid medium called **tusche**. The finished image is covered in a thin layer of gum arabic that includes a weak solution of nitric acid as an etching agent. The resulting chemical reaction divides the surface into two areas: the

positive areas containing the image and that will repel water, and the negative areas surrounding the image that will be water receptive. In printing a lithograph, the gum arabic film is removed and the stone or metal surface is kept moist with water so when it's rolled up with an oil based ink the ink adheres to the positive (image) areas but not to the negative (wet) areas.

Because of the mediums used to create the imagery, lithographic images show characteristics much like drawings or paintings. In *A Brush for the Lead* by Currier and Ives (below), a full range of shading and more linear details of description combine to illustrate a winter's race down the town's main road.



Currier and Ives, 'A Brush for the Lead; New York Flyers on the Snow', 1867, lithograph. PD-US Library of Congress

Serigraphy, also known as **screen-printing**, is a third type of planar printing medium. Screen-printing is a printing technique that uses a woven mesh to support an ink-blocking stencil. The attached stencil forms open areas of mesh that transfer ink or other printable materials that can be pressed through the mesh as a sharp-edged image onto a substrate such as paper or fabric. A roller or squeegee is moved across the screen stencil, forcing or pumping ink past the threads of the woven mesh in the open areas. The image below shows how a stencil's positive (image) areas are isolated from the negative (non-image) areas.



Meul, 'TeeshirtCopyleft Cadre'

In serigraphy, each color needs a separate stencil. You can watch how this process develops in this video



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=156

Screen printing is an efficient way to print posters, announcements and other kinds of popular culture images. Andy Warhol began using the silk screen process in the 1960's. He was thrilled with the mechanical quality of the prints and the sometimes random results he got. He used silk screen images and iconography from popular culture and newspapers to play with the idea of popular versus high art.



On the far wall, Andy Warhol, Portrait of Mao Zedong, 1973, silkscreen, from an exhibition of the artist's work at the Hamburg Bahnhof, August 2011. Photo: dalbera from Paris, France

Digital Inkjet Prints

This twentieth century technique has made printmaking available to a wide range of art patrons and has allowed artists to do things that would not have been imaginable a few decades ago. What is the difference between an inkjet print made by an artist that sells for a thousand dollars and one from a big box store that sells for less than a hundred? There are several significant differences. First, the machine that makes art prints can handle very large format prints. Second, the artist is on hand to approve, sign, and number every print that comes off the "press". Finally, artists' inkjet prints are made with archival quality inks and papers that are intended to last much longer than commercial printing mediums. Another advantage to art inkjet printing is that it can be done on unusual materials. Betsabee Romero, a Mexican artist, prints on car tires (and with car tires, but that's another process), sunglasses and other objects.

New York artists Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker use the inkjet printer and scanner in their multi-media work. They have printed on objects like paint cans, mattresses, and drywall or furniture.



Guyton\Walker, Untitled, Sculpture, 2008, Digital inkjet prints on paint cans, Each can 7 5/8 x 7 x 7″, The Museum of Modern Art, Fund for the Twenty-First Century. http://library.artstor.org/#/asset/AMOMA_10312310614

Important artists are also making prints. One of the best printmaking facilities is Santa Fe Editions. Here artists like Caio Fonseca, Robert Kelly, and Ricardo Mazal have created images that are reproduced in small editions at prices far below that of their paintings. Here the artists work with a master printmaker to create original works, not reproductions, that are then signed and numbered by the artist. The average edition is 30 prints, printed and shipped flat, not rolled. Take a look at some of the work being done at Santa Fe Editions.

http://www.sfeditions.com/MainFrameset-30.htm

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%B...27s_Rhinoceros; accessed 9.16.2017.

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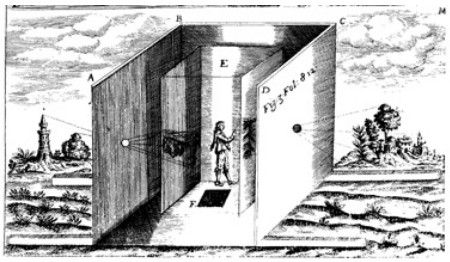
2.4: Photography

This is the one tool of art that – besides the pencil – most 21st century people have used, and often on a daily basis. Statistics suggest that every two minutes today we take as many photos as were taken in the entire 19th century, the century that saw the birth of modern photography.[1] In this class, rather than trying to explain all of the chemical processes that made photography possible we will focus on the history of photography and how it fits within our study of the fine arts.

Early Development

The basic principle that photography is based on is the idea that light passing through a small opening will cast an image into a darkened space. It is suggested that a Chinese philosopher, Mo Ti, from the 5th century BCE was the first to notice and record this observation. Others repeated these experiments including Aristotle. Arab mathematician and physicist Abu Ali Hasan Ibn al-Haitham, in the West known as Alhazen, created experiments with candles and a darkened room that allowed him to correctly theorize that light travels in straight lines and that the human eye must work similarly. These ideas made their way to the West and during the Renaissance we see the first invention created to make use of this concept.

The first attempts to capture an image were made from a **camera obscura**, in use since the 16th century. The device consists of a box or small room with a small hole in one side that acts as a lens. Light from an external scene passes through the hole and strikes the opposite surface inside where it is reproduced upside-down, but with color and perspective preserved. The image can be projected onto paper adhered to the opposite wall, and then traced to produce a highly accurate representation. The technology to capture images made of light on a permanent surface wasn't available until the 19th century, although experiments in capturing images on film had been conducted in Europe since the late 18th century.



Athanasius Kircher, Illustration of "portable" camera obscura in Kircher's Ars Magna Lucis Et Umbra, 1646. PD US http://web.stanford.edu/group/kirche...rcher_1281.jpg

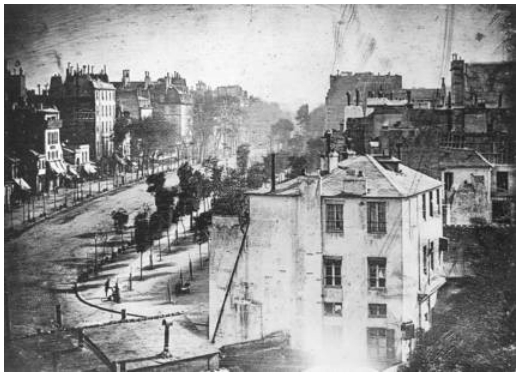
Using the dynamics of the camera obscura as a model, early chemist photographers found ways to chemically fix the projected images onto metal plates coated with light sensitive materials like silver iodide. Moreover, they installed glass lenses in their early cameras and experimented with different exposure times for their images. *View from the Window at Le Gras* is one of the oldest existing photographs, taken in 1826 by French inventor **Joseph Niepce** using a process he called **heliograpy** ("helio" meaning sun and "graph" meaning write). The exposure for the image took eight hours, resulting in the sun casting its light on both sides of the houses in the picture. Further developments resulted in apertures — thin circular devices that are calibrated to allow a certain amount of light onto the exposed film. A wide aperture is used for low light conditions, while a smaller aperture is best for bright conditions. Apertures allowed photographers better control over their exposure times.



Niépce's View from the Window at Le Gras, 1826-27, captured on 20 x 25 cm oil-treated bitumen with an 8 hour exposure. Enhanced version by the Swiss, Helmut Gersheim (1913-1995) performed ca. 1952 (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin) PD US Rebecca A. Moss,Director of Visual Resources and Digital Content Lab, via email. College of Liberal Arts Office of Information Technology University of Minnesota http://www.arthist.umn.edu/vrcinfo/

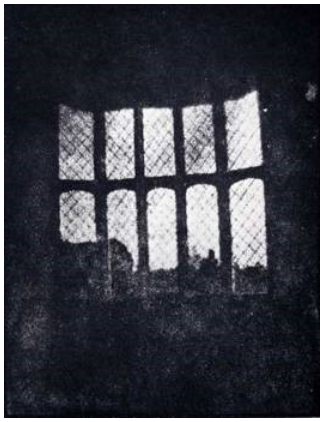
During the 1830's Louis Daguerre, having worked with Niepce earlier, developed a more reliable process to capture images on film by using a polished copper plate treated with silver iodide. Not being one to hide his light under a bushel, as it were, he termed the images made by this process "**Daguerreotypes**." They were sharper in focus and the exposure times were shorter. His photograph *Boulevard du Temple* from 1838 is taken from his studio window overlooking a busy Paris street. Still, with an exposure of ten minutes, none of the moving traffic or pedestrians stayed still long enough to be recorded. The only person in the image is a man on the lower left, standing at the corner getting his shoes shined.

The image that resulted from a daguerreotype was a single, positive image. It could not be reproduced. This limited the uses to which this new medium could be put. It would be only about two years before another inventor came up with a process for creating early negatives.



Louis Daguerre, 'Boulevard du Temps', 1838

At the same time Daguerre was working in France, in England William Henry Fox Talbot was experimenting with other photographic processes. He was creating photogenic drawings by simply placing objects (mostly botanical specimens) over light sensitive paper or plates, then exposing them to the sun. By 1844 he had invented the **calotype:** a photographic print made from a **negative** image. In contrast, as stated above, Daguerreotypes were single, positive images that could not be reproduced. Talbot's calotypes allowed for multiple prints from one negative, setting the standard for the new medium. *Latticed Window at Lacock Abbey* is a print made from the oldest photographic negative in existence.

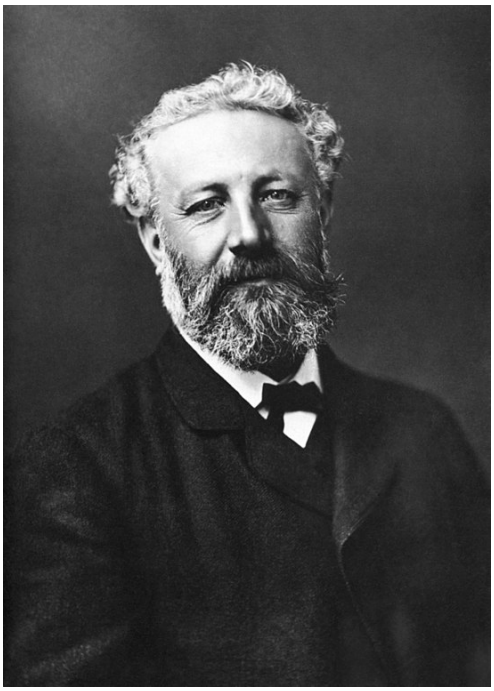


William Henry Fox Talbot, 'Latticed Window at Lacock Abbey', 1835, photographic print. National Museum of Photography, Film and Television collection, England

By the middle of the 19th century the process for creating negatives on glass plates was created. The collodion process involved adding soluble iodide to a solution of cellulose nitrate on a glass plate. Now all that was needed was a light-sensitive paper onto which the negatives could be printed.[2] Another French citizen, Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard, was the first to create a photographic paper using albumen – the white from chicken eggs – along with salt and silver nitrate. More on this process can be accessed here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albumen_print

Now that the basic elements of reproduceable photographic processes was available the question was: what is photography for? One of the earliest and most popular uses was the same as it is today – to record the likenesses of ourselves and our loved ones. Portrait photography gave rise to commercial photographic studios in Europe and America. One successful entrepreneur was Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, known as Nadar. A Parisian, Nadar tried his hand at many things before opening his photographic

studio in 1854. He had once been a caricaturist for newspapers and had met most of the celebrated artists, writers, and other creative people of the Parisian demi-monde. He would photograph such historical persons as actress Sarah Bernhardt, novelist Baudelaire, painter Delacroix, and musician Berlioz. One of his most famous sitters was Jules Verne, writer of early science fiction. Both men were enthusiasts of hot air ballooning – Nadar had commissioned one for himself – from which he made the first aerial photographs. Verne's experiences in Nadar's balloon would inspire his novel, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*.



Restored photograph of Jules Verne by Félix Nadar circa 1878. PD US This file was derived from: Félix Nadar 1820-1910 portraits Jules Verne.jpg

Photography and Art

Until the advent of photography the only access to images was from media like paintings or drawings translated through the hand and eye of another person. During the 19th century an effort was made to place photography in the same league as oil painting and other fine arts and to demonstrate its aesthetic potential. To do this photographs were staged and manipulated (by hand) to create simulacrums of famous paintings, or to create images that suggested popular paintings of the day.

While this continues today, the desire to find a more authentic use for the photographic medium would give rise to other fields of visual and social experimentation.



Thomas Couture, Romans of the Decadence, 1847. Oil on canvas



Oscar Rejlander, The Two Ways of Life, 1857. Combination albumen print. PD US

Thomas Couture's *Romans of the Decadence* from 1847 was possibly the most famous painting of its day. Couture, an early instructor of Edouard Manet, described the aftermath of a Roman orgy in the classical style of the French Academy. Reilander's photo, while not a strict recreation, nevertheless uses the same format and basic composition to describe the same moral position – in general, orgies are not good for you.

Photojournalism



The Dunker Church after September 17, 1862. Here, both Union and Confederate dead lie together on the field. PD-US

Mathew Brady had a photographic studio in New York City when the Civil War began. Young soldiers and their families began coming to him for portraits – one of the soldier for his family to keep and one of the family for the soldier to take with him to the battlefield. He even somewhat cynically marketed these services to soldiers with the idea that you should do it before it's too late. Brady saw a need for images from the war itself which would carry the impact of battle with more immediacy and empathy than could be communicated in the prints created by hand for the newspapers. In the 1860s newspapers couldn't print halftone photographs and were restricted to images made by the hand of an artist.



Gardner stereo image entitled "A Contrast: Federal buried, Confederate unburied, where they fell on the Battlefield of Antietam."
PD-US: Civil War photographs: 1861-1865, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division



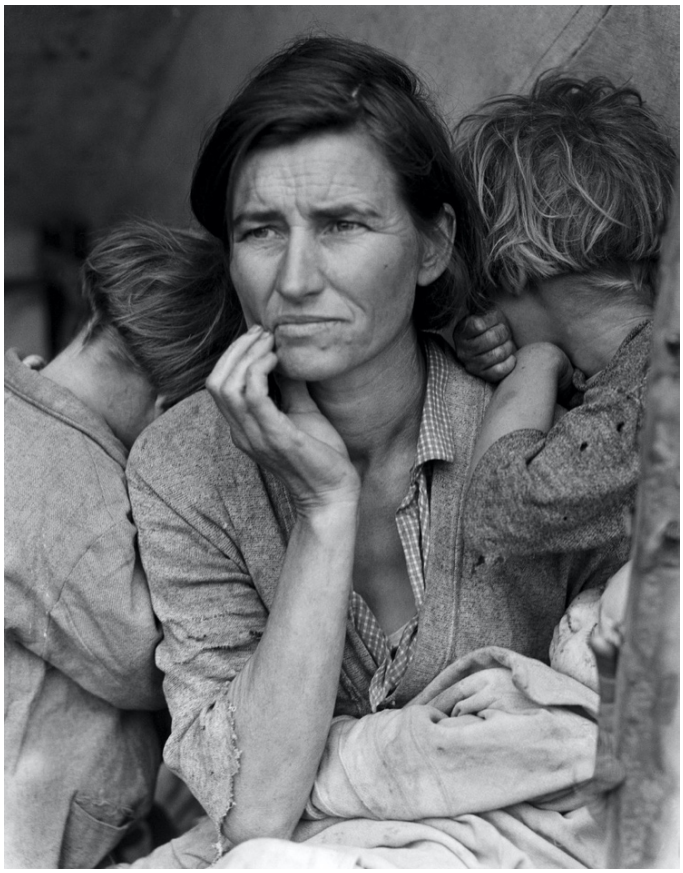
Woodcut created from the Gardner photograph that was reproduced in the newspapers. https://www.nps.gov/anti/contacts.htm

To realize his project of photographing the war itself Brady had to find a way to develop the glass plates on the spot. He invented a "portable darkroom" from a carriage covered in a light impermeable tarp and sent his assistants like Gardner into the field. Because of the still-long exposure times actual battle scenes weren't possible. The aftermath of the battle, however, was perfectly still and this was what Brady and his assistants captured. He exhibited one series, *The Dead of Antietam*, in his New York gallery bringing the real cost of the war home to the public. In many ways Brady might be thought of as the Father of modern photojournalism.

Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California

During the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl that afflicted much of the middle of the country in the 1930s, the government gave employment to artists and photographers by sending them out to document the ordeal of the people. One of these was Dorothea Lange. With her Hasselblad camera she traveled throughout the Dust Bowl states taking photos of farms covered in dust and dead crops and on to California, the destination of many of the displaced farm families. One of these provided the photograph that was to prove iconic and would be used to spur the government to create unemployment insurance and other aid programs.

Florence Thompson and her seven children were sitting in a tent. They had hoped to pick peas but a freezing rain had destroyed the crop.[3] Lange started snapping photos as she approached the tent and managed to capture the photo that would encapsulate the pain and suffering of the people during the Great Depression. Alongside Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, *Migrant Mother* documents a moment of American history that must be remembered.



Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965), Migrant Mother, Nipomo California, 1936. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/8 x 8 9/16″. PD-US, There are no known restrictions on the use of Lange's "Migrant Mother" images. A rights statement for the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information black-and-white negatives is available online at: http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/res/071_fsab.html

Photography and Art

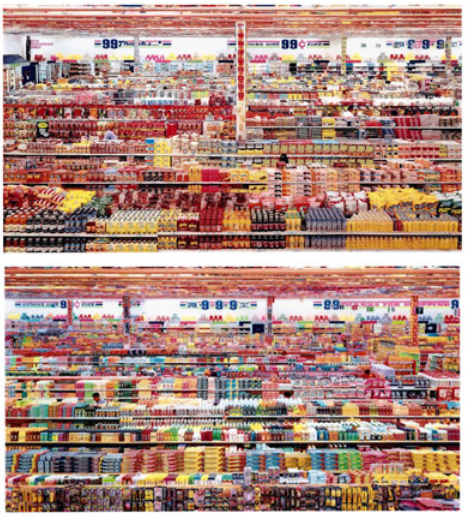
The discussion about art's true nature and purpose continued into the twentieth century. Some continued to feel that it should mimic the look of paintings and drawings, but others believed that photography as an artform should be appreciated for the specific qualities of which it was uniquely capable. Alfred Stieglitz was a wealthy New Yorker who believed in photography as a unique art. On a trip back from Europe he captured a photo that would illustrate the nature of photography in its own right. *The Steerage* captures the below-deck quarters of the poorer people on Stieglitz' voyage. He caught the moment when sun fell on a series of lines and walkways dividing the picture into two horizontal planes of light and dark. Joined by the walkway, the ladder on the right, and punctuated by the crown of the white straw boater of the man in the upper register, Stieglitz makes a case for pure photography showing all of the elements and principles of any other medium. To read more about Stieglitz and photography see Lisa Hostetler at: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stgp/hd_stgp.htm



Alfred Stieglitz, the Steerage, 1907, photogravure, 13.19 x 10×39”, PD US VgFMwBlWg-XTrw at Google Cultural Institute

Contemporary Photography

Today photography is recognized as the equivalent of any other fine art and is sold in galleries and included in Art Fairs and museums all over the world. In 2007, this c-print (chromogenic print) by Andreas Gursky sold at auction for $3,346,456. The manipulated photo was taken in a California grocery store and compressed to suggest the vertical perspective of Eastern paintings.



Andreas Gursky, 99 Cent II Diptychon, 2001. C-print mounted to acrylic glass, 81 x 121”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/99_Cen...esy_of_Sotheby’s.jpg is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply

Photography has at last come full circle, selling for as much as any major canvas and reflecting both the natural world of the subject and also the mind and hand of its maker. Digital photography has made photographers of us all and selfies continue the tradition of portraiture for which the medium was first thought best suited. The internet makes use of millions of images and makes them available for our use in a way never imagined by Stieglitz and other earlier photographers. Still, artists continue to push the limits of what the medium and technology can make it do.

1 http://www.lesaviezvous.net/society/today-every-two-minutes-people-take-as-many-pictures-as-taken-throughout-the-19th-century.html
2 https://www.google.com/search?q=coll...utf-8&oe=utf-8
3 http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/sto...orothea-lange/

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2.5: Film

Leland Stanford was bored.

In 1872, Stanford was a wealthy robber baron, former Governor of California, and horse racing enthusiast with way too much time on his hands. Spending much of that time at the track, he became convinced that a horse at full gallop lifted all four hooves off the ground. His friends scoffed at the idea. Unfortunately, a horse's legs moved so fast that it was impossible to tell with the human eye. So he did what really wealthy people do when they want to settle a bet, he turned to a nature photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, and offered him $25,000 to photograph a horse mid gallop.

Six years later, after narrowly avoiding a murder conviction (but that's another story), Muybridge perfected a technique of photographing a horse in motion with a series of 12 cameras triggered in sequence. One of the photos clearly showed that all four of the horse's hooves left the ground at full gallop. Stanford won the bet and went on to found Stanford University. Muybridge pocketed the $25,000 and became famous for the invention of **series photography**, a critical first step toward motion pictures.

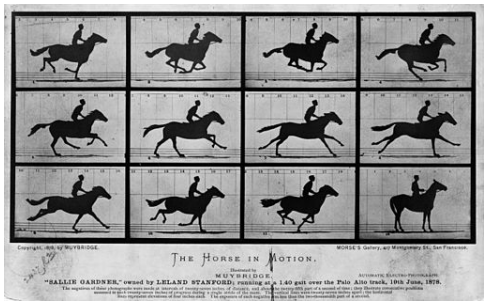


Figure 2.5.1: The Horse in Motion. Eadweard Muybridge, 1878. (Copyright; author via source)

Of course, the mechanical reproduction of an image had already been around for some time. The **Camera Obscura**, a technique for reproducing images by projecting a scene through a tiny hole that is inverted and reversed on the opposite wall or surface (think pinhole camera), had been around since at least the 5th century BCE, if not thousands of years earlier. But it wasn't until a couple of French inventors, Nicephore Niepce and Louis Daguerre, managed to capture an image through a chemical process known as photoetching in the 1820s that photography was born. By 1837, Niepce was dead (best not to ask too many questions about that) and Daguerre had perfected the technique of fixing an image on a photographic plate through a chemical reaction of silver, iodine and mercury. He called it a **daguerreotype**. After himself. Naturally.

But to create the illusion of movement from these still images would require further innovation. The basic concept of animation was already in the air through earlier inventions like the **magic lantern** and eventually the **zoetrope**. But a photo-realistic recreation of movement was unheard of. That's where Muybridge comes in. His technique of capturing a series of still images in quick succession laid the groundwork for other inventors like Thomas Edison, Woodville Latham and Auguste and Louis Lumiere to develop new ways of photographing and projecting movement. Crucial to this process was the development of strips of light-sensitive celluloid film to replace the bulky glass plates used by Muybridge. This enabled a single camera to record a series of high-speed exposures (rather than multiple cameras taking a single photo in sequence). It also enabled that same strip of film to be projected at an equally high speed, creating the illusion of movement through a combination of optical and neurological phenomena. But more on that in the next chapter.

By 1893, 15 years after Muybridge won Stanford's bet, Edison had built the first "movie studio," a small, cramped, wood-frame hut covered in black tar paper with a hole in the roof to let in sunlight. His employees nicknamed it the **Black Maria** because it reminded them of the police prisoner transport wagons in use at the time (also known as "paddy wagons" with apologies to the Irish). One of the first films they produced was a 5 second "scene" of a man sneezing.



Riveting stuff. But still, movies were born.

Sort of.

There was just one problem: the only way to view Edison's films was through a **kinetoscope**, a machine that allowed a single viewer to peer into a viewfinder and crank through the images. The ability to project the images to a paying audience would take another couple of years.

In 1895, Woodville Latham, a chemist and Confederate veteran of the Civil War, lured away a couple of Edison's employees and perfected the technique of motion picture projection. In that same year, over in France, Auguste and Louis Lumiere invented the **cinematographe** which could perform the same modern miracle. The Lumiere brothers would receive the lion's

share of the credit, but Latham and the Lumieres essentially tied for first place in the invention of cinema as we know it.

Sort of.

It turns out there was *another* French inventor, Louis Le Prince (apparently we owe a lot to the French), who was experimenting with motion pictures and had apparently perfected the technique by 1890. But when he arrived in the US for a planned public demonstration that same year – potentially eclipsing Edison's claim on the technology – he mysteriously vanished from a train. His body and luggage, including his invention, were never found. Conspiracy theories about his untimely disappearance have circulated ever since (we're looking at you, Thomas Edison).

Those early years of cinema were marked by great leaps forward in technology, but not so much forward movement in terms of art. Whether it was Edison's 5-second film of a sneeze, or the Lumieres' 46-second film *Workers Leaving a Factory* (which is exactly what it sounds like), the films were wildly popular because no one had seen anything like them, not because they were breaking new ground narratively.



There were, of course, notable exceptions. Alice Guy-Blaché was working as a secretary at a photography company when she saw the Lumieres' invention in 1895. The following year she wrote, directed and edited what many consider the first fully fictional film in cinema history, *The Cabbage Fairy* (1896):

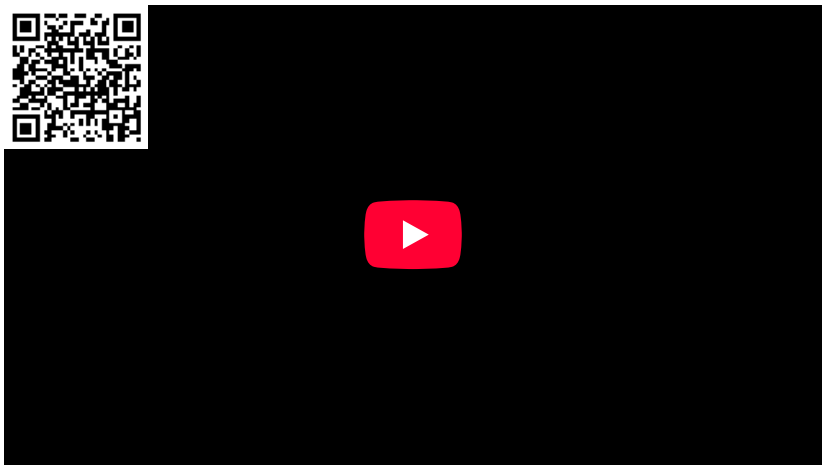


But it was George Melies who became the most well-known filmmaker-as-entertainer in those first few years. Melies was a showman in Paris with a flare for the dramatic. He was one of the first to see the Lumieres' *cinematographe* in action in 1895 and immediately saw its potential as a form of mass entertainment. Over the next couple of decades he produced hundreds of films that combined fanciful stage craft, optical illusions, and wild storylines that anticipated much of what was to come in the next century of cinema. His most famous film, *A Trip to the Moon*, produced in 1902, transported audiences to surface of the moon on a rocket ship and sometimes even included hand-tinted images to approximate color cinematography.



He was very much ahead of his time and would eventually be immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2011 film *Hugo*.

By the start of the 20th century, cinema had become a global phenomenon. Fortunately, many of those early filmmakers had caught up with Melies in terms of the art of cinema and its potential as an entertainment medium. In Germany, filmmakers like Fritz Lange and Robert Weine helped form one of the earliest examples of a unique and unified cinematic style, consisting of highly stylized, surreal production designs and modernist, even futuristic narrative conventions that came to be known as *German Expressionism*. Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) was a macabre nightmare of a film about a murderous hypnotist and is considered the world's first horror movie.



And Lange's *Metropolis* (1927) was an epic science-fiction dystopian fantasy with an original running time of more than 2 hours.



Meanwhile in Soviet Russia, Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein were experimenting with how the creative juxtaposition of images could influence how an audience thinks and feels about what they see on screen (also known as *editing*, a relatively new concept at the time). Through a series of experiments, Kuleshov demonstrated that it was this juxtaposition of images, not the discrete images themselves, that generated meaning, a phenomenon that came to be known as **The Kuleshov Effect**. Eisenstein, his friend and colleague, applied Kuleshov's theories to his own cinematic creations, including the concept of *montage*: a collage of moving images designed to create an emotional effect rather than a logical narrative sequence. Eisenstein's most famous use of this technique is in the Odessa steps sequence of his historical epic, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).



But it was the United States that was destined to become the center of the cinematic universe, especially as it grew into a global mass entertainment medium. Lois Weber was an early innovator and the first American director, male or female, to make a narrative feature film, *The Merchant of Venuce* (1914). Throughout her career, Weber would pursued subjects considered controversial at the time, such as abortion, birth control and capital punishment (it helped that she owned her own studio). But it wasn't just her subject matter that pushed the envelope. For example, in her short film, *Suspense* (1913) she pioneered the use of intercutting and basically invented split screen editing.



Others, like D. W. Griffith, followed suit (though it's doubtful Griffith would have given Weber any credit). Like Weber, Griffith helped pioneer the full-length feature film and invented many of the narrative conventions, camera moves and editing techniques still in use today. Unfortunately, many of those innovations were first introduced in his ignoble, wildly racist (and wildly popular at the time) *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Griffith followed that up the next year with the somewhat ironically-titled *Intolerance* (1916), a box office disappointment but notable for its larger than life sets, extravagant costumes, and complex story-line that made George Melies's creations seem quaint by comparison.



Weber, Griffith and many other filmmakers and entrepreneurs would go on to establish film studios able to churn out hundreds of short and long-form content for the movie theaters popping up on almost every street corner.

CINEMA GOES HOLLYWOOD

This burgeoning new entertainment industry was not, however, located in southern California. Not yet, anyway. Almost all of the production facilities in business at the time were in New York, New Jersey or somewhere on the Eastern seaboard. Partly because the one man who still controlled the technology that made cinema possible was based there: Thomas Edison. Edison owned the patent for capturing and projecting motion pictures, essentially cornering the market on the new technology (R.I.P. Louis Le Prince). If you wanted to make a movie in the 1900s or 1910s, you had to pay Edison for the privilege.

Not surprisingly, a lot of would-be filmmakers bristled at Edison's control over the industry. And since patent law was difficult to enforce across state lines at the time, many of them saw California as an ideal place to start a career in filmmaking. Sure, the weather was nice. But it was also as far away from the northeast as you could possibly get within the continental United States, and a lot harder for Edison to sue for patent violations.

By 1912, Los Angeles had replaced New York as the center of the film business, attracting filmmakers and entertainment entrepreneurs from around the world. World-renowned filmmakers like Ernst Lubitsch from Germany, Erich von Stroheim from Austria, and an impish comedian from England named Charlie Chaplin, all flocked to the massive new production facilities that sprang up around the city. Universal Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Warner Bros., all of them motion picture factories able to mass-produce dozens, sometimes hundreds of films per year. And they were surrounded by hundreds of other, smaller companies, all of them competing for screen space in thousands of new movie houses around the country.

One small neighborhood in the heart of Los Angeles became most closely associated with the burgeoning new industry: Hollywood.

By 1915, after a few years of failed lawsuits (and one imagines a fair number of temper-tantrums), Thomas Edison admitted defeat and dissolved his Motion Picture Patents Company.

In the heyday of those early years, some of those larger studios decided the best way to ensure an audience for their films was to own the theaters as well. They built extravagant movie palaces in large market cities, and hundreds more humble theaters in small towns, effectively controlling all aspects of the business: production, distribution and exhibition. In business terms that's called *vertical integration*. It's a practice that would get them in a lot of trouble with the U.S. government a couple of decades later, but in the meantime, it meant big profits with no end in sight.

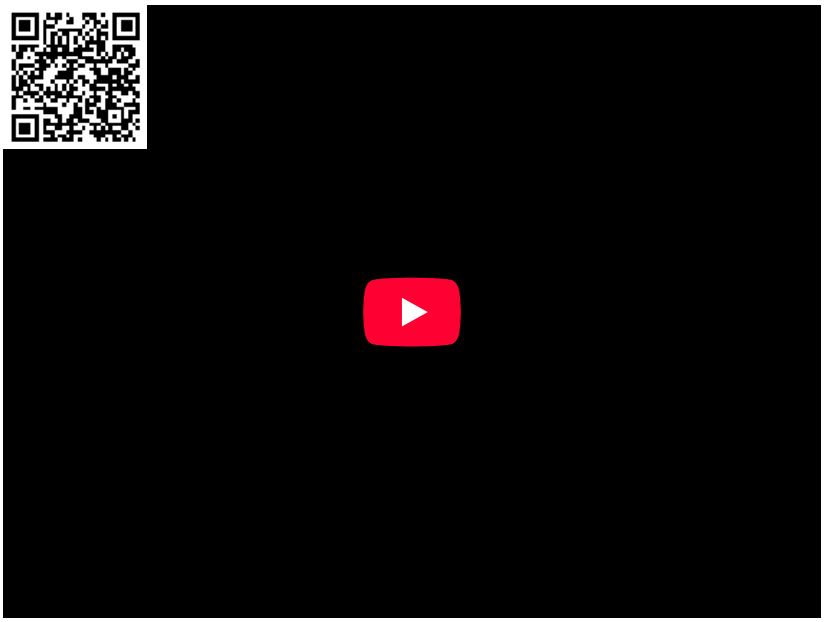
Then, in 1927, everything changed.

Warner Bros. was a family-owned studio run by five brothers and smaller than some of the other larger companies like Universal and MGM. But one of those brothers, Sam, had a vision. Or rather, an ear. Up to that point, cinema was still a silent medium. But Sam was convinced that sound, and more specifically, sound that was synchronized to the image, was the future.

And almost everyone thought he was crazy.

It seems absurd now, but no one saw any reason to add sound to an already perfect, and very profitable, visual medium. What next? Color? Don't be ridiculous…

Fortunately, Sam Warner persisted, investing the company's profits into the technology required to not only record synchronized sound, but to reproduce it in their movie theaters around the country. Finally, on October 6th, 1927, Warner Bros. released *The Jazz Singer*, the first film to include synchronized dialog.



Spoiler alert: It was a HUGE success. Unfortunately, Sam Warner didn't live to see it. He died of a brain infection on October 5th, the day before the premiere.

Suddenly, every studio was scrambling to catch up to Warner Bros. That meant a massive capital investment in sound technology, retrofitting production facilities *and* thousands of movie theaters. Not every production company could afford the upgrade, and many struggled to compete in the new market for films with synchronized sound. And just when it seemed like it couldn't get worse for those smaller companies, it did. In October of 1929, the stock market crashed, plunging the nation into the Great Depression. Hundreds of production companies closed their doors for good.

At the start of the 1930s, after this tremendous consolidation in the industry, eight major studios were left standing: RKO Pictures, Paramount, MGM, Fox, Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures and United Artists. Five of those – RKO, Paramount, MGM, Fox and Warner Bros. – also still owned extensive theater chains (aka **vertical integration**), an important source of their enormous profits, even during the Depression (apparently movies have always been a way to escape our troubles, at least for a couple of hours). But that didn't mean they could carry on with business as usual. They were forced to be as efficient as possible to maximize profits. Perhaps ironically, this led to a 20-year stretch, from 1927 to 1948, that would become known as The Golden Age, one of the most prolific and critically acclaimed periods in the history of Hollywood.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The so-called Golden Age of Hollywood was dominated by those eight powerful studios and defined by four crucial business decisions.[1] First and foremost, at least for five of the eight, was the emphasis on vertical integration. By owning and controlling every aspect of the business, production, distribution and exhibition, those companies could minimize risk and maximize profit by monopolizing the screens in local theaters. Theatergoers would hand over their hard-earned nickels regardless of what was playing, and that meant the studios could cut costs and not lose paying customers. And even for those few independent theater chains, the studios minimized risk through practices such as **block booking** and **blind bidding**. Essentially, the studios would force theaters to buy a block of several films to screen (block booking), sometimes without even knowing what they were paying for (blind bidding). One or two might be prestige films with well-known actors and higher production values, but the rest would be low-budget westerns or thrillers that theaters would be forced to exhibit. The studios made money regardless.

The second crucial business decision was to centralize the production process. Rather than allow actual filmmakers – writers, directors, actors – to control the creative process, deciding what scripts to develop and which films to put into production, the major studios relied on one or two **central producers**. At Warner Bros. it was Jack Warner and Darryl Zanuck. At RKO it was David. O. Selznick. And at MGM it was Louis B. Mayer and 28 year-old Irving Thalberg.



Irving Thalberg. Central Producer at MGM.

Thalberg would become the greatest example of the central producer role, running the most profitable studio throughout the Golden Age. Thalberg personally oversaw every production on the MGM lot, hiring and firing every writer, director and actor, and often taking over as editor before the films were shipped off to theaters. And yet, he shunned fame and never put his name on any of MGM's productions. Always in ill-health, perhaps in part because of his inhuman workload, he died young, in 1936, at age 37.

The third business decision that ensured studios could control costs and maximize profits was to keep the "talent" – writers, directors and actors – on low-cost, iron-clad, multi-year contracts. As Hollywood moved into the Golden Age, filmmakers – especially actors – became internationally famous. Stardom was a new and exciting concept, and studios depended on it to sell tickets. But if any one of these new global celebrities had the power to demand a fee commensurate with their name recognition, it could bankrupt even the most successful studio. To protect against stars leveraging their fame for higher pay, and thus cutting in on their profits, the studios maintained a stable of actors on contracts that limited their salaries to low weekly rates for years on end no matter how successful their films might become. There were no per-film negotiations and certainly no profit sharing. And if an actor decided to sit

out a film or two in protest, their contracts would be extended by however long they held out. Bette Davis, one of the biggest stars of the era, once fled to England to escape her draconian contract with Warner Bros. Warner Bros. sued the British production companies that might employ her and England sent her back. These same contracts applied to writers and directors, employed by the studio as staff, not the freelance creatives they are today. It was an ingenious (and diabolical) system that meant studios could keep their production costs incredibly low.

The fourth and final crucial business decision that made the Golden Age possible was the creative specialization, or **house style**, of each major studio. Rather than try to make every kind of movie for every kind of taste, the studios knew they needed to specialize, to lean into what they did best. This decision, perhaps more than any of the others, is what made this period so creatively fertile. Despite all of the restrictions imposed by vertical integration, central producers, and talent contracts, the house style of a given studio meant that all of their resources went into making the very best version of certain kind of film. For MGM, it was the "prestige" picture. An MGM movie almost always centered on the elite class, lavish set designs, rags to riches stories, the perfect escapist, aspirational content for the 1930s. For Warner Bros. it was the gritty urban crime thriller: *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). They were cheap to make and audiences ate them up. Gangsters, hardboiled detectives, femme fatales, these were all consistent elements of Warner Bros. films of the period. And for Universal, it was the horror movie:



Frankenstein (1931), *Dracula* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), all of them Universal pictures (and many of them inspired by the surreal production design of German Expressionist films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*).

But the fun and profits couldn't last forever.

Three important events conspired to bring an end the reign of the major studios and the Golden Age of Hollywood.

First, in 1943, Olivia de Havilland, a young actress known for her role as Melanie in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), sued Warner Bros. for adding six months to her contract, the amount of time she had been suspended by the studio for refusing to take roles she didn't want. She wasn't the first Hollywood actor to sue a studio over their stifling contracts. But she was the first to win her case. The court's decision in her favor set a precedent that quickly eroded the studios' power over talent. Soon actors became freelance performers, demanding fees that matched their box office draw and even profit participation in the success of their films. All of which took a sizeable chunk out the studios' revenue.

Then, in 1948, the U.S. government filed an anti-trust case against the major studios, finally recognizing that vertical integration constituted an unfair monopoly over the entertainment industry. The case went to the Supreme Court and in a landmark ruling known as **The Paramount Decision** (only because Paramount was listed first in the suit), the court ordered that all of the major studios sell off their theater chains and outlawed the practices of block booking and blind bidding. It was a financial disaster for the big studios. No longer able to shovel content to their own theater chains, studios had to actually consider what independent theaters wanted to screen and what paying audiences wanted to see. The result was a dramatic contraction in output as studios made fewer and fewer movies with increasingly expensive, freelance talent hoping to hit the moving target of audience interest.

And then it got worse.

In the wake of World War II, just as the Supreme Court was handing down The Paramount Decision, the television set was quickly becoming a common household item. By the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s, the rise of television entertainment meant fewer reasons to leave house and more reasons for the movie studios to panic. Some of them, like MGM, realized there was money to be made in licensing their film libraries to broadcasters. And some of them, like Universal, realized there was money to be made in leasing their vast production facilities to television producers. But all of them knew it was an end of an era.

THE NEW HOLLYWOOD

The end of the Golden Age thrust Hollywood into two decades of uncertainty as the major studios struggled to compete with the new Golden Age of *Television* and their own inability to find the pulse of the American theater-going public. There were plenty of successes. MGM's focus on musicals like *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and historical extravaganzas like *Ben Hur* (1959), for example, helped keep them afloat. (Though those came too late for Louis B. Mayer, one of the founders of the studio. He was fired in 1951.) But throughout the 50s and 60s, studios found themselves spending more and more money on fewer and fewer films and making smaller and smaller profits. To make matters worse, many of these once family-owned companies were being bought up by larger, multi-national corporations. Universal was bought out by MCA (a talent agency) in 1958. Paramount by Gulf Western in 1966. And Warner Bros. by Seven Arts that same year. These new parent companies were often publicly traded with a board of directors beholden to shareholders. They expected results.

And that's when Warren Beatty, an ambitious young actor, walked into Jack Warner's office with a scandalous script about two mass murderers named Bonnie and Clyde in his hand. Inspired by the upstart, avant-garde filmmakers making waves in France with their edgy, experimental films like Agnes Varda's *La Pointe Courte* (1955), Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) and Francois Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) (we can't seem to get away from the French!), Beatty wanted to break the mold of the Warner Bros. gritty crime thriller. He wanted to make something bold, unpredictable, and transgressive. He begged the aging Warner brother to finance the film.

Maybe Jack Warner was at the end of his creative rope. Maybe he knew the movie business needed to start taking risks again. Maybe he was inspired by Beatty's artistic vision. Or maybe he had just sold the studio to Seven Arts and figured Beatty's crazy idea for a movie would be their problem, a parting shot before the last Warner left the building.

Whatever the reason, Warner Bros. bankrolled *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), tried to bury it on release, but ultimately had to admit they had a huge hit on their hands. It was as bold, unpredictable, and transgressive (for its time) as Beatty had hoped. And audiences, especially younger audiences, loved it.



Six months later, an off-beat comedy no studio would touch called *The Graduate* (1967) opened to equally enthusiastic audiences and extraordinary profits. And two years after that, BBS, a fledgling production company bankrolled by its success in television, produced *Easy Rider* (1969), a drug-fueled, fever dream of a movie that captured a changing America, a seismic shift in the culture at the end of the 1960s. It cost less the $500,000 to make and earned nearly $60 million at the box office. Something had indeed changed. The major studios weren't sure exactly what It was, but they knew they wanted a piece of it.

The next decade would become another creative renaissance for the film industry known as The New Hollywood.[2] Like the Golden Age which rose from the ashes of the Great Depression and the rise of synchronized sound, The New Hollywood rose from the ashes of The Paramount Decision and the rise of television. Unlike the Golden Age, however, The New Hollywood emphasized the authority of the director and star over the material, not the central producer. And rather than control costs to maximize profits, studios allowed the freelance artists they employed to experiment with the form and take creative risks. In fact, more and more filmmakers were smart enough to shoot on location rather than on the studio backlot where executives might micromanage their productions.

Those risks didn't always pay off, but when they did, they more than made up for the disappointments. Films like *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Exorcist* (1973) broke every accepted norm of cinematography, sound design, narrative structure, editing, performance and even distribution models. And in the process broke every box office record.

But such creative fertility *and* unpredictability couldn't last forever. Not when there are billions of dollars at stake. The New Hollywood was done in by a one-two punch of films that were so successful, so astronomically profitable, they would have to coin a new term for them: **Blockbusters**.

The first was meant to be a run-of-the-mill Universal monster movie, a direct descendent of the studio's Golden Age classics like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. This time around it would be a shark. A really big shark. And in a (futile) effort to save some money, they assigned a young, 28 year-old television director named Steven Spielberg to helm the project. *JAWS* (1975) cost $9 million to make (three times more than Universal budgeted) and took 159 days to shoot (three times longer the Universal had hoped), but it grossed more than $120 million in its first theatrical run. It hit Hollywood like a tidal wave. A simple genre movie with clear heroes and just enough eye-popping special effects to wow the audience. Best of all, there was no need for an expensive, star-studded cast or a well-known, temperamental director. The concept was the star. It was a formula the studios understood and knew they could replicate.

Two years later, 20th Century Fox released *Star Wars* (1977). Its success dwarfed that of *JAWS*.

Hollywood would never be the same.



BIG MEDIA AND GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT

The rise of the blockbuster breathed new life into the Hollywood studio system, and by the 1980s, they had successfully wrested control of the filmmaking process from the young upstart artists of The New Hollywood era. But with increasing profits came increasing interest from investors and larger multi-national corporations looking to diversify their portfolios. The acquisition of major studios in the late 50s and 60s by mega-companies such as Gulf Western continued into the 80s and 90s.

For example, between 1969 and 2004, entrepreneur Kirk Kerkorian bought and sold MGM three times (mostly so he could put its name on a casino in Las Vegas) until finally selling it to Sony, the Japanese electronics company. In 1990, Warner Bros. merged with Time, Inc. to form Time Warner which was in turn purchased by AOL, an internet service provider, in 2000, then spun off into its own company again in 2009 before being purchase by AT&T in 2019. Throughout the 1980s, 20th Century Fox changed hands among private investors multiple times until finally falling into the hands of Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. It was in turn acquired by Disney in 2019. But it's Universal that has the most colorful acquisition history. In 1990, MCA which owned Universal was acquired by Panasonic, another Japanese electronics company. In 1995, Panasonic sold it to Seagram, a Canadian beverage company, which in turn sold it to Vivendi, a French water utility in 2000 (the French again!). Vivendi sold the studio to General Electric, this time an *American* electronics

company that already owned NBC. Finally, in 2011, GE sold NBC Universal to Comcast, the cable provider (which incidentally joined forces with Sony to purchase MGM back in 2004).

If all of that makes your head spin, you're not alone. In short, back in 1983, 90% of all American media was controlled by more than 50 distinct companies. By 2012, that same percentage was controlled by just 5. By 2019, it was down to 4: Comcast, Disney, AT&T and National Amusements.

This massive consolidation of American media companies has equally massive implications for cinema. Beholden to shareholders and the corporate bottom-line, Hollywood studios must be more efficient than ever, producing fewer and fewer movies at higher and higher budgets to attract more and more eyeballs. And if that sounds familiar, you've been paying attention. A similar consolidation occurred after the advent of sound and the financial havoc of the stock market crash of 1929. Only this time, major studios don't have the luxury of monopoly control through vertical integration (though they are dancing close to the edge with Comcast and AT&T, both internet and cable providers, controlling nearly half of all media in the United States). Instead, they've looked abroad to a new and growing global audience to ensure profitability.

Before 2008, international sales made up less than 20% of box office dollars. By 2008 it was 50%. By 2013 it had grown to more than 70% of Hollywood's bottom line. That's due in part to a massive investment in theaters around the world. In 2019, there were more than 200,000 cinema screens globally. Just over 44,000 were in the United States and Canada. Nearly 100,000 were in Asia alone.[3] And the theaters themselves are not immune to consolidation. In 2013, Dalian Wanda, a Chinese company, bought the American theater chain AMC for $2.6 billion.

What does all of this mean for contemporary cinema? At the corporate Hollywood level, it means tailoring content for a global audience. That means building film franchises around globally recognizable characters and brands. If you're thinking Marvel and DC comics, you're on the right track. That means fewer original movies and more entertainment spectacles that in turn cost more money to make. The lessons Hollywood learned from the blockbusters *JAWS* and *Star Wars* in the 1970s seem to have been carried to their logical conclusion.

But corporate Hollywood isn't the only hope for cinema.

A NEW HOPE

While much of this (very) brief history of cinema has focused on the media machine that is the Hollywood studio system, cinema – that is, the art of motion pictures – lives and breathes outside of that capital-intensive entertainment ecosystem. And it always has.

Alice Guy-Blachè, Georges Melies, Lois Weber, D.W. Griffith, and most of the very first cinema artists operated independently of any corporate studio. And during that great Golden Age of cinema, which was so dominated by Hollywood studios, independent producers like David O. Selznick were putting out massively popular films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the perennially remade *A Star is Born* (1937). One of the most successful films of the era, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) was arguably an "indie" picture (Selznick produced it with MGM as distributor). In fact, the New Hollywood of the 60s and 70s could not have taken hold at the corporate level without visionary filmmakers like Mike Nichols, Dennis Hopper and Hal Ashby working outside of the studio system:

As the technology required to make motion pictures became easier and cheaper to acquire, more and more cinema artists chose to work outside of the studio system. Towering figures like Shirley Clarke in the 1960s, John Cassavetes in the 1970s and Jim Jarmusch in the 1980s put out provocative and engaging cinema with limited distribution to match their limited budgets but often with enormous cultural impact. That trend continued into the 1990s and 2000s, supported by new production and distribution companies like Miramax (founded by the now disgraced Harvey Weinstein) that insisted on working outside of the studio system and often outside of Los Angeles itself.

That independent spirit in American cinema also created space for women and people of color to have a voice in the art form. A quick scan of the history above and you'll notice there are not a lot of women's names. And almost all of the men are white. But filmmakers like Shirley Clarke, Julie Dash and Allison Anders didn't wait around for Hollywood to give them permission to make great cinema. Nor did the filmmakers of the early so-called Blaxploitation movement (though their success was eventually and sadly co-opted by white filmmakers).

And as the massive corporate consolidation of the American media landscape has created a narrowing of cinematic content from the big studios, that indie spirit – along with a healthy dose of investor interest – has lead to new innovations in production and distribution models. Whether it's pre-selling foreign rights to a script to fund its production, or turning to streaming services for funding in return for exclusive rights to content, filmmakers continue to find new ways to push the boundaries of what is possible in cinema. Just take a look at the nominees for best picture at any of the recent Academy Awards ceremonies. Once dominated by studio-financed pictures, almost all of them are now independent productions.

But perhaps the most exciting new direction in cinema is not found in theaters at all. For more than a century, cinema has been most closely associated with that roughly 90 minute, closed-ended feature film playing at a theater near you. And while that continues to be an important cinematic space, the rise of cable and streaming services in desperate need of content has created exciting new frontiers to explore for the medium. No longer restricted to those 90 or so minutes, cinema can sprawl over 100s of hours or even just a few cut into 30 minutes chunks. And while it's tempting to call this a new Golden Age of Television, even the term "television" no longer seems appropriate. We consume this content on all manner of devices, on our phones, laptops, even our wristwatches. Even theatrical content has picked up on the trend. What is the *Fast and Furious*, the *Transformers* or *The Avengers* franchises but multi-billion dollar episodic series distributed to theaters (and after a few months to our phones, laptops and wristwatches)?

Ultimately, regardless of how it's made or how we engage with it, all of the above still fits into one artistic medium: cinema, the art of the motion picture. The tools and techniques, the principals of form and content, are all exactly the same. And that will be true whatever comes next, whether it's VR, AR or a cinema-chip implanted in our visual cortex (heaven forbid…). Mise-en-scene, narrative, cinematography, editing, sound and acting will all still matter. And our understanding of how those tools and techniques not only shape the medium, but also shape our culture will also still matter. Maybe more than ever.

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Bonnie And Clyde (1967) Official Trailer #1 – Warren Beatty, Faye Dunaway Movie by Movieclips Classic Trailers. Standard YouTube License.

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1. For a much more detailed analysis of this period (and a thoroughly entertaining read for film buffs), check out Thomas Schatz's The Genius of the System. ↵
2. If you want to know more about this fertile, drug-fueled portion of Hollywood history, check out Peter Biskind's Easy Riders, Raging Bulls. ↵
3. You can see a comprehensive report on the global entertainment marketplace here: www.motionpictures.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MPA-THEME-2019.pdf↵

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2.6: Graphic Design

Graphic designers use all of the same Elements and Principles that other artists do when creating their work. They make preliminary drawings, arrange elements on a 2-Dimensional surface or support that would be called a composition in a painting but in graphic design is called a **layout,** and finally manipulate the elements of that layout with an eye to color, scale, balance, unity and variety, and many of the other things we've studied in other media.

But there is one significant difference between so-called "fine art" and graphic design. We have discussed art as a form of communication, although what it communicates and how it's received is often as dependent on the viewer as it is the artist's intention. In graphic design this isn't the case. Graphic design is created to carry a very specific message to an equally specific audience and if it doesn't it isn't successful (and neither will the designer be). Corporations, small businesses and individuals trying to reach a specific audience with something to sell hire designers to create an image that will communicate to that audience what the company wants their potential clients to think about them.

Graphic design had its beginnings in the 15th century with the invention of moveable type. This was the first time in history that written material didn't have to be copied by hand, an expensive and time-consuming process. Now multiple editions of a text could be made available quickly and at a price even a 15th century person could afford – at least some of them. Images still had to be printed on a different press using a relief process, usually, but text could be added even to that. This made the ability to disseminate information to a wider audience possible, but it took another significant development for advertising to become necessary. The Industrial Revolution in Europe and America made the proliferation of product a fact of life. More things to sell meant the need to reach a wide population of potential buyers and so modern advertising was born. Those advertisements needed to be created and the more eye-catching the better, so graphic design began to find its way into the modern world as well.

Semiotics or the Communication of Signs

All written communication does so by means of signs. We understand these signs only because we have agreed on the meaning and codified that meaning. Letters combined into words have meaning but only if they are in a sign system we have been taught. The earliest forms of writing were pictographic – drawings that suggested the meaning that was being conveyed. This graphic copy of cuneiform script from Ninevah in Mesopotamia began as mimetic drawings but evolved into simpler versions that were quicker to record as you see below.



This file comes from Wellcome Images, a website operated by Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation based in the United Kingdom. Refer to Wellcome blog post (archive). This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license

Many of the familiar signs from earlier periods are still understandable today, but others have taken on very different meanings. The Yin/Yang symbol is an ancient sign related to Chinese philosophy. The idea of the balance of opposites such as male/female, good/evil, light/dark is embodied in this image and we basically understand it as such today.



PD-US

From as early as the 3rd millennium BCE in India and Central Asia the swastika was a symbol of good fortune. Examples can be found on illustrations, sculpture, and other objects from that period until the 20th century. When it – or a version of it – was coopted by the Nazi regime as their symbol it became synonymous with the actions of that evil period and the earlier, benevolent meaning was lost.



https://www.flickr.com/photos/567963...00/9684267018/

Graphic Designers use the idea of signs to communicate meaning. Probably the most frequent item designers are asked to create for clients are logos. Logos are symbols that carry the corporate identity of a company so designers must make them easily identifiable, unique, and having in some way the character of the company they represent.

One of the most successful designers in America in the 1950s and 60s was Paul Rand. Rand created some of the most iconic logos in design history – versions of which are still used by the companies today. The easiest way for a corporation to retool their image is a redesign of their logo, but unless the idea is to completely ditch what the world associates with that company and logo, most companies want a version of the old logo so that it looks fresh and modern, but still reads as the symbol of the company people already know and trust. Here are two of Rand's logos that you may recognize since they have changed little since his initial design.



abc: PD-US, Fair Use; trademarks not for reuse



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Typography

One of the first choices a designer makes when creating a corporate identity is which typeface to use. Type style is a great conveyer of meaning – a face that works for an oil and gas company would probably be the wrong choice for a line of baby food or a French restaurant. There are thousands of typefaces now and more being designed every year. When type had to be physically "set" it meant that metal type had to be produced – multiple typefaces would have been quite expensive. Today a designer can create a digital face and make it available to the world at very little cost. Some typefaces are free, other specialty faces must be rented or purchased.

Moveable type was invented in Northern Europe in 1450. One of the first fine artists to turn his hand to this new technology was Albrecht Durer. Durer was a painter, printmaker, and proto-graphic designer. His design for letterforms showing the measurements needed to create an alphabet of matching shapes gives an idea of the things taken into consideration when planning a new font.



Note the tops of the "A". The first one has a kind of scoop from left to right; the second comes to a sharp point; the third has a completely flat top. Durer has thought about the varying thicknesses of the letterforms from thick to thin. This kind of shape gives an elegant or decorative quality to the font. There are two basic letterforms: serifed and sans-serif. The serif is the little "tail" that extends beyond the edge of the letter. If a font has a straight "leg" that has no pointed extension to the side it is a "sans" serif (Fr. "no" serif). Helvetica is a sans-serif face. In a general way, sans-serif faces tend to read as more modern while serifed faces feel more Classical or refined.

Fine Art and Graphic Design

In the early days of the century graphic design was known as "commercial art". This has fallen out of use for the most part because it's recognized that: a. all art that is for sale is a commodity, or commercial, and b. all art uses the same elements of "design" whether it is for a specific client or for the artist's own pleasure, and c. art made for any client is "commercial". Leonardo da Vinci's portrait of Lisa Gherardini (Mona Lisa) was commissioned by her husband and thus was commercial (even thought Leonardo never delivered the portrait to Gherardini – he was paid).

Having written all that, there is a cross-over between so-called "fine" art and art made for commercial purposes – and it goes both ways. Fine artists have created art for advertisements and artists have used the techniques and conventions of "commercial" art or advertising design to create art for museums and galleries.

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec was a 19th century artist from an aristocratic family. He had exhibited an interest in art at a young age and had been encouraged by his mother to study. Lautrec suffered from an undiagnosed condition that resulted in his legs ceasing to grow at a young age. Some have suggested that it was his physical appearance that led him to become an habitué of nightclubs and prostitutes. In any case, he did many paintings of men and women of the demi-monde and created posters to advertise some of the establishments he frequented – especially the Moulin Rouge.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Moulin Rouge: La Goulue, 1891, lithograph printed in four colors on three sheets of wove paper, 74 13/16 x 45 7/8”

In this poster from 1891, Lautrec uses a narrow palette of primary colors – red, black, and yellow with tints of those hues – to describe not only the audience at the Moulin Rouge but also the main acts. La Goulue was the stage-name of Louise Weber, a can-can dancer often called “The Queen of Montmartre”. Her stage-name, La Goulue or The Glutton, came from her habit of finishing off patrons’ drinks as she danced around their tables. The can-can was considered a scandalous dance in the straight-laced 19th century because it exposed women’s underwear when they lifted and shook their skirts. Lautrec shows her in the middle of one of these dance moves. The other character in the poster – the tall man in grey – is Valentin, a contortionist who also performed at the cabaret. By repeating the name of the cabaret three times in the upper left corner Lautrec emphasizes the location; by repeating in large letters the “Bal Masque” in the lower right he achieves balance in the composition. The repetition of yellow globe-shapes across the surface also creates an implied line and unifies the work. These posters were said to be so popular that they disappeared from the walls where they were posted.

Barbara Kruger was born in New Jersey in 1945. She worked as a graphic designer during her early career, but turned to the creation of conceptual art and collage.

She began using her graphic design training and eye to create large-scale work that had a political bent. A feminist, she created images that referred to theories about the Gaze and the position of women in the culture.

In *Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face* Kruger gives us typography that recalls the “ransom note” style of punk-rock record labels and a grainy image of a woman’s face that isn’t a woman at all but a sculpture with a blocky bottom. Her choice of words – Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face – suggests the violence that was often at the bottom of the subjugation of women in the culture.

The kind of cool remove that is generated by the graphic red/black/grey color palette and the ironic choice of language was a Postmodern melding of graphic design and fine art and became Kruger’s trademark, so to speak.



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2.7: Sculpture and Installation

Drawing and painting both fall into the category of two-dimensional art; sculpture is three-dimensional in that it has height, width, and depth. It has **mass**, one of the elements of art. We include in the sculptural section other types of art that may not obviously belong to either category – installation art is one of those. Artists sometimes create entire environments in a museum or gallery – or elsewhere – that the viewer is intended to experience corporally (with their bodies) and sometimes with all of the senses. Another group of artists create work out of nature itself. Land artists like Robert Smithson made both the material of the natural world like water, soil and rocks their medium, but also made ideas and concepts like entropy the subject of the work. We will look at examples of three-dimensional artwork in this section.

Methods

Carving

Carving uses the *subtractive* process to cut away areas from a larger mass, and is the oldest method used for three-dimensional work. Traditionally stone and wood were the most common materials because they were readily available and extremely durable. Contemporary materials include foam, plastics and glass. Using chisels and other sharp tools, artists carve away material until the ultimate form of the work is achieved.

The Moai massive stone sculptures carved by the Rapa Nui people on Easter Island in Polynesia between the years 1250 and 1500.[1] These figures were positioned to face inland and are thought to have represented the guardian ancestors/deities that watched over the island and its people. The process of carving such large figures and transporting and placing them was a feat for these early peoples not unlike the creation of Stonehenge in England or the Olmec heads of ancient Mexico.



Easter Island Statues, photo by Hhooper1, CC-SA Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Generic license

In another example, you can see the high degree of relief carved from an original wood block in this mask from the Pacific Northwest Coast Kwakwaka' wakw culture. The mask was used in winter ceremonies where animals were said to take human form.

It's extraordinary for masks to personify a natural event. This and other mythic figure masks are used in ritual and ceremony dances. The broad areas of paint give a heightened sense of character to this mask.



Adam Collins, ‘Supernatural Mask’

Michelangelo’s masterpiece, *David*, from 1501 is carved from a single block of marble, finished and polished to embody an idealized form which was a testament to human aesthetic brilliance.



Michelangelo, ‘David’, 1501, marble, 17’ high. Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence

Three Types of Carved Sculpture

We think of carved sculpture as falling into three basic types: **in-the-round**, **high relief**, and **low (bas) relief**. Michelangelo’s *David* above is an example of sculpture in-the-round. This is fairly easy to spot as one can actually walk all around the sculpture and it is finished on all sides. High relief sculpture is usually a decorative addition to another object, often architecture.



Nicola Pisano, The Nativity and Annunciation to the Shepherds, 1255-60, Pulpit in the Baptistery, marble joanbanjo

High relief sculpture is characterized by figures or elements that are significantly raised off the surface from which they are carved, but still remain attached. You can see very dark shadows around the figures in high relief – note the black shadows around the urn on the bottom of the sculpture above.

Low relief, too, is most often seen on architecture. In low, or bas as in the French term, relief, few very dark shadows are seen.



Lid of the Sarcophagus of Palenque – Temple of Inscriptions – Palenque, 692 CE PD The carving on the lid of Pakal's sarcophagus, or coffin, is carved in a uniformly shallow relief. The shadows are not pronounced

Casting

The **additive** method of casting has been in use for over five thousand years. It's a manufacturing process by which a liquid material is usually poured into a mold, which contains a hollow cavity of the desired shape, and then allowed to solidify. One traditional method of bronze casting frequently used today is the lost wax process. Modern casting materials are usually metals but can be various *cold setting* materials that cure after mixing two or more components together; examples are epoxy, concrete, plaster, and clay. Casting is most often used for making complex shapes that would be otherwise difficult or uneconomical to make by other methods. It's a labor-intensive process that today allows for the creation of multiples from an original object (similar to the medium of printmaking), each of which is extremely durable and exactly like its predecessor. In the ancient world the mold would of necessity be destroyed once the sculpture had been cast. Today molds are made from materials that can be reused, but a mold is usually destroyed after the desired number of castings has been made. Traditionally, bronze statues were placed atop pedestals to signify the importance of the figure depicted. A statue of William Seward (below), the U. S. Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln and who negotiated the purchase of the Alaska territories, is set nearly eight feet high so viewers must look up at him. Standing next to the globe, he holds a roll of plans in his left hand. We generally refer to these kinds of commemorative likenesses as "statues" while figures in other contexts are usually called "sculpture."



Richard Brooks, 'William Seward', bronze on stone pedestal, c. 1909. Photo from Chris Gildow

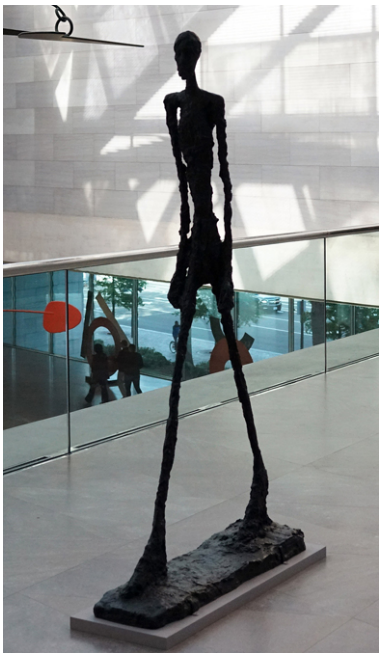
More contemporary bronze cast sculptures reflect their subjects through different cultural perspectives. The statue of rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix is set on the ground, his figure cast as if performing on stage. He's on both of his knees, head thrown back, eyes shut and mouth open in mid wail. His bell-bottom pants, frilly shirt unbuttoned halfway, necklace and headband give us a snapshot of 1960's rock culture but also engage us with the subject at our level.



David Herrera, ‘Jimi Hendrix’, Daryl Smith, 1996, bronze. Broadway and Pine, Seattle. Photo from Chris Gildow

Modeling

Modeling is a method that can be both additive and subtractive. The artist uses modeling to build up form with clay, plaster or other soft material that can be pushed, pulled, pinched, carved or poured into place. The material then hardens into the finished work. Larger sculptures created with this method make use of an **armature**, an underlying structure of wire that sets the physical shape of the work. Although modeling is primarily an additive process, artists often do remove material in the process. Modeling a form is often a preliminary step in the casting method. In 2010, Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti’s *Walking Man* (c. 1955), a bronze sculpture first modeled in clay, set a record for the highest price ever paid for a work of art at auction. Here you see another version of that sculpture belonging to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Giacometti was known for his elongated **abstract** figures. One of his inspirations was Etruscan art which we will look at in a later section.



Alberto Giacometti, Walking Man II (1/6), 1960, bronze, 188.5 × 27.9 × 110.7 cm (National Gallery of Art), photo by Steven Zucker, taken on October 22, 2016, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

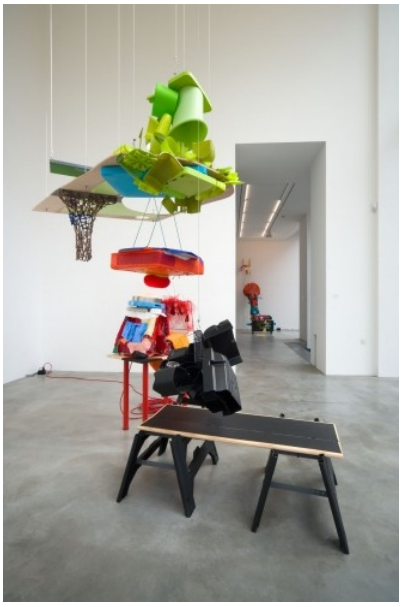
This Mayan Woman and Child were modeled from clay and then fired to create a ceramic figure. It may have been polychromed (painted with 2 or more colors).



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Construction/Assemblage

Construction, or **assemblage**, uses found, manufactured or altered objects to build form. Artists weld, glue, bolt and wire individual pieces together to create a new and unique form. Duchamp's Readymades are the historical predecessors for this type of work, as are Rauschenberg's Combines from the 1950's. Contemporary artists bring not only form but theory to their work in this technique. Our example here is Jessica Stockholder.



Jessica Stockholder, Untitled, 2006. Green plastic parts, black plastic parts, cushion, wooden element, red metal legs, fabric, cable, gray shelf, crocheted yarn, red skein of yarn, red electric cord, incandescent light fixture, tulle, various hardware and plastic parts, and acrylic paint. 9' 6" x 9' 7". Image used courtesy MITCHELL-INNES & NASH, New York, and with permission of the artist. Not to be reproduced for commercial purposes or altered in any way from the original

Stockholder is originally from Seattle; her pieces are created from objects that individually might be overlooked, or seen only as utilitarian. Stockholder is drawn to the potential in these objects through color and form. She also relates her structures to the physical human body and our own interaction with objects in space. We have discussed the emotional implications of color in the viewers' reaction to art. Stockholder has written that this is one of her concerns as well: "Color evokes feeling; I am not sure why, but I do know that it does. I work with color, form and composition exploring the links between emotive and thoughtful response. My works provide an opportunity to reify internal mind/feeling space. For a moment the abstract insubstantial nature of feeling/thoughts can be experienced as external and embodied by material." From the artist's website: https://jessicastockholder.info/about/

Both playful and ironic, Stockholder's pieces are accessible and visually stimulating; they are an excellent example of the art of assemblage.

Sculptor Debra Butterfield transforms throw away objects into abstract sculptures of horses with scrap metal, wood and other found objects. Sometimes she also casts these constructions in bronze, but the original form made of various materials is assembled.

Frequently she uses reclaimed materials to create the sculpture. Riot, a work from 1990 is made of pieces of found metal assembled into the final shape.



Riot (1990), steel sculpture by Deborah Butterfield. Photo taken at the Delaware Art Museum in February 2017. CC Attribution 2.0 Fair Use

Louise Nevelson is another American artist who used cut and shaped pieces of wood, gluing and nailing them together to form fantastic, complex compositions. Painted a single tone, (usually black or white), her sculptures are graphic, textural facades of shapes, patterns and shadow.

Traditional African masks often combine different materials. The elaborate Kanaga Mask from Mali uses wood, fibers, animal hide and pigment to construct an other worldly visage that changes from human to animal and back again. You can see the example from the Met in New York at this url: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/315061

Movement

Some modern and contemporary sculptures incorporate movement, light and sound. **Kinetic** sculptures use ambient air currents or motors allowing them to move, changing in form as the viewer stands in place. The artist Alexander Calder is famous for his mobiles, whimsical, abstract works that are intricately balanced to move at the slightest wisp of air, while the sculptures of Jean Tinguely are contraption-like and, similar to Nevelson's and Butterfield's works, constructed of scraps often found in garbage dumps. His motorized works exhibit a mechanical aesthetic as they whir, rock and generate noises. Tinguely's most famous work, '*Homage to New York*', ran in the sculpture garden at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1960 as part of a performance by the artist. After several minutes, the work exploded and caught fire, as it was supposed to do. The New York City fire department, however, was not amused.



Alexander Calder, Mobile, Photo by Manuelarosi, CC BY-SA 3.0

The idea of generating sound as part of three-dimensional works has been utilized for hundreds of years, traditionally in musical instruments that carry a spiritual reference. Contemporary artists use sound to heighten the effect of sculpture or to direct recorded narratives. The cast bronze fountain by George Tsutakawa (below) uses water flow to produce a soft rushing sound. In this instance the sculpture also attracts the viewer by the motion of the water: a clear, fluid addition to an otherwise hard abstract surface.



Tom Magliery, 'Fountain', George Tsutakawa, bronze, running water. City of Seattle

Doug Hollis's *A Sound Garden* from 1982 creates sounds from hollow metal tubes atop grid like structures rising above the ground. In weather vane fashion, the tubes swing into the wind and resonate to specific pitch. The sound extends the aesthetic value of the work to include the sense of hearing and, together with the metal construction, creates a mechanical and psychological basis for the work. There is a video of the work here:

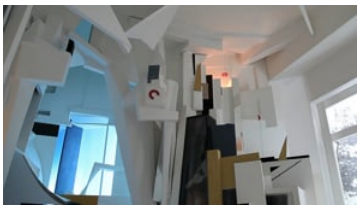
Modern Variations of Three-Dimensional Media

Dan Flavin is one of the first artists to explore the possibilities of light as a sculptural medium. Since the 1960s his work has incorporated fluorescent bulbs of different colors and in various arrangements. Moreover, he takes advantage of the wall space the light is projected onto, literally blurring the line between traditional sculpture and the more complex medium of **installation**.

Installation Art

Installation art utilizes multiple objects, often from various mediums, and takes up entire spaces. It uses a space and everything in it as the work of art, and is experienced by your entire body. It can be generic or site specific. Because of their relative complexity, installations can address aesthetic and narrative ideas on a larger scale than traditional sculpture. Its genesis can be traced to the Dada movement, ascendant after World War I and which predicated a new aesthetic by its unconventional nature and ridicule of established tastes and styles. Sculpture came off the pedestal and began to transform entire rooms into works or art. Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau*, begun in 1923, transforms his apartment into an abstract, claustrophobic space that is at once part sculpture and architecture. With installation art the viewer is surrounded by and can become part of the work itself.

Here is a video on Vimeo of the reconstruction of the *Merzbau* at the Berkeley Art Museum in 2011:



A Vimeo element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=233

British artist Rachel Whiteread's installation *Embankment* from 2005 fills an entire exhibition hall with **casts** made from various sized boxes. At first appearance a snowy mountain landscape navigated by the viewer is actually a gigantic nod to the idea of boxes as receptacles of memory towering above and stacked around them, squeezing them towards the center of the room. Whiteread uses epoxy and other polymers to cast her sculpture. This installation would qualify as both cast sculpture and installation art. Whiteread's work often deals with memory and loss.



Fin Fahey, 'Embankment', Rachel Whiteread, 2005

Ilya Kabakov mixes together a narrative of political propaganda, humor and mundane existence in his installation *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment* from 1984. What we see is the remains of a small apartment plastered with Soviet era posters, a small bed and the makeshift slingshot a man uses to escape the drudgery of his life within the system. A gaping hole in the roof and his shoes on the floor are evidence enough that he made it into space. See a slide presentation of this work at: https://www.wikiart.org/en/ilya-kabakov/the-man-who-flew-into-space-from-his-apartment-1984

Performance Art

Performance art goes a step further, involving the artist as part of the work itself. Some performance artworks are interactive, involving the viewer too. The nature of the medium is in its ability to use live performance in the same context as static works of art: to enhance our understanding of artistic experience. Similar to installation works, performance art had its first manifestations during the Dada art movement, when live performances included poetry, visual art and music, often going on at the same time.

The German artist Joseph Beuys was instrumental in introducing performance art as a legitimate medium in the post World War II artistic milieu. *I Like America and America Likes Me* from 1974 finds Beuys co-existing with a coyote for a week in the Rene

Block Gallery in New York City. The artist is protected from the animal by a felt blanket and a shepherd's staff. Performance art, like installation, challenges the viewer to reexamine the artistic experience from a new level.



Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes Me, 1974, performance. Photo from WikiArt, last edit Feb. 28, 2017 by xennex, Fair Use

In the 1960's Allen Kaprow's *Happenings* invited viewers to be the participants. These events, sometimes rehearsed and other times improvised begin to erase the line between the artist and the audience. Yoko Ono's '*Cut Piece*' from 1965 specifically invites members of the audience to interact with her on stage. You can watch the Maysle brothers' video of a portion of this event on Youtube:

This same idea – using the artist's body as subject, is evident in the performance art of Marina Abramovic. In *The Artist is Present* she sits quietly as individual visitors sit across the table from her, exchanging silent glances and stares.

Today we see a new form of performance art happen unexpectedly around us in the form of **Flash Mobs**: groups of people who gather in public spaces to collaborate in short, seemingly spontaneous events that entertain and surprise passersby. Many flash mobs are arranged in advance through the use of social media. Many examples of flash mob performance are uploaded to Youtube and other video sharing sites.

Decorative Arts

Craft

Craft requires the specific skilled use of tools in creating works or art. These tools can take many forms: words, construction tools, a camera, a paintbrush or even a voice. Traditional studio crafts include ceramics, metal and woodworking, weaving and the glass arts. Crafts are distinguished by a high degree of workmanship and finish. Traditional crafts have their roots in utilitarian purposes: furniture, utensils and other everyday accoutrements that are designed for specific uses, and reflect the adage that "form follows function". But human creativity goes beyond simple function to include the aesthetic realm, entered through the doors of embellishment, decoration and an intuitive sense of design. Artists use all of the elements and principles found in other artforms in the objects we see below.

In the first example below, the smooth simple lines of a '*Tulip Chair*' were designed by Eero Saarinen as an exercise in clarifying form. When it was made its futuristic use of curved lines and artificial materials were seen as emblematic of the "space age." In another example, a staircase crafted in the Shaker style takes on an elegant form that mirrors the organic spiral shape representing the 'golden ratio.'



Saarinen Tulpanstolen, photo by Holger Ellgaard. CC BY-SA 3.0



Shaker style staircase, Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. Photo by Jack E. Boucher, April 1963, National Parks Service. PD-USGov-Interior-HABS

Utility is not the sole purpose of craft. Persian carpets and European tapestries were also utilitarian objects, but the craftsmanship shown in the pattern and design gives them a separate aesthetic value. The decorative element is visually stimulating, as if the artisan uses the objectas simply a vehicle for his or her own creative imagination. Other textile arts like quilting have become recognized as aesthetic objects in their own right. It might be noted that many of the objects that have been dismissed as merely “craft” were traditionally made by women. It’s only with the feminist movement that those objects have been recognized as art.

Even a small tobacco bag from the Native American Sioux culture (below) becomes a work of art with its intricate beaded patterns and floral designs.



Sioux Quilled Pipe Bag ca.1870, decorated with rare cocoon imagery. Photo by Pierre Fabre. PD_US

The craftsmanship in glass making is one of the most demanding. Working with an extremely fragile medium presents unique challenges. Challenges aside, the delicate nature of glass gives it exceptional visual presence. A blown glass urn dated to first century Rome is an example. The fact that it has survived the ages intact is testament to its ultimate strength and beauty.



Cinerary Urn, Roman. C. 1st century CE, blown glass. National Archaeological Museum, Spain. Photo Luis Garcia Zaqarbal. CC SA-SH 3.0

Louis Comfort Tiffany introduced many styles of decorative glass between the late 19th and first part of the 20th centuries. His stained glass window '*The Holy City*' in Baltimore Maryland has intricate details in illustrations influenced by the Art Nouveau style popular at the turn of the 19th century.



Dragonfly shade, designed probably by Clara Driscoll for Tiffany Studios pre-1906, 22 in. (55.9 cm) diam.; library base, designed pre-1906. New-York Historical Society, Gift of Dr. Egon Neustadt, N84.110 http://behindthescenes.nyhistory.org...thomas-edison/

The artist Dale Chihuly has redefined the traditional craft of glass making over the last forty years, moving it towards the mainstream of fine art with single objects and large scale installations involving hundreds of individual pieces.



Taken by Adrian Pingstone in June 2005 and released to the public domain. A glass sculpture “The Sun” at the “Gardens of Glass” exhibition in Kew Gardens, London, England. The piece is 13 feet (4 metres) high and made from 1000 separate glass objects. The sculptor is Dale Chihuly. PD-US

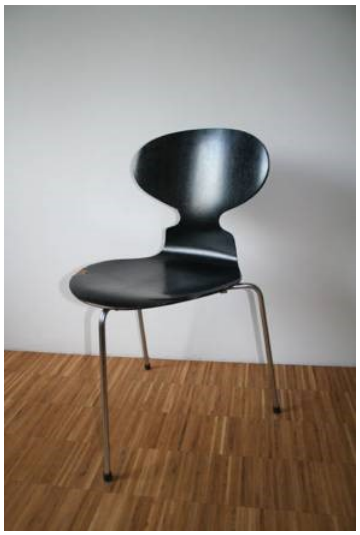
Product Design

The dictum “form follows function” represents an organic approach to three-dimensional design. The products and devices we use everyday continue to serve the same functions but change in styles. This constant realignment in basic form reflects modern aesthetic considerations and, on a larger scale, become artifacts of the popular culture of a given time period.

The two examples below illustrate this idea. Like Tiffany glass, the chair designed by Henry van de Velde in 1895 reflects the Art Nouveau style in its wood construction with organic, stylized lines and curvilinear form. In comparison, the ‘*Ant Chair*‘ from 1952 retains the basic functional form with more modern design using a triangular leg configuration of tubular steel and a single piece of laminated wood veneer, the cut out shape suggesting the form of a black ant.



Chair, Henry van de Velde, 1895, wood, woven fiber. Photo by Chris73, CC SA-SH



Arkines, ‘Ant Chair’, Arne Jacobsen,1952, steel and wood

The Most Sculpted Form

The human figure has been the most often reproduced in art. Even modern art with its abstracted forms used the human form most often as its material. There are a few conventions over time that you should be aware of in the depiction of human beings which have varied widely from period to period and from country to country.

Contrapposto

Earlier civilizations like the Egyptians developed a schematic representation of the human form. It never varied for thousands of years (with one exception we will examine in our study of the period) and this was because it was considered to be the most appropriate and necessary form. The figures were rigid and idealized – note the kneecap on Menkaure – but the single foot forward is thought to have been meant to represent life.



King Menkaure and Queen, Egypt, reign of Menkaure, 2490-2472 BCE

In 1866 an excavation on the Greek Acropolis unearthed a sculpture that would be profoundly influential in the history of art.[2] Kritios Boy, so-called, is most likely the image of a young hero created around 480 BCE. Found in pieces and reassembled, this sculpture exhibits the stance of an actual human being which has come to be called **contrapposto**, or counterbalance.



Kritios Boy, c. 480 BCE, marble, Acropolis Museum, Athens

A contrapposto stance is characterized by a standing figure with the weight on one leg, one hip elevated, and the other bent. More exaggerated contrapposto can involve straight and bent arms and a counterbalance of hips and shoulders. There is usually a pronounced “S” curve down the central axis of a figure in extreme contrapposto.



Polykleitos, Doryphoros (Spear Bearer), bronze original c. 440 BCE, Roman copy in marble



Michelangelo, Dying Slave, 1513-16, marble. CC-BY-SA

Michelangelo's sculpture, originally meant for the tomb of Pope Julius II, exhibits the kind of exaggerated contrapposto that suggests sleep, death or languor.

There are many objects that fit into the category of sculpture, and others – although not strictly sculpture – that are three-dimensional and valued as aesthetic objects. Sometimes it is useful to think about the objects that surround us and look for similar aesthetic qualities in them. We will see how the same impulses to create can be seen in most of the things humans make and even humble objects can be satisfying if the elements and principles are taken into consideration in their making.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moai. Accessed August 15, 2018.
2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kritios_Boy

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2.8: Architecture

Related to sculpture, architecture creates three-dimensional objects that occupy a given space and create a visual relationship with the space around them. The differences between the sculpture and architecture are in their scale and utility. Early human structures provided shelter from the elements. As hunter-gatherer societies transitioned to farming they made more permanent shelters, eventually formed communities, towns and cities. For thousands of years, architecture reflected the specific environment and materials available in any given region, including rock caves or huts of wood, soil and brick. Many were assemblages of materials like grasses, leaves and animal hides.



"Mammoth House", Frozen Woolly Mammoth Yuka Exhibit, Yokoyama, Japan, Summer 2013. This replica was made for the exhibit with real mammoth fossils and tusks. Author: Nandaro

Nomadic peoples in some parts of the world still utilize similar materials and techniques.



Turkman woman standing at the entry to a grass and hide covered yurt. Collection of the Library of Congress Prints and Images File

These are examples of **"skin and skeleton" construction**. In the case of the mammoth, literally. Any building that has an internal structure of one material and a cladding, or exterior, of another might be referred to as "skin and skeleton." Another structural system is the **"shell"** system in which the exterior cladding and the load-bearing structure are the same material. A log cabin would be an example of a "shell" structural system.

In simple design terms, architecture adheres to Louis Sullivan's dictum that "form follows function". Architecture's function reflects different human needs. For example, warehouses take the shape of large squares or rectangles because they need only to enclose a space that protects and stores products and materials in the most efficient manner. A home is designed with other functions in mind, including cooking, resting, cleaning and entertaining. So the interior design of a home includes specialized areas for these different functions. A church or school design would have their own set of spatial requirements because they provide for large groups of people at once.

Architecture solves problems concerning the use of space, interior design and the landscape that surrounds it. The limitations imposed on architecture by the laws of physics are solved to a large extent by engineering. The greatest limitations on design are the physical loads exerted by a structure's weight. **Compression** loads refer to vertical weight and **shear** loads travel at an angle or horizontally. Buildings need stable foundations and framing systems that support the spanning of open space.

Methods and Materials

The basic methods in building design and construction have been used for thousands of years. Stacking stones, laying brick or lashing wood together in one form or another are still used today in all parts of the world. But over the centuries, innovations in methods and materials have given new expression to architecture and the human footprint on the landscape. We can look to historical examples for clues that give context to different style periods.

In western culture, one of the earliest settlements with permanent structures was discovered at Catalhoyuk in Turkey (pictured below). The rich soil that surrounds the settlement indicates the inhabitants relied in part on farming. Dated to about 7500 BCE (Before Common Era), the dwellings are constructed from dried mud and brick and show wooden support beams spanning the ceilings. The design of the settlement incorporates a cell-like structure of small buildings either sharing common walls or separated by a few feet. The roofs are flat and were used as pathways between buildings.



Stipich Bela, 'Restoration of interior, Catalhoyuk, Turkey'

A significant advance came with the development of the **post and lintel system**. With this, a system of posts – either stone or wood – are placed at intervals and spanned by beams at the tops. The load is distributed down the posts to allow for areas of open space between them. Its earliest use is seen at Stonehenge (below), a prehistoric monument in southern England dating to about 3000 BCE.



Stonehenge, 30 July 2007 Source https://www.flickr.com/photos/gareth...n/photostream/ Author garethwiscombe CC-BY 2.0



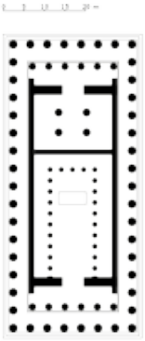
Post and lintel support in contemporary use; Image by Chris Gildow, Used with Permission

A **colonnade** continues the post and lintel method as a series of columns and beams enveloping larger areas of space. Colonnades can be free standing or part of a larger structure. Common in Egyptian, Greek and Roman architectural design, their use creates visual rhythm and implies a sense of grandeur. Over time columns became categorized by the capital style at their tops. The smooth and unadorned **Tuscan** and fluted **Doric** columns give way to more elaborate styles: the scrolled **Ionian** and the high relief **Corinthian**.

The Parthenon, a Greek temple to the mythic goddess Athena, was built in the 5thcentury BCE in Athens and is part of a larger community of structures in the Acropolis. All are considered pinnacles of classic Greek architecture. Ionic colonnades march across all sides of the Parthenon, the outer boundary of a very ordered interior floor plan.



Parthenon, Athens, Greece, Image by Onkel Tucal, CC-BY-SH 3.0



Floor plan of the Parthenon. Licensed through Creative Commons

The dots are columns in the colonnade.



The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Luxor, Egypt. C. 19th Dynasty. Covers 54,000 sq. ft. An example of post and lintel construction. The columns are close together to support the weight of the lintel and the roof. CC PD, Free for personal and commercial use, No attribution required

The colonnade is part of our contemporary surroundings too. Parks and other public spaces use them to the same effect: providing visual and material stability in spanning areas of open space.



Chris Gildow, 'Contemporary colonnade'. Used with Permission

The development of the **arch** gave architecture new alternatives to post and lintel construction. Arches appeared as early as the 2nd millennium BC in Mesopotamian brick architecture. They supply strength and stability to walls without massive posts and beams because their construction minimizes the shear load imposed on them. This meant walls could go higher without compromising their stability and at the same time create larger areas of open space between arches. In addition, the arch gave buildings a more organic, expressive visual element. The Colosseum in Rome (below), built in the first century CE, uses repeated arches to define an imposing but decidedly airy structure. The fact that it's still standing today is testament to the inherent strength of the arch.



The Colosseum, 1st Century CE. Rome. Photo by David Illiff, image licensed through Creative Commons

Roman aqueducts are another example of how effectively the arch was used. Tall and graceful, the arches support themselves in a colonnade and were used to transport a network of water channels throughout ancient Rome.



Roman Aqueduct, c. 1st century CE. PD

From the arch came two more important developments: extending an arch in a linear direction – basically putting one arch right after another – formed a **vault**, encapsulating tall, narrow spaces with inverted "U" shaped ceilings. The compressive force of the vault required thick walls on each side to keep it from collapsing. Because of this many vaults were situated underground – essentially tunnels – connecting areas of a larger building or providing covered transport of people, goods and materials throughout the city. Roman basilicas, public spaces used for law courts and other assemblies, were basically long arched, vaulted buildings.

An arch rotated on its vertical axis creates a **dome**, with its curving organic scoop of space reserved for the tops of the most important buildings. The Pantheon in Rome sports a dome with an oculus – a round or elliptical opening at the top, that is the massive building's only light source. The dome of the Pantheon was made with unreinforced concrete, a process that was lost to the West after the fall of Rome until modern times. It was the largest dome for centuries and remains the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world.



Dennis Jarvis, Dome of the Pantheon with oculus, 126 CE. Rome. PD

These elements combined to revolutionize architectural design throughout Europe and the Middle East in the form of bigger and stronger churches, mosques and even sectarian government buildings. Styles changed with technology.

Romanesque architecture was popular for nearly three hundred years (800 – 1100 CE). The style is characterized by **barrel or groin vault ceilings**, thick walls with low exterior buttresses and squared off towers. Buildings reached a point where they struggled to support their own weight. The architectural solution to the problem was a **flying buttress**, an exterior load-bearing column connected to the main structure by a segmented arch or 'flyer'. Even with exterior buttresses the Romanesque walls were thick and didn't allow for large openings.

St. Foy at Conques, France, is an example of Romanesque church architecture. Note the thickness of the walls and buttresses and the relative small size of the windows.



Abbey Church of St. Foy de Conques, France, 12th c. Image by Marc Figueras, CC BY-SH 3.0

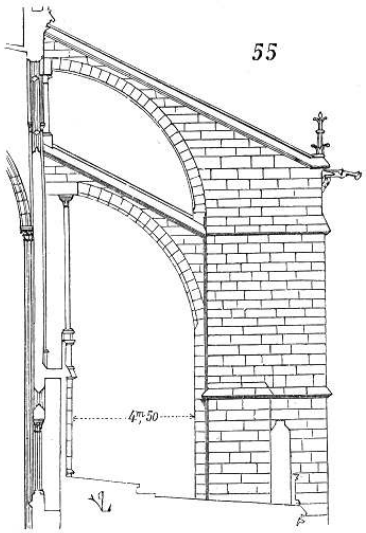


Diagram of a flying buttress from St. Denis basilica, Paris. From the Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century, 1856. Licensed through Creative Commons

Flying buttresses became a kind of exoskeleton that transferred the heavy weight of Romanesque stone roofs through their arches and into the ground, away from the building. They became catalysts for the later **Gothic** style based on higher, thinner walls, **pointed arches**, **ribbed vaults**, and spired towers. Also, the thinner walls of the Gothic style allowed for more stained glass windows and interior illumination.



Church of St. Denis, 7th -12th centuries CE. Saint-Denis, France; Image by Mossot; PD

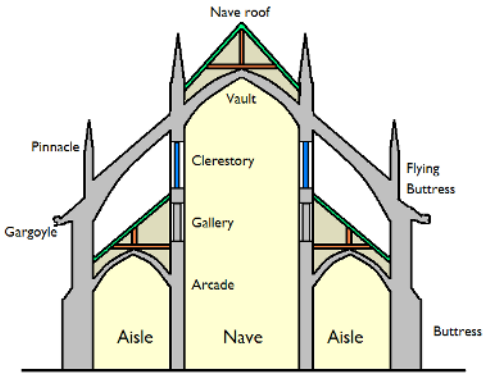
St. Denis basilica in France (above) is one of the first Gothic style churches, known for its high vaulted ceilings and extensive use of stained glass windows. The architecture of the church became a symbol of spirituality itself: soaring heights, magnificently embellished interiors and exteriors, elaborate lighting and sheer grandeur on a massive scale. Abbot Suger in the 12th century in Paris inspired master masons to build higher and to allow for bigger windows and more light to echo the grandeur of Heaven. This style was made possible by the pointed arches, pointed vaults, and flying buttresses that characterize Gothic architecture.[1]

By the 12th century the High Gothic style in France was developed and would inspire architecture in many other European countries – Italy remained an outlier for the most part into the Renaissance. In France, Chartres Cathedral about 50 miles southwest of Paris exhibits the Gothic style as it developed. Begun as a Romanesque church in 1145, the rebuilding of Chartres in the High Gothic style began in earnest in 1194 after a fire in that year. It continued through the 12th and 13th centuries and exhibits the hallmarks of High Gothic style: high nave with pointed arches, elaborate flying buttresses, thin walls with large, ornate stained glass windows.



Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, Image by MathKnight, Feb. 15, 2016; CC BY-SH 4.0

The parts of a Gothic basilican church are diagrammed below.



Gothic Cathedral, section with architectural labels, image by TTaylor, Sept. 1, 2007. CC BY-SH 3.0

The Doges Palace in Venice, Italy (pictured below) housed the political aristocracy of the Republic of Venice for a thousand years. Built in 1309 CE, its rhythmic levels of columns and pointed arches, divided by fractals as they rise, give way to elaborate geometric patterns in the pink brick façade. The ornamental additions at the top edge reinforce the patterns below.



Emustonen, 'The Doges Palace', 1309 CE, viewed from St. Mark's Square, Venice, Italy. Image by Martti Mustonen and licensed through Creative Commons

By the end of the High Gothic phase most of the innovations that drove architecture and building styles were in place. There wouldn't be a real change until the material discoveries of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. We will look at those transformations next.

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1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suger

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2.9: Modern Architecture

Building materials spawned by the Industrial Revolution, such as iron, steel, and sheet glass, determined new architectural techniques.

Key Points

- Among the common themes of modern architecture was the use of industrially produced materials.
- The Crystal Palace by Joseph Paxton, which housed the Great Exhibition of 1851, was an early example of iron and glass construction.
- Around 1900 a number of architects and designers around the world began developing new solutions to integrate traditional precedents (classicism or Gothic, for instance) with new technological possibilities.

Key Terms

- **Industrial Revolution**: The major technological, socioeconomic, and cultural change in the late 18th and early 19th century when the economy shifted from one based on manual labor to one dominated by machine manufacture.
- **William Le Baron Jenney**: (1832–1907) An American architect and engineer who is known for building the first skyscraper in 1884.
- **Louis Sullivan**: (1856-1924) An American architect who also pioneered urban steel-framed architecture and is also known, along with Jenney, as the Father of the Skyscraper and the Father of American Modernism. “Form follows function” is attributed to him although he credited the origin of the concept to an ancient Roman architect.
- **Crystal Palace**: A cast-iron and plate-glass building erected in Hyde Park, London, England, to house the Great Exhibition of 1851. More than 14,000 exhibitors from around the world gathered in the Palace’s 990,000 square feet (92,000 m2) of exhibition space to display examples of the latest technology developed in the Industrial Revolution. Designed by Joseph Paxton, the Great Exhibition building was 1,851 feet (564 m) long, with an interior height of 128 feet (39 m).

Modern Themes

Common themes of modern architecture include:

- The notion that ” form follows function,” a dictum originally expressed by Frank Lloyd Wright’s early mentor Louis Sullivan, meaning that the result of design should derive directly from its purpose
- Simplicity and clarity of forms and elimination of “unnecessary detail”
- Visual expression of structure (as opposed to the hiding of structural elements)
- The related concept of “truth to materials,” meaning that the true nature or natural appearance of a material ought to be seen rather than concealed or altered to represent something else
- Use of industrially produced materials
- Adoption of the machine aesthetic, particularly in International Style modernism
- A visual emphasis on horizontal and vertical lines

Application of Themes

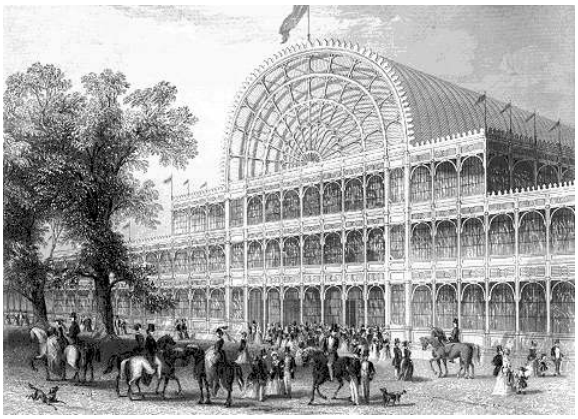
With the Industrial Revolution, the increasing availability of new building materials such as iron, steel, and sheet glass drove the invention of equally new building techniques. In 1796, Shrewsbury mill owner Charles Bage first used his “fireproof” design, which relied on cast iron and brick with flagstone floors. Such construction greatly strengthened the structure of mills, which enabled them to accommodate much bigger machines. Due to poor knowledge of iron’s properties as a construction material, a number of early mills collapsed. It was not until the early 1830s that English engineer Eaton Hodgkinson introduced the section beam, leading to widespread use of iron construction.

This kind of austere industrial architecture and the rolling steel mills that filled the sky with black clouds of smoke and coal dust utterly transformed the landscape of northern Britain, leading the poet William Blake to describe places like Manchester and parts of West Yorkshire as “Dark satanic mills.” The Crystal Palace, designed by Joseph Paxton for the Great Exhibition of 1851, was an early example of iron and glass construction. It was followed in 1864 by the first glass and metal curtain wall. A further development was that of the steel-framed skyscraper in Chicago, introduced around 1890 by William Le Baron Jenney and Louis Sullivan.

Modernist Schools

Around 1900, a number of architects and designers around the world began developing new solutions to integrate traditional precedents (i.e. classic Greek and Roman style, or Gothic) with new technological possibilities. The work of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, Victor Horta in Brussels, Antoni Gaudi in Barcelona, Otto Wagner and the Vienna Secession in Austria, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow, among many others, can be seen as a common struggle between old and new. The work of some of these were a part of what is broadly categorized as *Art Nouveau* ("new art").

Note that the Russian word for Art Nouveau, *StilModern*, and the Spanish word for Art Nouveau, *Modernismo*, are cognates of the English word "Modern," though they carry different meanings. The aftermath of the First World War would result in additional experimentation and ideas. Following the experiments in Art Nouveau and its related movements around the world, modernism in architecture and design grew out of stylistic threads originating throughout the world.



The transept façade of the Crystal Palace; PD-US. Original source www.uh.edu; originally from Tallis' History and Criticism of the Crystal Palace. 1852

The Crystal Palace, 1851, was one of the first buildings to have vast amounts of glass supported by structural metal, foreshadowing trends in Modernist architecture.

Modern Architecture: Form Follows Function

Modern architecture adhered to Louis Sullivan's famous precept, "form follows function," which called for an absence of ornamentation beyond functional necessity.

A Revolution in Scale and Form

The great 19th century architect of skyscrapers, Louis Sullivan, promoted an overriding precept to architectural design: "Form follows function." While the notion that structural and aesthetic considerations should be entirely subject to functionality was met with both approval and skepticism, it had the effect of introducing the concept of "function" in place of "utility." "Function" came to be seen as encompassing all criteria of the use, perception, and enjoyment of a building, not only practical but also aesthetic, psychological, and cultural.

Modern architecture is generally characterized by simplification of form and by the creation of ornament from the structure and theme of the building. It is a term applied to an overarching movement, with its exact definition and scope varying widely. In a broader sense, early modern architecture began at the turn of the 20th century with efforts to reconcile the principles underlying architectural design with rapid technological advancement and the modernization of society. It would take the form of numerous movements, schools of design, and architectural styles, some in tension to one another, and often equally defying classification.

The Industrial Revolution introduced and popularized the use of steel, plate glass, as well as mass-produced components in architecture. These new materials opened up a new world for bold structural frames, with clean lines and plain or shiny surfaces. In the early stages of modern architecture, a popular motto was "decoration is a crime." In Eastern Europe, the Communists rejected the West's decadent ways, and modernism developed in a markedly more bureaucratic, somber, and monumental fashion.

Some historians regard Modernism as a matter of taste, a reaction against eclecticism and the lavish stylistic excesses of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Around the turn of the 20th century, a general dissatisfaction with the emphasis on revivalist architecture and elaborate decoration of Arte Nouveau gave rise to many new lines of thought that served as precursors to Modern Architecture. Notable among these are the philosophies of the Deutscher Werkbund and the Bauhaus School.



The AEG Turbinenfabrik (“turbine factory”), 1909, designed by Peter Behrens, illustrating the combination of industry and design. Behrens’s turbine factory reflects the absence of decorative elements typical of modern architecture. Photo Doris Antony, CC BY-SA 3.0

The approach of the Modernist architects was to reduce buildings to pure forms, removing historical references and ornament in favor of functionalist details. Buildings displayed their functional and structural elements, exposing steel beams and concrete surfaces instead of hiding them behind decorative forms.

Chicago School of Architecture

The Chicago School of architecture is famous for promoting steel-frame construction and a modernist spatial aesthetic.

Key Points

- While the term ” Chicago School ” is widely used to describe buildings in the city during the 1880s and 1890s, Chicago buildings of the era displayed a wide variety of styles and techniques.
- One of the distinguishing features of the Chicago School is the use of steel- frame buildings with masonry cladding (usually terra cotta), allowing large plate-glass window areas and limiting the amount of exterior ornamentation.
- The “Chicago window” originated in this school. It is a three-part window consisting of a large fixed center panel flanked by two smaller double-hung sash windows.

Chicago’s architecture is famous throughout the world and one style is referred to as the Chicago School. It is also known as Commercial style. In the history of architecture, the Chicago School was a school of architects active in Chicago at the turn of the 20th century. They were among the first to promote the new technologies of steel-frame construction in commercial buildings, and developed a spatial aesthetic that co-evolved with, and then came to influence, parallel developments in European Modernism.

While the term Chicago School is widely used to describe buildings in the city during the 1880s and 1890s, this term has been disputed by scholars, in particular in reaction to Carl Condit’s 1952 book *The Chicago School of Architecture*. Historians such as H. Allen Brooks, Winston Weisman, and Daniel Bluestone have pointed out that the phrase suggests a unified set of aesthetic or conceptual precepts, when, in fact, Chicago buildings of the era displayed a wide variety of styles and techniques. Contemporary publications used the phrase Commercial style to describe the innovative tall buildings of the era rather than proposing any sort of unified school.

One of the distinguishing features of the Chicago School is the use of steel-frame buildings with masonry cladding (usually terra cotta), allowing large plate-glass window areas and limiting the amount of exterior ornamentation. Sometimes elements of neoclassical architecture are used in Chicago School skyscrapers. Many Chicago School skyscrapers contain the three parts of a classical column. The first floor functions as the base, the middle stories, usually with little ornamental detail, act as the shaft of the column, and the last floor or so represent the capital, with more ornamental detail and capped with a cornice.



The Chicago Building, photo J. Crocker, taken March 3, 2-10, CC BY

The Chicago Building by Holabird & Roche (1904–1905) : This steel frame building displays both variations of the Chicago window; its facade is dominated by the window area (limiting decorative embellishments) and it is capped with a cornice, elements that are all typical of the Chicago School.

The “Chicago window” originated in this school. It is a three-part window consisting of a large fixed center panel flanked by two smaller double-hung sash windows. The arrangement of windows on the facade typically creates a grid pattern, with some projecting out from the facade forming bay windows. The Chicago window combined the functions of light-gathering and natural ventilation; a single central pane was usually fixed, while the two surrounding panes were operable. These windows were often deployed in bays, known as oriel windows, that projected out over the street.



Chicago School window grid: The Chicago window combined the functions of light-gathering and natural ventilation; a single central pane was usually fixed, while the two surrounding panes were operable. Photo by J. Crocker, taken March 30, 2006. CC BY

Architects whose names are associated with the Chicago School include Henry Hobson Richardson, Dankmar Adler, Daniel Burnham, William Holabird, William LeBaron Jenney, Martin Roche, John Root, Solon S. Beman, and Louis Sullivan. Frank Lloyd Wright started in the firm of Adler and Sullivan but created his own Prairie Style of architecture.



The Home Insurance Building in Chicago, Illinois: Some regarded the Home Insurance Building, designed by architect William Le Baron Jenney, as the first skyscraper in the world. It was built in Chicago in 1884 and was demolished in 1931. PD-US Chicago Architectural Photographing Company – This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's National Digital Library Program

European Expressionist Architecture

Key Points

- The term Expressionist architecture initially described the activity of the German, Dutch, Austrian, Czech, and Danish avant-garde from 1910 until 1930.
- The style was characterized by an early modernist adoption of novel materials, formal innovation, and very unusual massing—sometimes inspired by natural biomorphic forms and sometimes by the new technical possibilities offered by the mass production of brick, steel, and glass.
- Expressionist architecture was individualistic and in many ways eschewed aesthetic dogma, but some aims common to its proponents include: the distortion of form, a striving for the new, the notion of architecture as a work of art, and the aim to express an inner experience.

Modern European Architecture

Expressionist architecture was an architectural movement that developed in Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century in parallel with the expressionist visual and performing arts. The term Expressionist architecture initially described the activity of the German, Dutch, Austrian, Czech, and Danish avant-garde from 1910 until 1930.

Subsequent redefinitions extended the term backwards to 1905 and also widened it to encompass the rest of Europe. Today the meaning has broadened even further to refer to architecture of any date or location that exhibits some of the qualities of the original movement such as: distortion, fragmentation, or the communication of violent or overstressed emotion.

Expressionism

The style was characterized by an early modernist adoption of novel materials, formal innovation, and very unusual massing—sometimes inspired by natural biomorphic forms and sometimes by the new technical possibilities offered by the mass production of brick, steel, and glass.

Many expressionist architects fought in World War I and their experiences, combined with the political turmoil and social upheaval that followed the German Revolution of 1919, resulted in a Utopian outlook and a romantic socialist agenda. Hence, ephemeral exhibition buildings were numerous and highly significant during this period.

Likewise, scenography for theater and films provided another outlet for the expressionist imagination, and provided supplemental incomes for designers attempting to challenge conventions in a harsh economic climate.

Features of Expressionist Architecture

Expressionist architecture was individualistic and in many ways eschewed aesthetic dogma. While the movement was very broad, some points can be found as recurring in works of Expressionist architecture, and are evident in some degree in each of its works.

- A distortion of form for an emotional effect.
- The subordination of realism to symbolic or stylistic expression of inner experience.
- An underlying effort at achieving the new, original, and visionary.
- A profusion of works on paper, and models, with discovery and representations of concepts being more important than pragmatic finished products.
- Often hybrid solutions, irreducible to a single concept.
- Themes of natural romantic phenomena, such as caves, mountains, lightning, crystal and rock formations.
- Utilizes the creative potential of artisan craftsmanship.
- A tendency towards the gothic than the classical.
- Draws as much from Moorish, Islamic, Egyptian, and Indian art and architecture as from Roman or Greek.
- Conceives architecture as a work of art.

Form also played a defining role in setting apart expressionist architecture from its immediate predecessor, art nouveau, or Jugendstil – the German version of arte nouveau. While art nouveau had an organic freedom with ornament, expressionist architecture strove to free the form of the whole building instead of just its parts.

An example of a built expressionist project that is formally inventive is Erich Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower. This sculpted building shows a relativistic and shifting view of geometry: devoid of applied ornament, form and space are shaped in fluid concrete to express concepts of the architect and the building's namesake.



The Einstein Tower: In Mendelsohn's design, form and space are shaped in fluid concrete and devoid of applied ornament. Photo by Doris Antony, taken Sept. 16, 2003, CC BY-SA 2.5

Expressionist architecture utilized curved geometries and a recurring form in the movement is the dome. Another expressionist motif was the emphasis on either horizontality or verticality for dramatic effect, which was influenced by new technologies like cruise liners and skyscrapers.

While the drawing of the design for a skyscraper by Mies van der Rohe is very much in keeping with German Expressionism, the actual skyscraper would also have been an expression of the new. The idea of a multistory building with glass cladding over a steel skeleton was new and daring in 1921. Even the steel-framed buildings of Louis Sullivan adhered to the convention of a solid masonry cladding which gave the public the feeling of solidity and reliability they were used to from 19th century materials.

Mies was interested in showing the load-bearing function of steel that allowed the exterior walls to be free of the support (non-load-bearing) and, in this case, translucent. His later work, like the Seagram Building in New York, would continue this idea of the glass curtain wall and would have an extraordinary influence on the cityscape of the 20th century.



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project: drawing Charcoal and graphite on paper mounted on board, Berlin-Mitte, Germany, 1921. PD-US

American Art Deco Architecture

Art Deco and Streamline Moderne were two key styles of early 20th-century American architecture.

Key Points

- Art Deco emerged from the Interwar period and combines traditional craft motifs with Machine-Age imagery and materials.
- Art Deco can be recognized by its heavy ornament, bold geometric forms, and rich colors.
- Streamline Moderne was an aesthetic first created by industrial designers who stripped Art Deco design of its ornament in favor of the aerodynamic pure- line concept of motion and speed developed from scientific thinking: it is embodied in cylindrical forms and long, horizontal windowing.
- The Streamline Moderne was both a reaction to Art Deco and a reflection of austere economic times. Gone was unnecessary ornament: sharp angles were replaced with simple, aerodynamic curves.

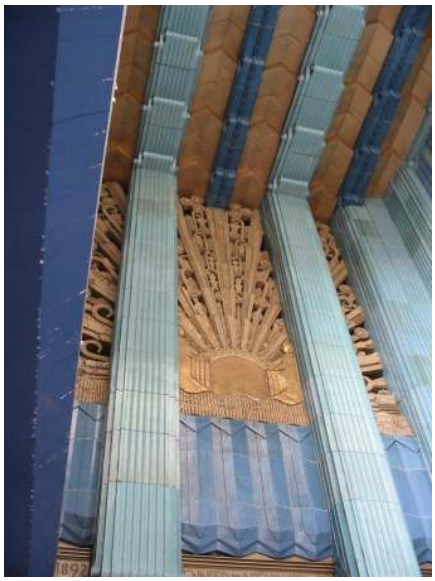
Modern American architecture is usually divided into the two styles of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne. Art Deco, which emerged in the 1920s and flourished in the 1930s to 1940s, is an eclectic style that combines traditional craft motifs with Machine Age imagery and materials.

Streamline Moderne, also known as Art Moderne, was a late type of the Art Deco design style that emerged during the 1930s. Its architectural style emphasized curving forms, long, horizontal lines, and sometimes nautical elements.

Art Deco

The Art Deco style is often characterized by its use of rich colors, symmetry, bold geometric shapes, simple composition, rectilinear rather than curvilinear shapes, and lavish ornamentation. Emerging during the Interwar period when rapid industrialization was transforming culture, one of the major attributes of Art Deco was its embrace of technology.

During its heyday, Art Deco represented luxury, glamor, exuberance, and faith in social and technological progress. The urban United States has many examples of Art Deco architecture, especially in New York, Chicago, and Detroit. The famous skyscrapers in these cities are the best known, but notable Art Deco buildings can be found in other neighborhoods.



Eastern Columbia Building entrance, Los Angeles, 1930: The sunburst design executed in terra cotta exemplifies Art Deco's characteristic combination of craft, ornament, and geometrical motif. Photographed by Binksternet in August 2002, PD-US



Spire of the Chrysler Building, New York: The opulent Art Deco spire of the Chrysler Building in New York City, designed by William Van Alen, was built 1928–1930 and reflects the earlier lavish ornamentation, yet simple and streamlined composition of the style. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith, US Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID highsm.04444

Streamline Moderne

As the Great Depression decade of the 1930s progressed, Americans saw a new decorative element of the Art Deco style emerge in the marketplace: streamlining. Streamline Moderne was a concept first created by industrial designers, who stripped Art Deco design of its ornament in favor of the aerodynamic pure-line concept of motion and speed developed from scientific thinking.

This aesthetic was embodied through the use of cylindrical forms and long, horizontal windowing. An array of designers quickly ultra-modernized and streamlined the designs of everyday objects, such as toasters.

Streamline Moderne was both a reaction to Art Deco and a reflection of austere economic times. Gone was unnecessary ornament. Sharp angles were replaced with simple, aerodynamic curves. Exotic woods and stone were replaced with cement and glass.

Some common characteristics of Streamline Moderne include horizontal orientation, rounded edges, corner windows, glass blocks, porthole windows, chrome hardware, smooth exterior wall surfaces (usually stucco), horizontal wall grooves, and subdued colors.



Hecht Company Warehouse: The Hecht Company Warehouse (Washington, D.C.) is a Streamline Moderne style building. The building uses glass block extensively, culminating in a twelve-pointed star-shaped cupola at the corner, which is illuminated at night. Black brick interspersed with glass block spells out The Hecht Co. at the fifth floor. Photo by Superbass taken July 12, 2012. CC BY-SA 3.0



Hollywood Palladium: The Hollywood Palladium (in Hollywood, CA) was a dance hall built in the 1940s in the Streamline Moderne style. This picture depicts the Palladium in 2005, prior to its 2008 renovation. Released under CC BY-SH 2.0 on June 25th, 2005, orig. uploader R. 123 at English Wikipedia

However, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne were not necessarily opposites. Streamline Moderne buildings with a few Deco elements were not uncommon, and sometimes there is so much crossover that it can be difficult to differentiate between the two styles. Other examples of both Art Deco and Streamline Moderne can be found in New York, California, and especially Miami.

Europe in the 1920s was recovering from WWI. Many artists reacted to that cataclysm, some by searching for new forms that they hoped would help turn society away from the mistakes of the past and create a new utopian future. In architecture, Le Corbusier developed a style that would be highly influential.

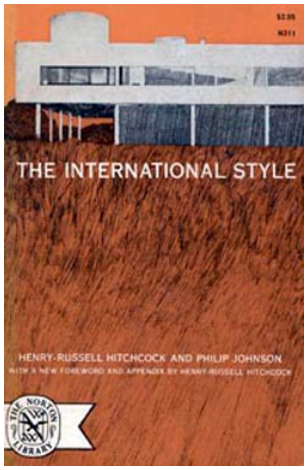
International Style

The International Style would become the face of modern architecture for decades after Le Corbusier's theories of the 1920s and 30s. The Getty Research Institute defines the primary attributes of International Style buildings as having an "emphasis on volume over mass, the use of lightweight, mass-produced, industrial materials, rejection of all ornament and color, repetitive modular forms, and the use of flat surfaces, typically alternating with areas of glass."[1]

[1]



Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye, Poissy, France, 1928-31. Photo by Valueyou, uploaded Oct. 7, 2008; CC BY- SA 3.0



Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, Front cover of the 1932 book The International Style, 1932. Source: WP:NFCC#4 Fair Use

Corbusier published a number of texts on architecture in which his largely utopian ideas were established. In *L'EspritNouveau* (New Spirit, 1918-22) and *Versunearchitecture* (Toward an Architecture, 1920-23) he outlined his five points which made up his philosophy that "Une maison est une machine-à-habiter" ("A house is a machine for living in").

These points were:

- Free façade
- Open floor plan
- Roof garden
- Pilotis which lift the living space off the ground
- Strip or ribbon windows

The Villa Savoye was begun in 1928 in a wooded landscape a short train ride from Paris. It was the summer retreat of a wealthy Parisian family and it gave Corbusier the freedom to express each of the five points exactly. The concrete pillars (pilotis) lift the

house off of the unhealthy ground and open that footprint for access by cars and other practical uses. It also allowed the healthy breezes to circulate through the ribbon windows which are also located so that the view of the surrounding trees makes the house seem to be a kind of treehouse. The façade is not linked to obvious supports (free) and the interior walls are also able to be placed wherever they were needed without reliance on obvious structure. The roof of the Villa is a kind of garden or recreational space. The Villa Savoye was the cover illustration for the Museum of Modern Art's architectural exhibition on what curators Hitchcock and Johnson would name the "International Style".

American Modernism and Frank Lloyd Wright



Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater (Kaufmann House), Mill Run, Pennsylvania, 1937. Photo by Somach, May 30, 2010, CC BY_SH 3.0

Frank Lloyd Wright is possibly the most significant architect of the first half of Amerca's twentieth century. He was a prolific designer and had some 532 of his more than 1000 designs actually built. A student of Louis Sullivan, Wright would develop his own theories about what architecture should be – mainly that it should harmonize with human beings and with the landscape in which it was set. He called this *organic architecture*. While his forms were geometric like Corbusier's, his materials were often taken from the area in which the building was itself sited and always with the idea of nature in mind. He also established a school at his estate called Taliesin in Wisconsin, and later at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. Wright had a number of influences in his work including something of Sullivan, Japanese architecture, the English Arts and Crafts movement. However, nature was his greatest inspiration and his Prairie Houses, long low structures with cantilevered overhangs were meant to relate to the Midwestern landscape that inspired them.

One of his most famous houses, Fallingwater, at Mill Run in Pennsylvania was, like Corbusier's Villa Savoye, a summer retreat for a wealthy merchant, Philadelphia department store mogul Edgar Kaufmann, Sr. and his family. The unexpected thing about Fallingwater was Wright's genius in its siting. The conventional choice would have been to put the house on the other side of the water looking back toward the waterfall. Wright chose to locate it *over* the fall itself with open access to the water from the house and views of the water and nature beyond. Local materials were used in the construction along with Wright's reinforced concrete cantilevered patios making nature an integral part of the design.

Postmodernism

During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s architects began to turn away from the stark lines of the International Style with a return to ornamentation. This was part of the cultural zeitgeist of the time which seemed to be a kind of general exhaustion with the forms of modernism. Francis Fukuyama's essay *The End of History*, published in 1989, suggested that political systems had reached their final evolution with liberal democracies – Western culture had reached the end of history. This was echoed in Postmodern architecture by the incorporating, or appropriating, styles or ornament from the past and incorporating those forms onto new buildings. The idea of appropriation also made its way into painting and sculpture with artists literally using images already created by other artists and recreating them wholly or in part. Sherrie Levine rephotographed some of the iconic work of Edward Weston: https://smarthistory.org/sherrie-levine-untitled-after-edward-weston/

The Centre Georges Pompidou is in the Beaubourg area of the 4th arrondissement of Paris, near Les Halles, rue Montorgueil and the Marais and houses much of Paris' contemporary art.

Pompidou Center, Paris, 1971-11. Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and Gianfranco Franchini architects. Accessed on Vimeo, posted by EcoworldReactor. Visit site and video at https://vimeo.com/197148859

It was designed by the architectural team of Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, along with Gianfranco Franchini. While more high tech than Postmodern, the Beaubourg, as it is called, does seem to be a building turned inside out with the structures that are usually hidden made the primary exterior architectural features. In that way it participates in the Postmodern idea of "deconstruction" made popular during the 1980s by French philosopher and semiotician Jacques Derrida. Derrida analyzed texts by close readings meant to question the relationship between structure and language and ultimately the impossibility of meaning in language as he saw it. It has become an important theoretical underpinning of many disciplines including architecture, art, and critical theory.

In America the architects Philip Johnson and Frank Gehry along with Michael Graves and others also turned to ideas of Postmodernism in building. Gehry's work at the time is arguably more playful – another aspect of Postmodern architecture – but Johnson's skyscraper on Madison Avenue in New York was both reviled and celebrated for its appropriation of the cornice of an 18th century Chippendale cabinet on the top of the building.



550 Madison Avenue (formerly the AT&T Building), New York, 1982, Philip Johnson architect. Photo by David Shankbone, taken Feb. 19, 2007. CC BY-SH 3.0



Chippendale desk, CC PD-US

Green Architecture

Contemporary architects have become as concerned with sustainability and environmental issues as they are with form and ornamentation. Buildings are being designed integrating literal green spaces – some can even vertically farm their own food. Issues of material that is recycled or naturally integrated with the environment can be the starting place for architecture in the 21st century,

both domestic and commercial. Other buildings like tiny houses are created to leave as small a footprint on the land as possible, as well as being more affordable for an expanding population with shrinking resources for housing.



Tobalaba Subway Station, Santiago, Chile, 1980. Photo by Eduardo Zárate, taken on Nov. 21, 2009. CC BY-ND 2.0

1. [1] "International Style (modern European architecture style)". *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*. Getty Research Institute. http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=international+style&logic=AND&note=&page=1&s ubjectid=300021472 ↵

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: THE HISTORY OF ART—PREHISTORY TO ANCIENT

3.1: Prehistory
3.2: Mesopotamia
3.3: Ancient Egypt
3.4: Ancient Aegean
3.5: Ancient Greece
3.6: Ancient Rome

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3.1: Prehistory

The Paleolithic Period

Paleolithic Architecture

The oldest examples of Paleolithic dwellings are shelters in caves, followed by houses of wood, straw, and rock.

Key Points

- Early humans chose locations that could be defended against predators and rivals and that were shielded from inclement weather.
- Weather, water, and time have destroyed the majority of campsites; our understanding of Paleolithic dwellings is therefore limited.
- Caves are the most famous example of Paleolithic shelters.

Key Terms

- **Mammoth**: A large, hairy, extinct elephant-like mammal of the taxonomic genus Mammuthus.
- **Hut**: A small wooden shed, a primitive temporary dwelling.
- **Paleolithic**: Paleo (Old) Lith (Stone); Early stage of the Stone Age, when primitive stone tools were used.

The Paleolithic Age, or Old Stone Age, spanned from around 30,000 BCE until 10,000 BCE and produced the first accomplishments in human creativity. Due to a lack of written records from this time period (Pre-history), nearly all of our knowledge of Paleolithic human culture and way of life comes from archaeologic and ethnographic comparisons to modern hunter-gatherer cultures. The Paleolithic lasted until the retreat of the ice, when farming and use of metals were adopted.

Paleolithic Societies

A typical Paleolithic society followed a hunter-gatherer economy. Humans hunted wild animals for meat and gathered food, firewood, and materials for their tools, clothes, or shelters. The adoption of both technologies—clothing and shelter—cannot be dated exactly, but they were key to humanity's progress. As the Paleolithic era progressed, dwellings became more sophisticated, more elaborate, and more house-like. At the end of the Paleolithic era, humans began to produce works of art such as cave paintings, rock art, and jewelry, and began to engage in religious behavior such as burial and rituals.

Dwellings and Shelters

Early men chose locations that could be defended against predators and rivals and that were shielded from inclement weather. Many such locations could be found near rivers, lakes, and streams, perhaps with low hilltops nearby that could serve as refuges. Since water can erode and change landscapes quite drastically, many of these campsites have been destroyed. Our understanding of Paleolithic dwellings is therefore limited.

As early as 380,000 BCE, humans were constructing temporary wood huts . Other types of houses existed; these were more frequently campsites in caves or in the open air with little in the way of formal structure. The oldest examples are shelters within caves, followed by houses of wood, straw, and rock. A few examples exist of houses built out of bones.



Temporary wood hut: An artist's rendering of a temporary wood house, based on evidence found at Terra Amata (in Nice, France) and dated to the Lower Paleolithic era

Caves

Caves are the most famous example of Paleolithic shelters, though the number of caves used by Paleolithic people is drastically small relative to the number of hominids thought to have lived on Earth at the time. Most hominids probably never entered a cave, much less lived in one. Nonetheless, the remains of hominid settlements show interesting patterns. In one cave, a tribe of Neanderthals kept a hearth fire burning for a thousand years, leaving behind an accumulation of coals and ash. In another cave, post holes in the dirt floor reveal that the residents built some sort of shelter or enclosure with a roof to protect themselves from water dripping on them from the cave ceiling. They often used the rear portions of the cave as middens, depositing their garbage there.

In the Upper Paleolithic (the latest part of the Paleolithic), caves ceased to act as houses. Instead, they likely became places for early people to gather for ritual and religious purposes.

Tents and Huts

Modern archaeologists know of few types of shelter used by ancient peoples other than caves. Some examples do exist, but they are quite rare. In Siberia, a group of Russian scientists uncovered a house or tent with a frame constructed of mammoth bones. The great tusks supported the roof, while the skulls and thighbones formed the walls of the tent. Several families could live inside, where three small hearths, little more than rings of stones, kept people warm during the winter. Around 50,000 years ago, a group of Paleolithic humans camped on a lakeshore in southern France. At Terra Amata, these hunter-gatherers built a long and narrow house. The foundation was a ring of stones, with a flat threshold stone for a door at either end. Vertical posts down the middle of the house supported roofs and walls of sticks and twigs, probably covered over with a layer of straw. A hearth outside served as the kitchen, while a smaller hearth inside kept people warm. Their residents could easily abandon both dwellings. This is why they are not considered true houses, which was a development of the Neolithic period rather than the Paleolithic period.

Paleolithic Artifacts

The Paleolithic era has a number of artifacts that range from stone, bone, and wood tools to stone sculptures.

Key Points

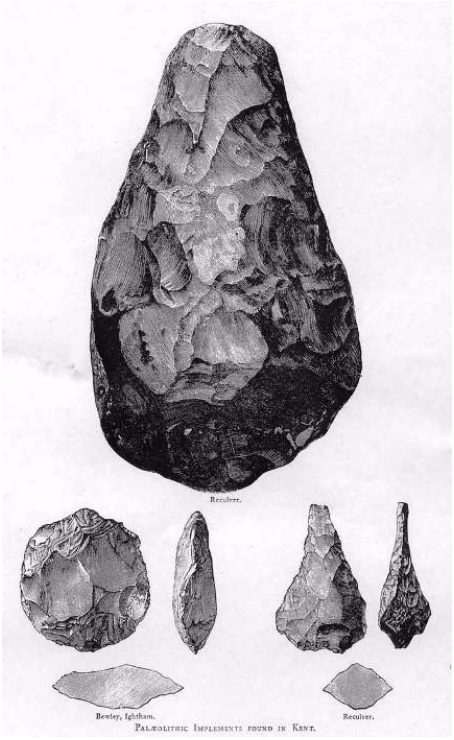
- Artifacts dating from the Lower and Middle Paleolithic remain disputed as objects of artistic expression.
- There is some evidence that a preference for aesthetic emerged in the Middle Paleolithic due to the symmetry inherent to discovered artifacts.
- The (So-called) Venus of Tan-Tan is an alleged artifact found in Morocco that is believed by some archaeologists to be the earliest representation of the human form.
- The Paleolithic is characterized by the use of stone tools, although at the time humans also used wood and bone tools.

Key Terms

- **ochre**: An earth pigment containing silica, aluminum, and ferric oxide.
- **incised**: To cut into the surface of an object for decorative purposes.

- **flint**: A hard, fine-grained quartz that fractures conchoidally and generates sparks when struck.
- **paleoliths**: A stone relic of the Paleolithic era.
- **artifacts**: Objects that are created by a human being with cultural and historical significance.

The Paleolithic or Old Stone Age originated around 30,000 BCE, lasting until 10,000 BCE, and is separated into three periods: the Lower Paleolithic (the earliest subdivision), Middle Paleolithic, and Upper Paleolithic. The Paleolithic era is characterized by the use of stone tools, although at the time humans also used wood and bone tools. Other organic commodities were adapted for use as tools, including leather and vegetable fibers; however, due to their nature, these have not been preserved to any great degree. Surviving artifacts of the Paleolithic era are known as **paleoliths**.



Acheulean hand-axes: Acheulean hand-axes from Kent. The types shown are (clockwise from top) cordate, ficron, and ovate. Evidence shows these early hominids intentionally selected raw materials with good flaking qualities and chose appropriate-sized stones for their needs to produce sharp-edged tools for cutting

The earliest undisputed art originated in the Upper Paleolithic. However, there is some evidence that a preference for aesthetic emerged in the Middle Paleolithic due to the symmetry inherent in discovered artifacts and evidence of attention to detail in such things as tool shape, which has led some archaeologists to interpret these artifacts as early examples of artistic expression. There has been much dispute among scholars over the terming of early prehistoric artifacts as “art.” Generally speaking, artifacts dating from the Lower and Middle Paleolithic remain disputed as objects of artistic expression, while the Upper Paleolithic provides the first conclusive examples of art making.

Disputed Art(ifacts): Early “Venuses”

The “Venus” of Tan-Tan is an alleged artifact found in Morocco that is believed by some to be the earliest representation of the human form . The name “Venus” is no longer considered appropriate because it suggests that these objects were representative of goddesses, or other deities, when there is no proof that this is so. The term is still in use but here we will demote these figures to the designation “Woman” which is usually undeniable by the physical gendered characteristics, although the Tan-Tan figure is arguably not gendered. The Woman of Tan-Tan, a 2.3 inch long piece of quartzite rock dated between 300,000 and 500,000 years ago during the Middle Paleolithic, was discovered in 1999 in a river terrace deposit on the north bank of the Draa River, just south of the Moroccan village of Tan-Tan. There is controversy among archaeologists as to its nature and origin. Some archaeologists believe it was created by a combination of geological forces as well as tool-based carving. Visible smudge stains have been interpreted by some as remnants of red **ochre pigments**. For others, the rock’s shape is simply the result of natural weathering and erosion, and any human shape is a mere coincidence.



Drawing of the Woman of Tan-Tan: The Woman of Tan-Tan is an alleged artifact found in Morocco that is believed by some to be the earliest representation of the human form

Blombos Cave

Discoveries of engraved stones in the Blombos Caves of South Africa has led some archaeologists to believe that early *Homo sapiens* were capable of abstraction and the production of symbolic art. Made from ochre, the stones are engraved with abstract patterns, and while they are simpler than prehistoric cave paintings found in Europe, some scholars believe these engraved stones represent the earliest known artworks, dating from 75,000 years ago. Although, much like the other pieces, this belief remains contested.



Engraved ochre from the Blombos Cave: Engraved ochre from the Blombos Cave has led some historians to believe that early Homo sapiens were capable of symbolic art

Paleolithic Cave Paintings

Paleolithic cave paintings demonstrate early humans' capacity to give meaning to their surroundings and communicate with others.

Key Points

- Cave paintings can be grouped into three main categories: animals, human figures, and abstract signs.
- Animals depicted include familiar herbivores and predatory animals.
- Animals were shown in profile

- The most spectacular examples of cave paintings are in southern France and northern Spain.
- Interpretations vary from prehistoric star charts, accounts of past hunts or mystical rituals for future ones, and shamanism.

Key Terms

- **chiaroscuro**: An artistic technique developed during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.
- **shamanism**: A range of traditional beliefs and practices concerned with communication with the spirit world.
- **polychromy**: Refers to the use of multiple colors in an object or artwork.
- **schematic**: following a set form, often geometric, and repeatable.

The Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age, ranges from 30,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE and produced the first accomplishments in human creativity, preceding the invention of writing. Archaeological discoveries across a broad swath of Europe (especially southern France and northern Spain) include over two hundred caves with spectacular paintings, drawings, and sculpture that are among the earliest undisputed examples of representational image-making.

Themes and Materials

The most common themes in cave paintings are large wild animals, such as bison, horses, aurochs (a kind of bull), and deer. The species found most often were suitable for hunting by humans, but were not necessarily the typical prey found in associated bone deposits. For example, the painters of Lascaux, France left mainly reindeer bones, but this species does not appear at all in the cave paintings; equine species are the most common.

Drawings of humans were rare and were usually **schematic** in nature as opposed to the detailed and naturalistic images of animals. Tracings of human hands and hand stencils were very popular, however, as well as abstract patterns called finger flutings. Animals were pictured in profile to give the most identifiable information about each one as possible.

The pigments used appear to be red and yellow ochre, manganese or carbon for black, and china clay for white. Some of the color may have been mixed with fat. The paint was applied by finger, chewed sticks, or using fur for brushes. Sometimes the silhouette of the animal was incised in the rock first, and in some caves many of the images were only engraved in this fashion, taking them out of a strict definition of “cave painting.”

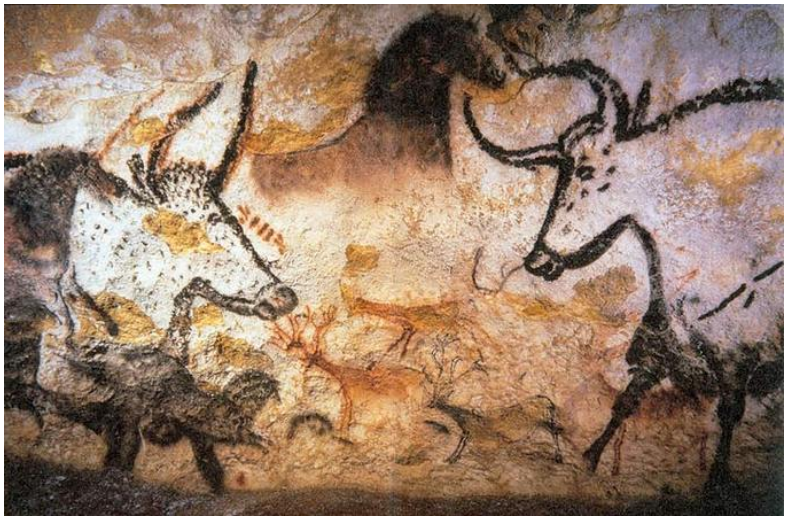
Main Examples of Cave Paintings: France and Spain

France

Lascaux (circa 15,000 BCE), in southwestern France, is an interconnected series of caves with one of the most impressive examples of artistic creations by Paleolithic humans.



A horse from the “Panel of the Chinese Horses” from the Lascaux Cave. The second Chinese horse in the Axial Gallery, also known as the Painted Gallery. Note also the sign above the horse. PD-US; Photo: http://coursecontent.westhillscolleg...2500/index.htm



Cave paintings in Lascaux, France: The most famous section of the cave is “The Great Hall of the Bulls,” where bulls, equines, and stags are depicted. CC BY-SA: Prof saxx Feb. 2006

Discovered in 1940, the cave contains nearly two thousand figures, which can be grouped into three main categories—animals, human figures, and abstract signs. Over nine hundred images depict animals from the surrounding areas, such as horses, stags, aurochs, bison, lions, bears, and birds—species that would have been hunted and eaten, and those identified as predators. The paintings contain no images of the surrounding landscape or the vegetation of the time.

The Chauvet-Pont-d’Arc Cave (circa 30,000 BCE) in the Ardèche department of southern France contains some of the earliest known paintings, as well as other evidence of Upper Paleolithic life. The Chauvet Cave is uncharacteristically large, and the quality, quantity, and condition of the artwork found on its walls have been called spectacular. Hundreds of animal paintings have been catalogued, depicting at least thirteen different species—not only the familiar herbivores that predominate Paleolithic cave art, but also many predatory animals, such as cave lions, panthers, bears, and cave hyenas.



Drawings of horses from the Chauvet Cave in France: The Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave in the Ardèche department of southern France is a cave that contains some of the earliest known cave paintings. PD-Art US

As is typical of most cave art, there are no paintings of complete human figures in Chauvet. There are a few panels of red ochre hand prints and hand stencils made by spitting pigment over hands pressed against the cave surface. Abstract markings—lines and dots—are found throughout the cave.

The artists who produced these unique paintings used techniques rarely found in other cave art. Many of the paintings appear to have been made after the walls were scraped clear of debris and concretions, leaving a smoother and noticeably lighter area upon which the artists worked. Similarly, a three-dimensional quality and the suggestion of movement are achieved by incising or etching around the outlines of certain figures. The art also includes scenes that were complex for its time—animals interacting with each other. For instance, a pair of wooly rhinoceroses are seen butting horns in an apparent contest for territory or mating rights.

Spain

Altamira (circa 18,000 BCE) is a cave in northern Spain famous for its Upper Paleolithic cave paintings featuring drawings and polychrome rock paintings of wild mammals and human hands. The cave has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



Painting of a bison in the Great Hall of Policromes, Altamira, Spain: Altamira's famous Upper Paleolithic cave paintings feature drawings and polychrome rock paintings of wild mammals and human hands. CC BY-SA; Museo de Altamira y D. Rodríguez

The long cave consists of a series of twisting passages and chambers. Human occupation was limited to the cave mouth, although paintings were created throughout the length of the cave. The artists used **polychromy**—charcoal and ochre or haematite (iron oxide)—to create the images, often diluting these pigments to produce variations in intensity, creating an impression of **chiaroscuro**. They also exploited the natural contours in the cave walls to give their subjects a three-dimensional effect.

Interpretations

Like all prehistoric art, the purpose of these paintings remains obscure. In recent years, new research has suggested that the Lascaux paintings may incorporate prehistoric star charts. Some anthropologists and art historians also theorize that the paintings could be an account of past hunting success, or they could represent a mystical ritual to improve future hunting endeavors. An alternative theory, broadly based on ethnographic studies of contemporary hunter-gatherer societies, is that the paintings pertained to shamanism, or a mystical connection to nature.

Paleolithic Sculpture

Paleolithic sculptures found in caves are some of the earliest examples of representational art.

Key Points

- Sculptural work from the Paleolithic consists mainly of figurines, beads, and some decorative utilitarian objects constructed with stone, bone, ivory , clay, and wood.
- “Venus” or “Woman” figurines” is an umbrella term for a number of prehistoric statuettes of women that have been found mostly in Europe, but also in Eurasia and Siberia.
- Woman figurines are characterized by shared stylistic features, such as an oval shape, large belly, wide-set thighs, large breasts, and the typical absence of arms and feet.

Key Terms

- **flint**: A hard, fine-grained quartz that fractures conchoidally and generates sparks when struck.

The Paleolithic or Old Stone Age existed from approximately 30,000 BCE until 10,000 BCE, and produced the first accomplishments in human creativity. Archeological discoveries across Europe and Asia include over two hundred caves with spectacular paintings, drawings, and sculptures that are among the earliest undisputed examples of representational art-making. Sculptural work from the Paleolithic consists mainly of figurines, beads, and some decorative utilitarian objects constructed with stone, bone, ivory, clay, and wood. During prehistoric times, caves were places of dwelling as well as possible spaces for ritual and communal gathering. Unsurprisingly, caves were the locations of many archeological discoveries owing to their secluded locations and protection from the elements.

Venus/Woman Figurines

“Venus” or Woman figurines is an umbrella term for a number of prehistoric statuettes of women that have been found mostly in Europe, but also in Asia and Siberia, dating from the Upper Paleolithic. These figures are all quite small, between 4 and 25 cm tall, and carved mainly in steatite (soapstone), limestone, bone, or ivory. These sculptures are collectively described as “Venus” figurines in reference to the Roman goddess of beauty, as early historians assumed they represented an ideal of beauty from the time. Woman of Willendorf is used now since the figures’ status as goddesses is unknowable.

The figurines have sometimes been interpreted as representing a mother goddess; the abundance of such female imagery has led some to believe that Upper Paleolithic (and later Neolithic) societies had a female-centered religion and a female-dominated society. Various other explanations for the purpose of the figurines have been proposed, such as the hypothesis that the figurines were created as self-portraits of actual women (unlikely) or were used as gestures of goodwill between unrelated groups.

Stylistic Features

These figures are characterized by shared stylistic features, such as an oval shape, large belly, wide-set thighs, large breasts, and the typical absence of arms and feet. Hundreds of these sculptures have been found both in open-air settlements and caves. The Woman of Hohle Fels, a 6 cm figure of a woman carved from a mammoth‘s tusk, was discovered in Germany’s Hohle Fels cave in 2008 and represents one of the earliest found sculptures of this type.



The Woman of Hohle Fels: a 6 cm figure of a woman carved from a mammoth’s tusk, was discovered in Germany’s Hohle Fels cave in 2008 and represents one of the earliest found sculptures of this type. CC Fair Use: image copyright H. Jensen / Universität Tübingen http://www.nature.com/nature/videoar...historicpinup/

Additionally, the Woman of Willendorf is a particularly famous example of this type of figure. While initially thought to be symbols of fertility, or of a fertility goddess, the true significance of the figure remains obscure, as does much of prehistoric art.



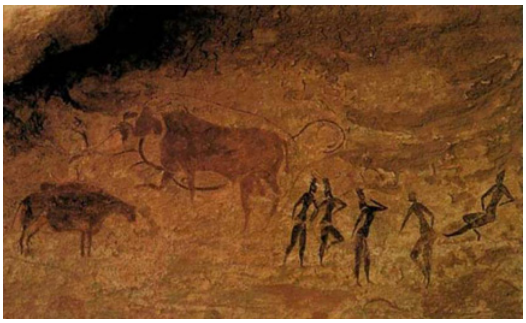
The Woman of Willendorf: The Woman of Willendorf is a particularly famous example of the figure. CC BY 2.5: User: MatthiasKabel

Prehistory is divided roughly into three sections:

Paleolithic – Old Stone Age 2.5 million years ago to end of last Ice Age c. 9600 BCE

Mesolithic – Middle Stone Age – end of last ice age, agriculture, domestication of animals including the dog

Neolithic – New Stone Age – farming spreads to Western Europe, large-scale stone structures like Stonehenge in England



Women and Cattle, Rock painting at Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria. After 5000 BCE. http://nation.com.pk/blogs/09-Aug-20...-in-human-life

Further South in present-day Algeria, the Sahara desert was a vast savanna grassland suitable for the husbanding of herds of animals. This rock painting seems to picture a group of women watching the herd and entertaining themselves by – possibly – dancing. The artist has used the natural coloring of the rock outcropping to create a platform on which one of the figures reclines. This image confirms the activity of animal husbandry as well as advanced cultural and communal exchanges among the people who lived there.

Mesolithic Age

The period between the Paleolithic Age and the Neolithic Age is known as the Meso (Middle) Lith (Stone) ic period. The years attributed to this period vary from region to region, but it roughly corresponds to the time in Northern Europe during which the climate began to warm and the glaciers to recede.

Some characteristics of the Mesolithic Age is a transition from large chipped stone tools and hunting in groups of large herd animals to smaller (microliths) chipped stone tools and a more hunter-gatherer culture. It ends with the introduction of the growing of crops and husbanding of animals in the Neolithic.



English: Hunter gatherer's camp at Irish National Heritage Park Exhibit showing how a 7000 B.C. campsite of Mesolithic period hunter gatherers would have looked. They were nomadic and built temporary houses. Wood, bone and flint were the materials of their tools. They fished using dugout canoes – there is one in the photo. More photos in the park, see https://www.geograph.org.uk/gallery/..._wexford_10033, photo by David Hawgood CC BY-SA 2.0

There is rather less art attributed to the Mesolithic than in the period prior and subsequent. Certain regions developed a distinctive pottery during this period. Possibly the most significant and long-lasting development during the Mesolithic is the domestication of the dog.



The Elk's Head of Huittinen is a rare Mesolithic animal carving in soapstone from Finland. CC BY-SA Rauno Träskelin / The Finnish National Board of Antiquities – https://www.finna.fi/Record/musketti.M012:AKD58629:1

Neolithic Monuments

Neolithic art in Western Europe is best represented by its megalithic (large stone) monuments.

Key Points

- The Neolithic or New Stone Age was a period in human development from around 10,000 BCE until 3,000 BCE.
- Stonehenge and Avebury, both located in the county of Wiltshire in England, are the best known megalithic henges (circles). Both were built in stages over several centuries. Their exact purposes remain a matter of debate.
- Passage tombs or graves consist of narrow passages made of large stones and one or multiple burial chambers been covered in earth or stone. A common layout is the cruciform passage grave.
- The carvings at Newgrange and Knowth are aligned with the solstices and equinoxes.

Key Terms

- **rectilinear**: In a straight line.
- **henge**: A prehistoric enclosure in the form of an arc, defined by a raised circular bank and a circular ditch inside the bank, with one or more entrances to the enclosed open space.
- **trilithon**: A structure consisting of two stone pillars supporting a horizontal stone.
- **cruciform**: Having the shape of a cross.
- **serpentiform**: Having the form of a serpent.
- **curvilinear**: Formed by curved lines.
- **passage grave**: A burial chamber consisting of a narrow passage made of large stones and one or multiple burial chambers covered in earth or stone.

Also known as the New Stone Age, the Neolithic period in human development lasted from around 10,000 BCE until 3,000 BCE. Considered the last part of the Stone Age, the Neolithic is signified by a progression in behavioral and cultural characteristics including the cultivation of wild and domestic crops and the use of domesticated animals.

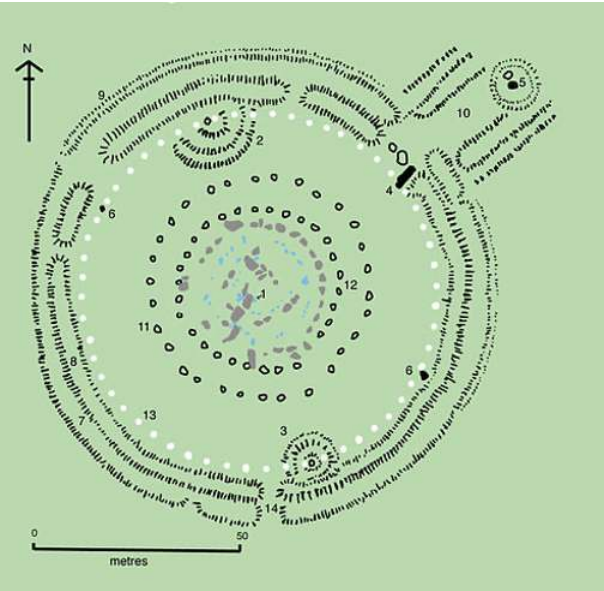
Agrarian societies first appeared in southeast Europe in the seventh millennium BCE. Through migration and cultural diffusion, Neolithic traditions spread to northwestern Europe by around 4500 BCE. The development of agriculture allowed groups of people to form larger permanent settlements in single locations, as opposed to living as nomadic hunter gatherers. Permanent settlements resulted in the construction of megalithic monuments requiring considerable time and effort that was unavailable to nomads.

Megalithic Henges

Neolithic societies produced female and animal statues, engravings, and elaborate pottery decoration. In Western Europe, though, this period is best represented by the megalithic (large stone) monuments and passage tomb structures found from Malta to Portugal, through France and Germany, and across southern England to most of Wales and Ireland.

Stonehenge

Perhaps the best known megalithic henge is Stonehenge, located on Salisbury Plain in the county of Wiltshire in south-central England. Archaeologists believe it was constructed from 3000 BCE to 2000 BCE. The surrounding circular earth bank and ditch, which constitute the earliest phase of the monument, have been dated to about 3100 BCE. Radiocarbon dating suggests that the first bluestones in the innermost ring of Stonehenge were raised between 2400 and 2200 BCE, although they may have been at the site as early as 3000 BCE.



Plan of Stonehenge: Key to plan: (1) The Altar Stone, (2) barrow without a burial, (3) “barrows” without burials, (4) the fallen Slaughter Stone, (5) the Heel Stone, (6) two of originally four Station Stones, (7) ditch, (8) inner bank, (9) outer bank, (10) the Avenue, (11) ring of 30 pits called the Y Holes, (12) ring of 29 pits called the Z Holes, (13) circle of 56 pits, known as the Aubrey holes, (14) smaller southern entrance. CC BY_SA Drawn by Adamsan

Although human remains have been found at the site, archaeologists are uncertain whether the site served funerary purposes, ritual purposes, or both. Its alignments with the sunrise of the summer solstice and sunset of the winter solstice present the possibility that the site served as a rudimentary astronomical calendar to help early agrarian societies acclimate to the approaching growing season and harvest.



Stonehenge: Salisbury Plain, England. CC BY 2.0 garethwiscombe, July 30 2007; https://www.flickr.com/photos/gareth...n/photostream/

Even the smallest bluestones weigh several tons each. These stones, so-called because they appear blue when wet, were quarried approximately 150 miles away in the Prescelli Mountains in southwest Wales. Even more impressive, the quarrying and transport of the stones took place without the aid of the wheel, requiring a sophisticated method of transport and construction involving felled trees and earthen mounds. The larger Sarcen stones that form the post-and-lintel ring and he free-standing trilithons were quarried approximately 25 miles to the north of Salisbury Plain, requiring the same transport system of felled trees and earthen mounds.

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3.2: Mesopotamia

The Art of the Ancient Near East

Cultures in the ancient Near East (often called the Cradle of Civilization) practiced intensive year-round agriculture, developed a writing system, invented the potter's wheel, created a centralized government, law codes, and empires, and introduced social stratification, slavery, and organized warfare. Societies in the region laid the foundations for astronomy and mathematics.

From Mesopotamia came the empires of Sumeria, Babylon, and Assyria. From the fertile floodplains of the Nile emerged the Egyptians, with their great monuments and sophisticated society. From the Iranian Plateau came the Medes and then the Persians, who nearly succeeded in uniting the entire civilized world under one empire.

In Mesopotamian Babylonia, an abundance of clay and lack of stone led to greater use of mud brick. Babylonian temples were massive structures of crude brick supported by buttresses, with drains to remove rain. The use of brick led to the early development of the pilaster, column, frescoes, and enameled tiles. Walls were brilliantly colored and sometimes plated with zinc or gold, as well as with tiles. Painted terra cotta cones for torches were also embedded in the plaster. In Babylonia, three-dimensional figures often replaced bas-relief—the earliest examples being the Statues of Gudea, which are realistic if somewhat clumsy. The paucity of stone in Babylonia made every pebble precious and led to perfection in the art of gem cutting.



Statue of Gudea: Neo-Sumerian period, circa 2,090 BCE. PD-Art US

The Mesopotamian Cultures

Sumer was an ancient civilization that saw its artistic styles change throughout different periods in its history.

Key Points

- The Eridu economy produced abundant food, which allowed its inhabitants to settle in one location and form a labor force specializing in diverse arts and crafts.
- Writing produced during the early Sumerian period suggest the abundance of pottery and other artistic traditions.
- Elements of the early Sumerian culture spread through a large area of the Near and Middle East.
- The Sumerian city states rose to power during the prehistorical Ubaid and Uruk periods.

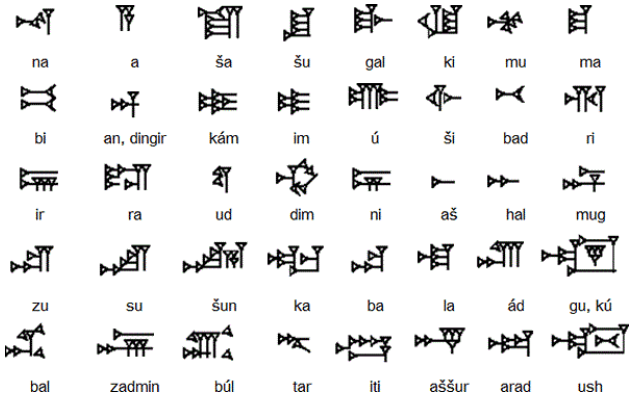
Key Terms

- **theocratic**: A form of government in which a deity is officially recognized as the civil ruler. Official policy is governed by officials regarded as divinely guided, or is pursuant to the doctrine of a particular religion or religious group.
- **casting**: A sculptural process in which molten material (usually metal) is poured into a mold, allowed to cool and harden, and become a solid object.
- **cuneiform**: One of the earliest known forms of written expression that began as a system of pictographs. It emerged in Sumer around the 30th century BC, with predecessors reaching into the late 4th millennium.

Sumer was an ancient civilization in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) during the Early Bronze Age. Although the historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historians believe that Sumer was first settled between ca. 4500 and 4000 BCE by people who may or may not have spoken the Sumerian language. These people, now called the "Ubaidians," were the first to drain the marshes for agriculture; develop trade; and establish industries including weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery.

The Sumerian city of Eridu, which at that time bordered the Persian Gulf, is believed to be the world's first city. Here, three separate cultures fused—the peasant Ubaidian farmers, the nomadic Semitic-speaking pastoralists (farmers who raise livestock), and fisher folk. The surplus of storable food created by this economy allowed the region's population to settle in one place, instead of migrating as hunter-gatherers. It also allowed for a much greater population density, which required an extensive labor force and a division of labor with many specialized arts and crafts.

An early form of wedge-shaped writing called cuneiform developed in the early Sumerian period. During this time, cuneiform and pictograms suggest the abundance of pottery and other artistic traditions. In addition to the production of vessels, clay was also used to make tablets for inscribing written documents. Metal also served various purposes during the early Sumerian period. Smiths used a form of casting to create the blades for daggers. On the other hand, softer metals like copper and gold could be hammered into the forms of plates, necklaces, and collars.



Akkadian form of cuneiform writing. PD-Art US

Stele of the Vultures

From the Early Dynastic III period (2600-2300 BCE) in what is today Iraq, this stele – usually a vertical commemorative stone – seems to show the victory of the city-state of Lagash over its neighbor, Umma, both Sumerian. Today it exists in fragments in various locations, the one pictured below is in the Louvre. Named for the vultures that appear in one scene, the stele is divided into **registers**, bands that tell portions of the story. The story is related in cuneiform as well as images.



Stele of the Vultures: Battle formations on a fragment of the Stele of the Vultures. Example of Sumerian pictorial cuneiform writing. CC BY-SA Eric Gaba (User: Sting), July 2005

By the late fourth millennium BCE, Sumer was divided into about a dozen independent city-states delineated by canals and other boundary makers. At each city center stood a temple dedicated to the particular patron god or goddess of the city. Priestly governors ruled over these temples and were intimately tied to the governing of the city-states.

Gilgamesh

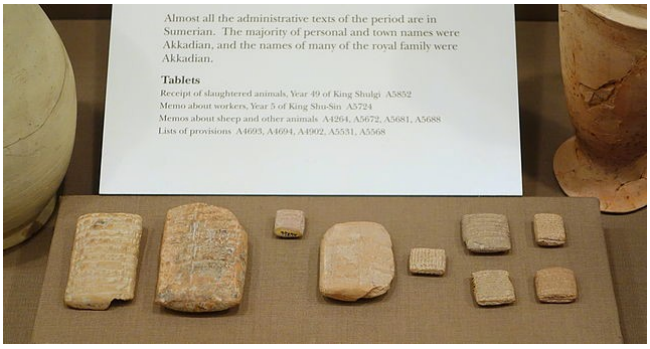
The earliest king authenticated through archaeological evidence is Enmebaragesi of Kish, whose name is also mentioned in the Gilgamesh epic (ca. 2100 BCE)—leading to the suggestion that Gilgamesh himself might have been a historical king. As the *Epic of Gilgamesh* shows, the second millennium BCE was associated with increased violence. Cities became walled and increased in size as undefended villages in southern Mesopotamia disappeared.

Babylonian Empire

One of the most significant developments following the Sumerians was the arrival of the Babylonians by about 1830 BCE. One of the enlightened rulers of this civilization was Hammurabi (ruled c. 1792-1750 BCE) who established the first written code of law. The Stele of Hammurabi is a vertical stone stele inscribed in cuneiform with an entire set of laws that covered everything from inheritance to murder. On top, Hammurabi receives the tools of rulership from his God, Shamash or possibly Marduk. Interestingly, those tools are tools of measurement, as in building, suggesting that the law was seen as measuring out justice.



Code of Hammurabi replica stele on display at the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California. CC BY-SA photo: Brokensphere



Administrative texts in cuneiform writing: A collection of administrative texts in cuneiform writing on display at the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago

Sculpture in Mesopotamia

While the purposes that Mesopotamian sculpture served remained relatively unchanged for 2000 years, the methods of conveying those purposes varied greatly over time.

Key Points

- Mesopotamian sculptures were predominantly created for religious and political purposes.
- Common materials included clay, metal, and stone fashioned into reliefs and sculptures in the round.
- The Uruk period marked a development of rich narrative imagery and increasing lifelikeness of human figures.
- Hieratic scale was often used in Mesopotamian sculpture to convey the significance of gods and royalty.
- After the end of the Uruk period, subject matter began to depict scenes of warfare and became increasingly violent and intimidating.

Key Terms

- **register**: A usually horizontal division of separate scenes in two- or three- dimensional art.

- **hieratic scale**: A visual method of marking the significance of a figure through its size. The more important a figure is, the larger it appears.
- **terra cotta**: Clay that has been fired in a kiln.
- **high relief**: A sculpture that projects significantly from its background, providing deep shadows.
- **votive**: An object left in temples or other religious locations for a variety of spiritual purposes.
- **colossal**: Extremely tall.
- **lyre**: A hand-held stringed instrument resembling a small harp.
- **cylinder seal**: A small object adorned with carved images of animals, writing, or both, used to sign official documents.
- **in the round**: Sculpture that stands freely, separate from a background.
- **relief**: sculpture that projects from a background.
- **mixed-media**: Artwork consisting of two or more different materials.
- **nomadic**: Mobile; moving from one place to another, never settling in one location for too long.

The current archaeological record dates sculpture in Mesopotamia the tenth millennium BCE, before the dawn of civilization. Sculptural forms include humans, animals, and cylinder seals with cuneiform writing and imagery in the round or as reliefs. Materials range from terra cotta, stones like alabaster and gypsum, and metals like copper and bronze.

Hunter-Gatherers and Samarra

Because the artists of the hunter-gatherer era were nomadic, the sculptures they produced were small and lightweight. Even after cultures discovered agricultural methods, such as irrigation and animal domestication, artists continued to produce small sculptures. The seated female figure below (c. 6000 BCE), likely carved from a single stone, hails from the prehistoric Samarra culture (5500-4800 BCE). Like many prehistoric female figures, the features of this sculpture suggest that it was used in fertility rituals. Its breasts are accentuated, and its legs are spread in a position that might resemble a woman in labor. While the artist emphasized areas of the body related to reproduction, he or she did not add facial features or feet to the figure.



Seated Female, Samarra, c. 6000 BCE. Stone. Met Museum, PD

Sculptures in human form were also used as votive offerings in temples. Among the best known are the Tell Asmar Hoard, a group of 12 sculptures in the round depicting worshipers, priests, and gods. Like the cylinder seal found in Queen Puabi's tomb, the figures in the Tell Asmar Hoard show hieratic scale. Worshipers, as in the image below, stand with their arms in front of their chests and their hands in the position of holding offerings. Materials range from alabaster to limestone to gypsum, depending on each figure's significance. One common feature is the large hollowed out eye sockets, which were once inlaid with stone to make them appear lifelike. The eyes held spiritual significance, especially that of the gods, which represented awesome otherworldly power.



Tell Asmar Hoard, votive figures from the Square, ca. 2900-2350 B.C.E. See Jean </ Evans. “The Square Temple at Tell Asmar and the Construction of Early Dynastic Mesopotamia, ca. 2900-2350 B.C.E., American Journal of Archaeology Vol. 111, No. 4 (October 2007), pp. 599–632 DOI: 10.3764/aja.111.4.599 © 2007 Archaeological Institute of America

Akkadian Empire

During the period of the Akkadian Empire (2271-2154 BCE), sculpture of the human form grew increasingly naturalistic, and its subject matter increasingly about politics and warfare.

A cast bronze portrait head believed to be that of King Sargon combines a naturalistic nose and mouth with stylized eyes, eyebrows, hair, and beard. Although the stylized features dominate the sculpture, the level of **naturalism was unprecedented**. It may have been damaged by subsequent invaders to diminish the power of the previous dynasty. It was stolen during the Iraq War begun in 2003, but returned to the Baghdad Museum.



Head of an Akkadian ruler, probably Sargon (2270-2215 BCE): This portrait combines naturalistic and stylized facial features and was cast using the lost-wax method. The eye sockets were once inlaid. PD-US

The Victory Stele of Naram Sin provides an example of the increasingly violent subject matter in Akkadian art, a result of the violent and oppressive climate of the empire. Here, the king is depicted as a divine figure, as signified by his horned helmet. In typical hieratic fashion, Naram Sin appears larger than his soldiers and his enemies. The king stands among dead or dying enemy soldiers as his own troops look on from a lower vantage point. The figures are depicted in high relief to amplify the dramatic significance of the scene. On the right hand side of the stele, cuneiform script provides narration.



Victory Stele of Naram-Sin (12th century BCE): The king stands in the center of the stele wearing a horned headpiece. His dead and dying enemies surround him while his own soldiers passively observe. PD- US

Architecture in Mesopotamia

Domestic and public architecture in Mesopotamian cultures differed in relative simplicity and complexity. As time passed, public architecture grew to monumental heights.

Key Points

- Mesopotamian cultures used a variety of building materials. While mud brick is the most common, stone also features as a structural and decorative element.
- The ziggurat marked a major architectural accomplishment for the Sumerians, as well as subsequent Mesopotamian cultures.
- Palaces and other public structures were often decorated with glaze or paint, stones, or reliefs.
- Animals and human-animal hybrids feature in the religions of Mesopotamian cultures and were often used as architectural decoration.

Key Terms

- **bas reliefs**: Sculptures that minimally project from their backgrounds.
- **public sphere**: The world outside the home.
- **ziggurat**: A towering temple, similar to a stepped pyramid, that sat in the center of Mesopotamian city-states in honor to the local pantheon.
- **private sphere**: The home, or the domestic realm.
- **load-bearing**: A form of architecture in which the walls are the structure's main source of support.
- **stacking and piling**: A form of load-bearing architecture in which the walls are thickest at the base and grow gradually thinner toward the top.
- **pilaster**: A rectangular column that projects partially from the wall to which it is attached; it gives the appearance of a support, but is only for decoration.

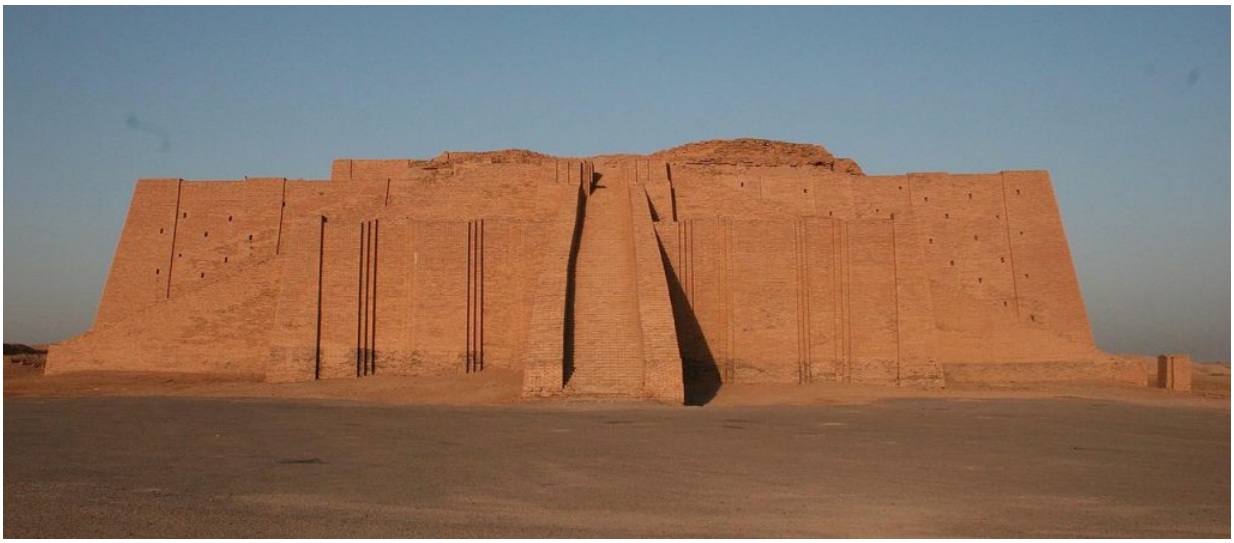
The Mesopotamians regarded "the craft of building" as a divine gift taught to men by the gods, and architecture flourished in the region. A paucity of stone in the region made sun baked bricks and clay the building material of choice. Babylonian architecture featured pilasters and columns, as well as frescoes and enameled tiles. Assyrian architects were strongly influenced by the Babylonian style, but used stone as well as brick in their palaces, which were lined with sculptured and colored slabs of stone instead of being painted. Existing ruins point to load-bearing architecture as the dominant form of building. However, the invention of the round arch in the general area of Mesopotamia influenced the construction of structures like the Ishtar Gate in the sixth century BCE.

Domestic Architecture

Mesopotamian families were responsible for the construction of their own houses. While mud bricks and wooden doors comprised the dominant building materials, reeds were also used in construction. Because houses were load-bearing, doorways were often the only openings. Sumerian culture observed a rigid division between the public sphere and the private sphere, a norm that resulted in a lack of direct view from the street into the home. The sizes of individual houses varied, but the general design consisted of smaller rooms organized around a large central room. To provide a natural cooling effect, courtyards became a common feature in the Ubaid period and persist into the domestic architecture of present-day Iraq.

Ziggurats

One of the most remarkable achievements of Mesopotamian architecture was the development of the **ziggurat**, a massive structure taking the form of a terraced step pyramid of successively receding stories or levels, with a shrine or temple at the summit. Like pyramids, ziggurats were built by stacking and piling. Ziggurats were not places of worship for the general public. Rather, only priests or other authorized religious officials were allowed inside to tend to cult statues inside the temple on the top, and make offerings. The first surviving ziggurats date to the Sumerian culture in the fourth millennium BCE, but they continued to be a popular architectural form in the late third and early second millennium BCE as well.



Nanna Ziggurat at Ur, Sumerian. PD-US Tia2006 at English Wikipedia

The image below is an artist's reconstruction of how ziggurats might have looked in their heyday. Human figures appear to illustrate the massive scale of these structures. This impressive height and width would not have been possible without the use of ramps and pulleys. They were part of a larger temple complex with other buildings around them. The primary function seems to have been to elevate the temple and the priest toward their god.



An artist's reconstruction of a ziggurat: Like most Mesopotamian architecture, ziggurats were composed of sun-baked bricks, which were less durable than their oven-baked counterparts. Thus, buildings had to be reconstructed on a regular basis, often on the foundations of recently deteriorated structures, which caused cities to become increasingly elevated. Sun-baked bricks remained the dominant building material through the Babylonian and early Assyrian empires. "32487-ziggurat-mesopotamia.jpg." Wikispaces CC BY-SA 3.0

Political Architecture

The exteriors of public structures like temples and palaces featured decorative elements such as bright paint, gold, leaf, and enameling. Some elements, such as colored stones and terra cotta panels, served a twofold purpose of decoration and structural support, which strengthened the buildings and delayed their deterioration.

Between the thirteenth and tenth centuries BCE, the Assyrians replaced sun-baked bricks with more durable stone and masonry. Colored stone and *bas* reliefs replaced paint as decoration. Art produced under the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE), Sargon II (722-705 BCE), and Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) inform us that reliefs evolved from simple and vibrant to naturalistic and restrained over this time span.

From the Early Dynastic Period (2900-2350 BCE) to the Assyrian Empire (25th century-612 BCE), palaces grew in size and complexity. However, even early palaces were very large and ornately decorated to distinguish themselves from domestic architecture. Because palaces housed the royal family and everyone who attended to them, palaces were often arranged like small cities, with temples and sanctuaries, as well as locations to inter the dead. As with private homes, courtyards were important features of palaces for both utilitarian and ceremonial purposes.

By the time of the Assyrian empire, palaces were decorated with narrative reliefs on the walls and outfitted with their own gates. The gates of the Palace of Dur- Sharrukin, occupied by Sargon II, featured monumental *alto* reliefs of a mythological guardian figure called a *lamassu* (also known as a *shedu*), which had the head of a human, the body of a bull or lion, and enormous wings. Lamassu figure in the visual art and literature from most of the ancient Mesopotamian world, going as far back as ancient Sumer (settled c. 5500 BCE) and standing guard at the palace of Persepolis (550-330 BCE).



Lamassu: This is only one example of how a lamassu would appear in Mesopotamian art. Other sculptures wear conical caps, face the front, or have the bodies of lions. In literature, some lamassu assumed female form. CC BY-SA TrJames

Although the Romans often receive credit for the round arch, this structural system actually originated during ancient Mesopotamian times. Where typical load-bearing walls are not strong enough to have many windows or doorways, round arches absorb more pressure, allowing for larger openings and improved airflow. The reconstruction of Dur-Sharrukin (see below) shows that the round arch was being used as entryways by the eighth century BCE.

Perhaps the best known surviving example of a round arch is in the Ishtar Gate, which was part of the Processional Way in the city of Babylon. The gate, now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, was lavishly decorated with lapis lazuli complemented by blue glazed brick. Elsewhere on the gate and its connecting walls were painted floral motifs and *bas* reliefs of animals that were sacred to Ishtar, the goddess of fertility and war.



Ishtar Gate (c. 575 BCE): The reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. CC BY 2.0 Rector Norton https://www.flickr.com/photos/24065742@N00/151247206/

The photograph above shows the immense scale of the gate. The photograph below shows the detail of a relief of a bull, or aurochs, from the gate's wall. While it is muted in the photo below, the figures are in gold and brown-glazed brick. They symbolized the gods Marduk (dragons), Adad (aurochs or bulls), and Ishtar (lions).



Detail of bull relief on Ishtar Gate: An aurochs, or bull, above a flower ribbon. CC BY_SA Jami430

The Assyrian Culture

The Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian capitals of Nimrud, Dur-Sharrukin, and Nineveh are known today for their ruins of great palaces and fortifications.

Key Points

- Nimrud, also known as Kalhu, was the Assyrian capital from the thirteenth century BCE until 706 BCE. Ashurnasirpal II made the city famous when he built a large palace and temples on top of ancient ruins c. 880 BCE.
- Nineveh, the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, rose to greatness under Sennacherib. He laid out new streets and squares and built within it the famous "palace without a rival", the plan of which has been mostly recovered.

Key Terms

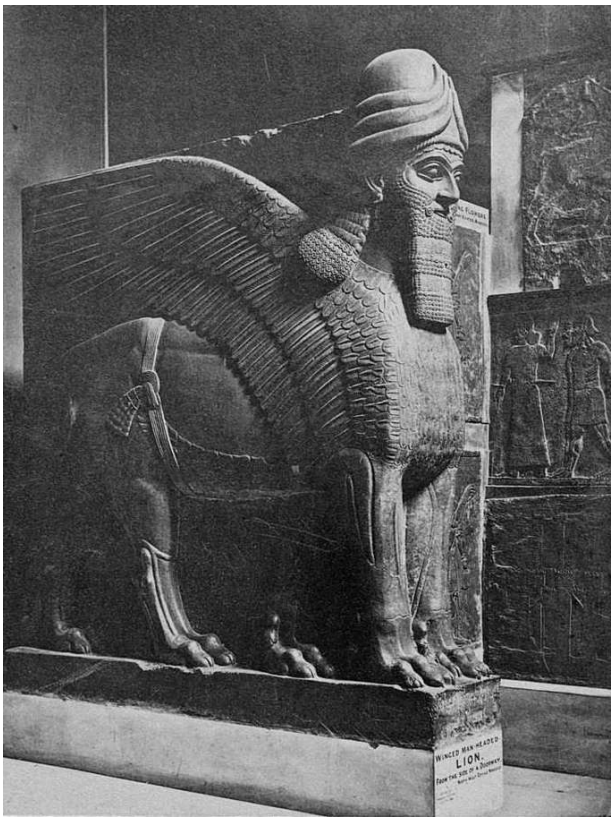
- **Obelisk**: A tall, square, tapered, stone monolith topped with a pyramidal point, frequently used as a monument.
- **ziggurat**: A temple tower of the ancient Mesopotamian valley, having the form of a terraced pyramid of successively receding stories.

Nimrud and Ashurnasirpal II

Nimrud is an ancient Assyrian city located in southern, modern Iraq on the River Tigris. In ancient times the city was called Kalhu. The ruins of the city are found some 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Mosul.

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser I made Nimrud, which existed for about a thousand years, the capital in the thirteenth century BCE. The city gained fame when king Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria (c. 880 BCE) built a large palace and temples on the site of an earlier city that had long fallen into ruins. Nimrud housed as many as 100,000 inhabitants and contained botanic gardens and a zoologic garden. Ashurnasirpal's son, Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE), built the monument known as the Great Ziggurat and an associated temple. The palace, restored as a site museum, is one of only two preserved Assyrian palaces in the world. The other is Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh. Nimrud remained the Assyrian capital until 706 BCE when Sargon II moved the capital to Dur-Sharrukin, but it remained a major center and a royal residence until the city was completely destroyed in 612 BCE when Assyria succumbed under the invasion of the Medes.

Excavations at Nimrud in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries revealed remarkable bas- reliefs, ivories, and sculptures. A statue of Ashurnasirpal II was found in an excellent state of preservation, as were colossal winged man-headed lions (Lamassu), each guarding the palace entrance. The large number of inscriptions pertaining to king Ashurnasirpal II provide more details about him and his reign than are known for any other ruler of this epoch.

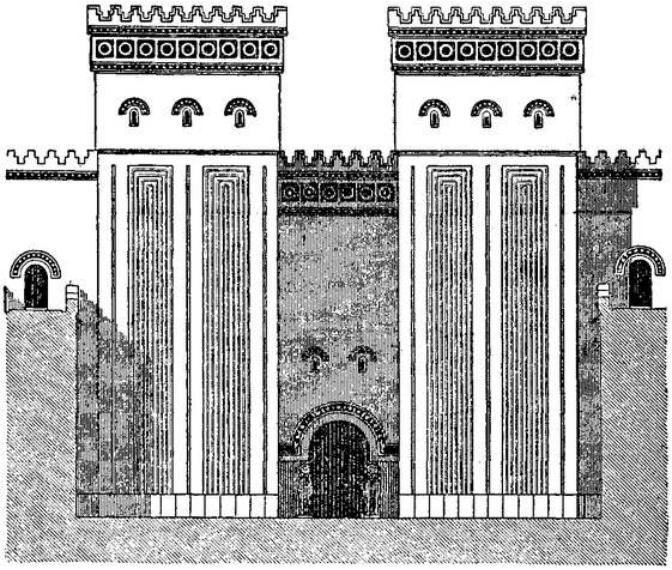


Gate Guardians: The Man-Headed Lions: This Portal Guardian (Lamassu) from Nimrud guarded the entrance to the palace at Nimrud. PD-US

Portions of the site have been also been identified, such as temples to Ninurta and Enlil, a building assigned to Nabu (the god of writing and the arts), and extensive fortifications. Furthermore, the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, discovered in 1846, stands six-and-a-half-feet tall and commemorates the king's victorious campaigns from 859–824 BCE. It is shaped like a temple tower at the top, ending in three steps.

Sargon II and Dur-Sharrukin

Dur-Sharrukin, or present day Khorsabad, was the Assyrian capital in the time of King Sargon II. Today, Khorsabad is now a village in northern Iraq, and is still inhabited by Assyrians. The construction of Dur-Sharrukin was never finished. Sargon, who ordered the project, was killed during a battle in 705. After his death, his son and successor Sennacherib abandoned the project and relocated the capital with its administration to the city of Nineveh.



Palace of Khorsabad (artist's reconstruction). PD-US

Dur-Sharrukin was constructed on a rectangular layout. Its walls were massive, with 157 towers protecting its sides. Seven gates entered the city from all directions. A walled terrace contained temples and the royal palace. The main temples were dedicated to the gods Nabu, Shamash, and Sin, while Adad, Ningal, and Ninurta had smaller shrines. A ziggurat was also constructed at the site. The palace was adorned with sculptures and wall reliefs, with its gates flanked by winged-bull lamassu (or *shedu* as they are also called) statues weighing up to 40 tons. On the central canal of Sargon's garden stood a pillared pleasure-pavilion which looked up to a great topographic creation—a man-made Garden Mound. This mound was planted with cedars and cypresses and modeled after the Amanus mountains in northern Syria.

Nineveh

Nineveh was an ancient Assyrian city on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, and the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Its ruins are across the river from the modern- day major city of Mosul in Iraq.

Today, Nineveh's location is marked by two large mounds, Kouyunjik and Nabī Yūnus "Prophet Jonah," and the remains of the city walls. These were fitted with fifteen monumental gateways which served as checkpoints on entering and exiting the ancient city, and were probably also used as barracks and armories. With the inner and outer doors shut, the gateways were virtual fortresses. Five of the gateways have been explored to some extent by archaeologists.

Nineveh was an important junction for commercial routes crossing the Tigris. Occupying a central position on the great highway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, Nineveh united the East and the West, and received wealth from many sources. Thus, it became one of the oldest and greatest of all the region's ancient cities, and the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The area was settled as early as 6000 BCE, and by 3000 BCE had become an important religious center for worship of the Assyrian goddess Ishtar.

It was not until the Neo-Assyrian Empire that Nineveh experienced a considerable architectural expansion. King Sennacherib is credited with making Nineveh a truly magnificent city during his rule (c. 700 BCE). He laid out new streets and squares and built within it the famous "palace without a rival", the plan of which has been mostly recovered. It comprised at least 80 rooms, many of which were lined with sculpture. A large number of cuneiform tablets were found in the palace. The solid foundation was made out of limestone blocks and mud bricks. Some of the principal doorways were flanked by colossal stone-door figures that included many winged lions or bulls with the heads of men. The stone carvings in the walls include many battle and hunting scenes, as well as depicting Sennacherib's men parading the spoils of war before him.



Royal Nineveh carving: The king hunting lion from the North Palace, Nineveh, seen at the British Museum. CC BY-2.0: Ricardo Tulio Gandelman from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – P1050552 Uploaded by Marcus Cyro



Slaves carrying dead lions back from the hunt. Nineveh, British Museum, room 10. CC BY-2.0 Paul Hudson from the UK

Nineveh's greatness was short-lived. In around 627 BCE, after the death of its last great king Ashurbanipal, the Neo-Assyrian empire began to unravel due to a series of bitter civil wars, and Assyria was attacked by the Babylonians and Medes. From about 616 BCE, in a coalition with the Scythians and Cimmerians, they besieged Nineveh, sacking the town in 612, and later razing it to the ground.

The Assyrian empire as such came to an end by 605 BC, with the Medes and Babylonians dividing its colonies between them. Following its defeat in 612, the site remained largely unoccupied for centuries with only a scattering of Assyrians living amid the ruins until the Sassanian period, although Assyrians continue to live in the surrounding area to this day.

Architecture in Assyria

Assyrian architecture eventually emerged from the shadow of its predecessors to assume distinctive attributes, such as domes and diverse building materials, that set it apart from other political entities.

Key Points

- Inscriptions and reliefs produced under the Assyrian Empire depict structures with octagonal and circular domes, which were unique to the region at the time.
- Assyrian ziggurats eventually consisted of enameled walls and two towers.
- Massive fortified walls are a common attribute in Assyrian fortresses, pointing to the political instability of the time and the need for architectural defense.
- Architectural materials in the Assyrian empire were quite diverse, consisting of a variety of woods, stones, and metals.

Key Terms

- **lamassu**: A guardian figure consisting of the head of a human, massive wings, and the body of a lion or bull.

During the Assyrian Empire's historical span from the 25th century BCE to 612 BCE, architectural styles went through noticeable changes. Assyrian architects were initially influenced by previous forms dominant in Sumer and Akkad. However, Assyrian structures eventually evolved into their own unique style.

Temples

Little is known of the construction of Assyrian temples with the exception of the distinctive ziggurats and massive remains at Mugheir. Ziggurats in the Assyrian Empire came to be built with two towers (as opposed to the single central tower of previous styles) and decorated with colored enameled tiles. Contemporaneous inscriptions and reliefs describe and depict structures with octagonal and circular domes, unique architectural systems for the time. Little remains of the temple at Mugheir, but the ruins of its base remain quite impressive, measuring 198 feet (60 m) long by 133 feet (41 m) wide by 70 feet (21 m) high.

Nimrud

Lamassu figures abounded throughout the Assyrian Empire, featuring in the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II (reigned 883-859 BCE) at Nimrud. Reconstructions show that they adorned the gateways of the palace, including an entrance marked by a round arch . According to contemporaneous inscriptions, the palace consisted of wood from a diverse number of tree species, alabaster, limestone, and a variety of precious metals. As with Dur-Sharrukin, the palace of Ashurnasirpal II was surrounded by fortified load-bearing walls.

Artifacts of Assyria

Assyrian artifacts consist of a variety of media and range in size from hand-held to monumental.

Key Points

- The Assyrian Lion Weights and the Statue of Ashurnasirpal II represent rare examples of surviving Assyrian sculpture in the round.
- The Assyrian Lion Weights represent the importance of weights and measures and accommodation of more than one language.
- The Statue of Ashurnasirpal II, the lamassu reliefs, and the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III provide examples of art rich in political and religious symbolism.
- The Statue of Ashurnasirpal II and the lamassu reliefs provide examples of royal hairstyles and beard lengths.

Key Terms

- **stylized**: Art that is not naturalistic, yet not distorted enough to be abstract.
- **sculpture in the round**: A free-standing object that is usually meant to be viewed from multiple angles.
- **relief**: A sculpture that projects from a background.
- **Obelisk**: Four-sided monument that tapers with height and is usually capped by a pyramidal form.
- **register**: A usually horizontal band on an artwork that divides designs into logical patterns.
- **bas relief**: A sculpture with minimal projection from its background.

Artifacts produced during the Assyrian Empire range from hand-held to monumental and consist of a variety of media, from clay to bronze to a diversity of stone. While reliefs comprise the majority of what archaeologists have found, existing sculptures in the round shed light on Assyrian numerical systems and politics.

Assyrian Lion Weights



Assyrian Lion Weights: These weights represented one of only two known systems of weights and measures in Mesopotamia at the time. CC BY-SA-3.0: Jononmac46

The Assyrian Lion Weights (800-700 BCE) are a group of solid bronze weights that range from two centimeters (approximately 0.8 inches) to 30 centimeters (approximately 12 inches). Admired as sculptures in the round today, the weights represent one of only two systems of weights and measures in the region at the time. This system was based on *heavy mina* (about one kilogram) and was used for weighting metals. Additionally, they bear inscriptions in Assyrian cuneiform and Phoenician script, indicating use by speakers of both languages. Eight lions in the set bear the only known inscriptions from the reign of Shalmaneser V (reigned 727-722 BCE).

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3.3: Ancient Egypt

Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Art

Ancient Egyptian art is the painting, sculpture, and architecture produced by the civilization in the Nile Valley from 5000 BCE to 300 CE.

Key Points

- Ancient Egyptian art reached considerable sophistication in painting and sculpture , and was both highly stylized and symbolic.
- The Nile River, with its predictable flooding and abundant natural resources, allowed the ancient Egyptian civilization to thrive sustainably and culturally. Much of the surviving art comes from tombs and monuments; hence, the emphasis on life after death and the preservation of knowledge of the past. In a narrower sense, Ancient Egyptian art refers to the second and third dynasty art developed in Egypt from 3000 BCE and used until the third century.
- Most elements of Egyptian art remained remarkably stable over this 3,000 year period, with relatively little outside influence.

Key Terms

- **wadi**: A valley, gully, or stream bed in northern Africa and southwest Asia that remains dry except during the rainy season.
- **Ancient Egypt**: A civilization that existed in the valley of the Nile River from 3150 BC to 30 BC. Noted for building the Great Pyramids of Giza.
- **pyramid**: An ancient massive construction with a square or rectangular base and four triangular sides meeting in an apex, such as those built as tombs in Egypt or as bases for temples in Mesoamerica.

Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt , the Bronze Age began in the Protodynastic period circa 3,150 BCE. The hallmarks of ancient Egyptian civilization, such as art, architecture, and many aspects of religion, took shape during the Early Dynastic period and lasted until about 2,686 BCE. During this period, the pantheon of the gods was established and the illustrations and proportions of their human figures developed; and Egyptian imagery , symbolism , and basic hieroglyphic writing were created. During the Old Kingdom, from 2686-2181 BCE, the Egyptian pyramids and other more natural sculptures were built. The first-known portraits were also completed. At the end of the Old Kingdom, the Egyptian style moved toward formalized seminude figures with long bodies and large eyes.



Reverse and obverse sides of Narmer Palette, this facsimile on display at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada: The Narmer Palette, named after Egyptian King Narmer, is a significant Egyptian archeological relic dating from about the 3,100 BCE, containing some of the earliest hieroglyphic inscriptions ever found

Ancient Egyptian art includes the painting, sculpture, architecture, and other arts produced by the civilization in the lower Nile Valley from 5000 BCE to 300 CE. Ancient Egyptian art reached considerable sophistication in painting and sculpture, and was both highly stylized and symbolic. Much of the surviving art comes from tombs and monuments; hence, the emphasis on life after death and the preservation of knowledge of the past. In a narrower sense, Ancient Egyptian art refers to art of the second and third dynasty developed in Egypt from 3000 BCE until the third century. Most elements of Egyptian art remained remarkably stable over this 3,000 year period, with relatively little outside influence. The quality of observation and execution began at a high level and remained so throughout the period.

Ancient Egypt was able to flourish because of its location on the Nile River, which floods at predictable intervals, allowing controlled irrigation, and providing nutrient-rich soil favorable to agriculture. Most of the population and cities of Egypt lie along those parts of the Nile valley north of Aswan, and nearly all the cultural and historical sites of Ancient Egypt are found along riverbanks. The Nile ends in a large delta that empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The settlers of the area were able to eventually produce a surplus of edible crops, which in turn led to a growth in the population. The regular flooding and ebbing of the river is also responsible for the diverse natural resources in the region.

Natural resources in the Nile Valley during the rise of ancient Egypt included building and decorative stone, copper and lead ores, gold, and semiprecious stones, all of which contributed to the architecture, monuments, jewels, and other art forms for which this civilization would become well known. High-quality building stones were abundant. The ancient Egyptians quarried limestone all along the Nile Valley, granite from Aswan, and basalt and sandstone from the wadis (valleys) of the eastern desert. Deposits of decorative stones dotted the eastern desert and were collected early in Egyptian history.

The Prehistory of Egypt spans the period of earliest human settlement to the beginning of the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt in ca. 3100 BCE, beginning with King Menes/Narmer. The Predynastic Period is traditionally equivalent to the Neolithic period, beginning ca. 6000 BCE and is generally divided into cultural periods, each named after the place where a certain type of Egyptian settlement was first discovered. However, the same gradual development is present throughout the entire Predynastic period, and individual “cultures” must not be interpreted as separate entities but as largely subjective divisions used to facilitate the study of the entire period.

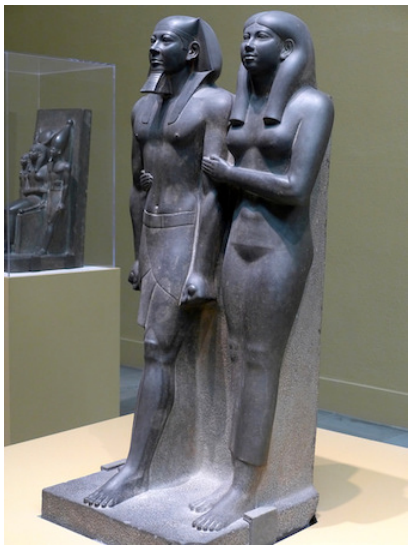
Old Kingdom

The Old Kingdom is the name given to the period in the third millennium BCE when Egypt attained its first continuous peak of civilization in complexity and achievement—the first of three so-called “Kingdom” periods which mark the high points of civilization in the lower Nile Valley (the others being Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom). While the Old Kingdom was a period of internal security and prosperity, it was followed by a period of disunity and relative cultural decline referred to by Egyptologists as the First Intermediate Period. During the Old Kingdom, the king of Egypt (not called the Pharaoh until the New Kingdom) became a living god, who ruled absolutely and could demand the services and wealth of his subjects. Under King Djoser, the first king of the Third Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, the royal capital of Egypt was moved to Memphis. A new era of building was initiated at Saqqara under his reign. King Djoser’s architect, Imhotep, is credited with the development of building with stone and with the conception of the new architectural form—the Step Pyramid . Indeed, the Old Kingdom is perhaps best known for the large number of pyramids constructed at this time as pharaonic burial places. For this reason, the Old Kingdom is frequently referred to as “the Age of the Pyramids.”



Djoser pyramid: Step pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, Egypt

Sculpture in the Old Kingdom set the standard for all sculpture to come – except for the moment of Akhenaten and Amarna. One of the Great Pyramids at Giza was the tomb of Menkaure (Mycerinus). This iconic greywacke relief sculpture of Menkaure and one of his queens shows the characteristics of Egyptian pharoanic sculpture. He is rigid, frontal, with one foot forward as a sign of life. The queen’s gesture is one of familial belonging rather than protection.



King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen, 2490–2472 B.C.E., greywacke, 142.2 x 57.1 x 55.2 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), photo: tutincommon (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom of Egypt is the period in the history of ancient Egypt stretching from the establishment of the Eleventh Dynasty to the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty, between 2055 and 1650 BCE. During this period, the funerary cult of Osiris rose to dominate Egyptian popular religion.



Osiris: The gods Osiris, Anubis, and Horus, from a tomb painting

New Kingdom

The New Kingdom of Egypt, also referred to as the Egyptian Empire, is the period between the sixteenth century and the eleventh century BCE, covering the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties of Egypt. The New Kingdom followed the Second Intermediate Period and was succeeded by the Third Intermediate Period. It was Egypt's most prosperous time and marked the peak of its power.

The Ptolemaic dynasty was a Macedonian Greek royal family which ruled the Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt during the Hellenistic period. Their rule lasted for 275 years, from 305 BCE to 30 BCE. They were the last dynasty of ancient Egypt.

Painting

All Egyptian reliefs were painted, and less prestigious works in tombs, temples, and palaces were just painted on a flat surface. Stone surfaces were prepared by whitewash, or, if rough, a layer of coarse mud plaster, with a smoother gesso layer above; some finer limestones could take paint directly. Pigments were mostly mineral, chosen to withstand strong sunlight without fading. The binding medium used in painting remains unclear; egg tempera and various gums and resins have been suggested. It is clear that true fresco, painted into a thin layer of wet plaster, was not used. Instead, the paint was applied to dried plaster, in what is called *fresco a secco* in Italian. After painting, a varnish or resin was usually applied as a protective coating, and many paintings with some exposure to the elements have survived remarkably well, although those on fully exposed walls rarely have. Small objects including wooden statuettes were often painted using similar techniques.



Nebamun hunting in the marshes, Nebamun's tomb-chapel. C. 1350 BCE, fresco, British Museum

See http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/galleries/ancient_egypt/room_61_tomb-chapel_nebamun/nebamun_animation.aspx for an interactive recreation of what Nebamun's funeral chapel might have looked like.

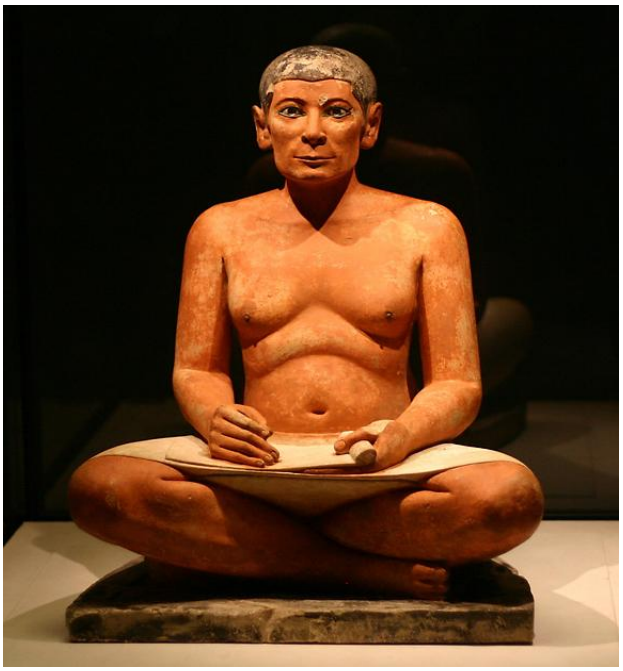
Many ancient Egyptian paintings have survived due to Egypt's extremely dry climate. The paintings were often made with the intent of making a pleasant afterlife for the deceased. The themes included journey through the afterworld or protective deities introducing the deceased to the gods of the underworld (such as Osiris). Some tomb paintings show activities that the deceased were involved in when they were alive and wished to carry on doing for eternity. Egyptian paintings are painted in such a way to show a profile view and a side view of the animal or person—a technique known as composite view. Their main colors were red, blue, black, gold, and green.



Wall painting of Nefertari: Egyptian paintings are painted in such a way to show a profile view and a side view of the animal or person. This painting, for example, shows the head from a profile view and the body from a frontal view. The main colors used were red, blue, black, gold, and green

Sculpture

The monumental sculpture of Ancient Egypt is world famous, but refined and delicate small works exist in much greater numbers. The Egyptians used the distinctive technique of sunk relief, which is well suited to very bright sunlight. The main figures in reliefs adhere to the same figure convention as in painting, with parted legs (where not seated) and head shown from the side, but the torso from the front, and a standard set of proportions making up the figure, using 18 “fists” to go from the ground to the hair-line on the forehead. This appears as early as the Narmer Palette from Dynasty I, but elsewhere the convention is not used for minor figures shown engaged in some activity, such as the captives and corpses. Other conventions make statues of males darker than females. Very conventionalized portrait statues appear from as early as Dynasty II (before 2,780 BCE), and, with the exception of the art of the Amarna period of Ahkenaten and some other periods such as Dynasty XII, the idealized features of rulers changed little until after the Greek conquest.



The Seated Scribe, Old Kingdom, Saqqara, painted limestone with inlaid rock crystal eyes, and nipples made of wood. Height: 53.7 cm; width: 44 cm; depth: 35 cm. Louvre, Paris. BY-Ivo Jansch via Flickr CC-BY-SA

By Dynasty IV (2680–2565 BCE) at the latest, the idea of the Ka statue was firmly established. These were put in tombs as a resting place for the *ka* portion of the soul. The so-called reserve heads, or plain hairless heads, are especially naturalistic, though the extent to which there was real portraiture in Ancient Egypt is still debated.

Early tombs also contained small models of the slaves, animals, buildings and objects – such as boats necessary for the deceased to continue his lifestyle in the afterworld – and later Ushabti figures. However, the great majority of wooden sculpture has been lost to decay, or probably used as fuel. Small figures of deities, or their animal personifications, are commonly found in popular materials such as pottery . There were also large numbers of small carved objects, from figures of the gods to toys and carved utensils. Alabaster was often used for expensive versions of these, while painted wood was the most common material, normally used for the small models of animals, slaves, and possessions that were placed in tombs to provide for the afterlife.

Very strict conventions were followed while crafting statues, and specific rules governed the appearance of every Egyptian god. For example, the sky god (Horus) was essentially to be represented with a falcon's head, while the god of funeral rites (Anubis) was to be always shown with a jackal's head. Artistic works were ranked according to their compliance with these conventions, and the conventions were followed so strictly that, over three thousand years, the appearance of statues changed very little. These conventions were intended to convey the timeless and non-aging quality of the figure's *ka*.

The monumental sculpture of Ancient Egypt is world famous, but refined and delicate small works exist in much greater numbers. The Egyptians used the distinctive technique of sunken relief, which is well suited to very bright sunlight. The main figures in reliefs adhere to the same figure convention as in painting, with parted legs (where not seated) and head shown from the side, but the torso from the front, and a standard set of proportions making up the figure, using 18 "fists" to go from the ground to the hair-line on the forehead. This appears as early as the Narmer Palette from Dynasty I (c. 31st century BCE), but there, as elsewhere, the convention is not used for minor figures shown engaged in some activity, such as the captives and corpses. Other conventions make statues of males darker than females. Figures shown from multiple perspectives – head in profile, shoulders front, legs and feet in profile – are called **composite** figures.

Early tombs contained small sculptural models of the slaves, animals, buildings, and objects, such as boats necessary for the deceased to continue his lifestyle in the afterlife, and later Ushabti figures. However, the great majority of wooden sculpture has been lost to decay, or probably used as fuel. Small figures of deities, or their animal personifications, are commonly found in popular materials such as pottery. There were also large numbers of small carved objects, from figures of the gods to toys and carved utensils. Alabaster was often used for expensive versions of these, while painted wood was the most common material, normally used for the small models of animals, slaves, and possessions that were placed in tombs to provide for the afterlife.



Shabti figures: Shabti were funerary figurines that were placed in tombs along with the deceased to assist them in the afterlife

Architecture of the New Kingdom

The golden age of the New Kingdom created huge prosperity for Egypt and allowed for the proliferation of monumental architecture.

It is the period of Hatshepsut, Tutankhamun, Ramses II, and other famous pharaohs. The wealth gained through military dominance created huge prosperity for Egypt and allowed for the proliferation of monumental architecture, especially works that glorified the pharaohs' achievements. Starting with Hatshepsut, buildings were of a grander scale than anything previously seen in the Middle Kingdom.

The Valley of the Kings

By this time, pyramids were no longer built by kings, but they continued to build magnificent tombs. This renowned valley in Egypt is where, for a period of nearly 500 years, tombs were constructed for the Pharaohs and powerful nobles of the New Kingdom. The valley is known to contain 63 tombs and chambers, the most well known of which is the tomb of Tutankhamun (commonly known as King Tut). Despite its small size, it is the most complete ancient Egyptian royal tomb ever found. In 1979, the Valley became a World Heritage Site, along with the rest of the Theban Necropolis.

Hatshepsut

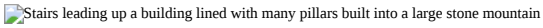
Sculpture in the New Kingdom continued in the traditional Egyptian style, with many great works produced by pharaohs over the years. However, during the later Amarna period, it underwent a drastic shift in style to emphasize more naturalistic (and less idealistic) human figures, such as those with drooping bellies. While reliefs and sculptures in the round continued to be painted, the skin tones of male and female figures was now the same value of brown. Some scholars believe that the shift was due to a new group of artists whose training was different from those trained in the traditional methods at Karnak.

Hatshepsut's (1508–1458 BCE) construction of statues was so prolific that, today, almost every major museum in the world has a statue of hers among their collections. While some statues show her in typically feminine attire, others depict her in the royal ceremonial attire. The physical aspect of the gender of pharaohs was rarely stressed in the art, and with few exceptions, subjects were idealized. The Osirian statues of Hatshepsut, located at her tomb, follow the Egyptian tradition of depicting the dead pharaoh as the god Osiris. However, many of the official statues commissioned by Hatshepsut show her less symbolically, and more naturally, as a woman in typical dresses of the nobility of her day.



Detail of Hatshepsut (c. 1473–1458 BCE): Hatshepsut is depicted in the clothing of a male king, though with a feminine form—differing from the Osirian statues in which she appears much more androgynous

The Temple of Hatshepsut was Hatshepsut's mortuary temple and was the first to be built in the area. The focal point of the tomb was the *Djeser-Djeseru*, a colonnaded structure of perfect harmony that predates the Parthenon by nearly one thousand years. Built into a cliff face, *Djeser-Djeseru*, or "the Sublime of Sublimes," sits atop a series of terraces that once were graced with lush gardens. Funerary goods belonging to Hatshepsut include a lioness "throne," a game board with carved lioness head, red-jasper game pieces bearing her title as Pharaoh, a signet ring, and a partial shabti figurine bearing her name.



Collonaded design of Hatshepsut temple: Hatshepsut's temple is most famous for its Djeser-Djeseru, a collonaded structure of such architectural skill that predates the Parthenon by nearly one thousand years

Amarna Art

The style of sculpture shifted drastically during the Amarna Period in the late Eighteenth Dynasty , when Pharaoh Akhenaten moved the capital to the city of Amarna. This art is characterized by a sense of movement and activity in images, with figures having raised heads, many figures overlapping, and many scenes full and crowded. Sunken relief was widely used. Figures are depicted less idealistically and more realistically, with an elongation and narrowing of the neck; sloping of the forehead and nose; prominent chin; large ears and lips; spindle-like arms and calves; and large thighs, stomachs, and hips. For example, many depictions of Akhenaten's body show him with wide hips, a drooping stomach, thick lips, and thin arms and legs. This is a divergence from the earlier Egyptian art which shows men with perfectly chiseled bodies, and there is generally a more "feminine" quality in male figures. Some scholars suggest that the presentation of the human body as imperfect during the Amarna period is in deference to Aten.



Artist's sketch: Walk In The Garden; limestone, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, c. 1335 BC: A relief of a royal couple in the Armana style. The figures are thought to be Akhenaten and Nefertiti, Smenkhkare and Meritaten, or Tutankhamen and Ankhesenamun

Like previous works, faces on reliefs continued to be shown exclusively in profile. The illustration of figures' hands and feet showed great detail, with fingers and toes depicted as long and slender. The skin color of both males and females was generally dark brown, in contrast to the previous tradition of depicting women with lighter skin. Along with traditional court scenes, intimate scenes were often portrayed. In a relief of Akhenaten, he is shown with his primary wife, Nefertiti, and their children in an intimate setting. His children are shrunken to appear smaller than their parents, a routine stylistic feature of traditional Egyptian art.



Relief portrait of Akhenaten (c. 1345 BCE): Akhenaten represented in the typical Amarna period style

While the religious changes of the Amarna period were brief, the styles introduced to sculpture had a lasting influence on Egyptian culture.



House altar showing Akhenaten, Nefertiti and three of their daughters. 18th dynasty, reign of Akhenaten, limestone, 12.8” H, 15.4” w. Egyptian Museum of Berlin. PD-US

Akhenaten’s extraordinary upheaval of Egyptian pictorial, religious, and governmental tradition lived only as long as he did. His son (by another wife, not Nefertiti) took everything back the way it had been before his father’s rule. He was a short-lived pharaoh, but one that left a very big impression on the world.

Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun was an Egyptian pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who ruled from around 1332 BC to 1323 BCE. Popularly referred to as “King Tut,” the boy-king took the throne when he was nine and ruled until his early death at age nineteen. Tutankhamun was buried in a tomb that was small relative to his status. His death may have occurred unexpectedly, before the completion of a grander royal tomb, so that his mummy was buried in a tomb intended for someone else. His mummy still rests in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings, though is now on display in a climate-controlled glass box rather than his original golden sarcophagus . Relics and artifacts from his tomb, including his pectoral jewels and a red granite lion, are among the most traveled artifacts in the world.



Harry Burton, Howard Carter with Innermost Coffin of Tutankhamun, 1922 Copyright: Griffith Institute, University of Oxford’, (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk)

Painted walls in the burial chamber of Tutankhamun’s tomb, Valley of the Kings, Egypt (late 14th century BCE): Tutankhamun’s burial chamber contained beautiful works of art, text, and hieroglyphics.



Tutankhamen Death Mask, gold, lapis lazuli, other precious stones. CC-BY-SA

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3.4: Ancient Aegean

Sculpture of the Cyclades

Cycladic art during the Greek Bronze Age is noted for its abstract, geometric designs of male and female figures.

Key Points

- The Cyclades are a chain of Greek islands in the middle of the Aegean Sea. They encircle the island of Delos.
- Cycladic marble figurines of abstract male and female forms have been found at burial sites. These figurines are small, abstract, and rely on geometric shapes and flat plans for their design and would have been painted.
- The female figurines depict a woman with her legs together and arms folded over her abdomen, with her breasts and pubic region emphasized.
- The male figures are often depicted sitting in a chair and playing a harp or a lyre.

Key Terms

- **incised**: To mark or cut the surface of an object for decoration.
- **Cycladic**: Of, or relating to the Cyclades.
- **schematic:** following a repeated geometric form and/or proportion.

The Cyclades were known for their white marble, mined during the Greek Bronze Age and throughout Classical history. Their geographical location placed them, like the island of Crete, in the center of trade between Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Near East. The indigenous civilization on the Cyclades reached its high point during the Bronze Age. The islands were later occupied by the Minoans, Mycenaeans, and later the Greeks.



Map of the Cyclades islands: A map marking the Cyclades islands

Cycladic Sculptures

Cycladic art is best known for its small-scale, marble figurines. From the late fourth millennium BCE to the early second millennium BCE, Cycladic sculptures went through a series of stylistic shifts, with their bodily forms varying from geometric to organic. The purpose of these figurines is unknown, although all that have been discovered were located in graves. While it is clear that they were regularly used in funerary practices, their precise function remains a mystery.

Some are found in graves completly intact, others are found broken into pieces, others show signs of being used during the lifetime of the deceased, but some graves do not contain the figurines. Furthermore, the figurines were buried equally between men and women. The male and female forms do not seem to be identified with a specific gender during burial. These figures are based in simple geometric shapes. The repetition of geometric forms and proportions – like those of Egyptian figures – allow the term **schematic** to be applied to these figures.

Cycladic Female Figures

The abstract female figures all follow the same mold. Each is a carved statuette of a nude woman with her arms crossed over her abdomen. The bodies are roughly triangular and the feet are kept together. The head of the women is an inverted triangle with a

rounded chin and the nose of the figurine protrudes from the center.

Each figure has modeled breasts, and incised lines draw attention to the pubic region with a triangle. The swollen bellies on some figurines might indicate pregnancy or symbolic fertility. The incised lines also provide small details, such as toes on the feet, and to delineate the arms from each other and the stomach.

Their flat back and inability to stand on their carved feet suggest that these figures were meant to lie down. While today they are featureless and remain the stark white of the marble, traces of paint allow us to know that they were once colored. Paint would have been applied on the face to demarcate the eyes, mouth, and hair. Dots were used to decorate the figures with bracelets and necklaces.



Cycladic female figure: A Cycladic female figure. Marble. Cyclades, Greece. c. 2500 BCE

Cycladic Male Figures

Male figures are also found in Cycladic grave sites. These figures differ from the females, as the male typically sits on a chair and plays a musical instrument, such as the pipes or a harp. Harp players, like the one in the example below, play the frame harp, a Near Eastern ancestor of the modern harp.

The figures, their chairs, and instruments are all carved into elegant, cylindrical shapes. Like the female figures, the shape of the male figure is reliant on geometric shapes and flat planes. The incised lines provide details (such as toes), and paint added distinctive features to the now-blank faces.



Cycladic male figure: A Cycladic male figure with the harp. Marble. Santorini, Greece. c. 2500 BCE

Other Cycladic Figures

While reclining female and seated male figurines are the most common Cycladic sculptures discovered, other forms were produced, such as animals and abstracted humanoid forms. Examples include the terra cotta figurines of bovine animals (possibly oxen or bulls) that date to 2200–2000 BCE, and small, flat sculptures that resemble female figures shaped like violins; these date to the Grotta–Pelos culture, also known as Early Cycladic I (c. 3300–2700 BCE). Like other Cycladic sculptures discovered to date, the purposes of these figurines remain unknown.



Terra cotta figurines (2200–2000 BCE): These bovine figures may be oxen or bulls



Violin-shaped female figurines (c. 3300–2700 BCE): These flat, abstracted figurines of the female body provide one example of how its representation evolved in Cycladic art

The Minoans

The Protopalatial period of Minoan civilization (1900 to 1700 BCE) saw the establishment of administrative centers on Crete; the Neopalatial Period (1700 to 1450 BCE) can be considered the apex, or height, of Minoan civilization.

Key Points

- The Minoan civilization was named after the mythical King Minos, because the first excavator, Sir Arthur Evans , mistook the many rooms and corridors of the administrative palace of Knossos to be the labyrinth in which Minos kept the Minotaur.
- The Protopalatial period (1900–1700 BCE) saw the establishment of administrative centers on the island of Crete. The identifying features of Minoan civilization—extensive sea trade and the building of communal civic centers—are first seen on the island during this time.
- The Protopalatial period ended in 1700 BCE when the palaces of the island were destroyed and life on the island was significantly disrupted. The unknown cataclysmic event is believed to be either an earthquake or an invasion.
- During the Neopalatial period (1700–1450 BCE), the Minoans recovered from the cataclysm and reached the height of their civilization, eventually controlling the major trade routes in the Mediterranean.

Key Terms

- **labyrinth**: A maze, especially underground or covered.
- **minotaur**: A monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man.
- **Linear A:** A syllabary (set of written characters representing syllables) used to write the as-yet-undeciphered Minoan language, and an apparent predecessor to other scripts.

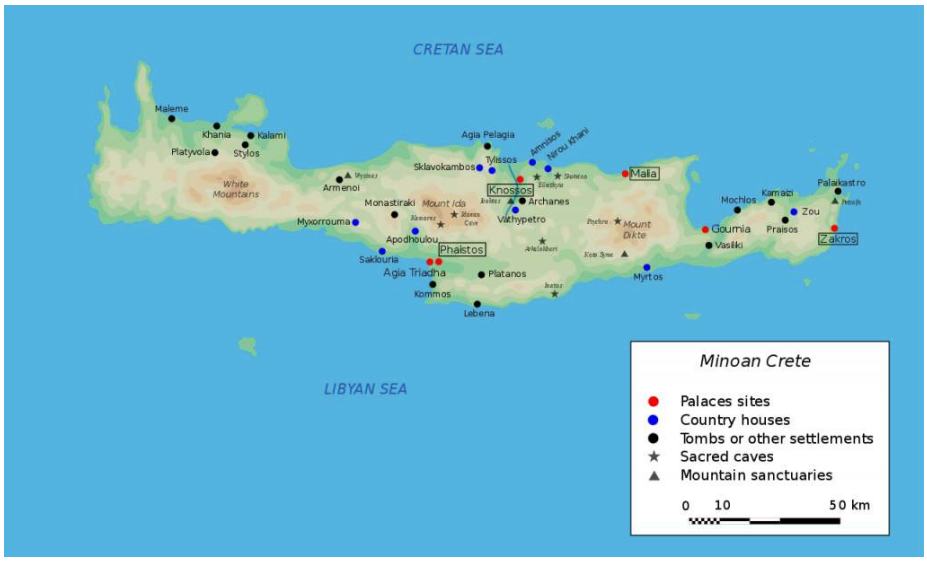
Discovery and Excavation

The ancient sites on the island of Crete were first excavated in the early 1900s by the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans. Evans excavated the site of Knossos, where he discovered a palace. From this fact and related points, he decided to name the civilization after the mythical King Minos.

The many rooms of the palace at Knossos were so oddly shaped and disordered to Evans that they reminded him of the labyrinth of the Minotaur. According to myth, Minos' wife had an illicit union with a white bull, which lead to the birth of a half bull and half man, known as the Minotaur. King Minos had his court artist and inventor, Daedalus, build an inescapable labyrinth for the Minotaur to live in.

Archaeological evidence dates the arrival of the earliest inhabitants of Crete in approximately 6000 BCE. Over the next four thousand years the inhabitants developed a civilization based on agriculture, trade, and production. The Minoan's civilization on Crete existed during the Bronze Age, from 3000 to 1100 BCE, although the Mycenaeans from Greece invaded the island in the mid-1400s BCE and occupied it for the last centuries before the Greek Dark Age.

The Minoans were known as great seafarers. They traded extensively throughout the Mediterranean region.



Map of Minoan Crete: A map of Minoan Crete

Protopalatial Period

The Protopalatial Period is considered the civilization's second phase of development, lasting from 1900 to 1700 BCE. During this time the major sites on the island were developed, including the palatial sites of Knossos, Phaistos, and Kato Zakros, which were the first palaces or administrative centers built on Crete.

These civic centers appear to denote the emergence of a collective community governing system, instead of system in which a king ruled over each town. During this period the Minoan trade network expanded into Egypt and the Near East; the first signs of writing, the still undeciphered language Linear A, appear. The period ended with a cataclysmic event, perhaps an earthquake or an invasion, which destroyed the palace centers.

Neopalatial Period

The Neopalatial period occurred from 1700 to 1450 BCE, during which time the Minoans saw the height of their civilization. Following the destruction of the first palaces in approximately 1700 BCE, the Minoans rebuilt these centers into the palaces that were first excavated by Sir Arthur Evans.

During this period, Minoan trade increased and the Minoans were considered to rule the Mediterranean trading routes between Greece, Egypt, Anatolia, the Near East, and perhaps even Spain. The Minoans began to settle in colonies away from Crete, including on the islands of the Cyclades, Rhodes, and in Egypt.

Minoan Architecture

Minoan palace centers were divided into numerous zones for civic, storage, and production purposes; they also had a central, ceremonial courtyard.

Key Points

- The palaces excavated on Crete functioned more as administrative centers with rooms for civic functions, storage, workshops, and shrines located around a central, ceremonial courtyard.
- The palaces have no fortification walls, suggesting a lack of enemies and conflict, although the natural surroundings provide a high level of protection, and the multitude of rooms creates a continuous, protective façade.
- Minoan columns were uniquely shaped, constructed from wood, and painted. They are tapered at the bottom, larger at the top, and fitted with a bulbous, pillow-like capital.
- The complex at Phaistos bears many similarities with its counterpart at Knossos, although it is smaller.
- Minoan builders rebuilt new complexes atop older ones in the aftermath of damaging earthquakes.

Key Terms

- **pithoi**: (Singular: pithos) Large storage jars for liquids—oil, wine, and water—and grains.
- **labyrinth**: A maze, especially underground or covered.

- **fresco**: A water-based painting applied to wet or dry plaster.
- **capital**: The topmost part of a column.

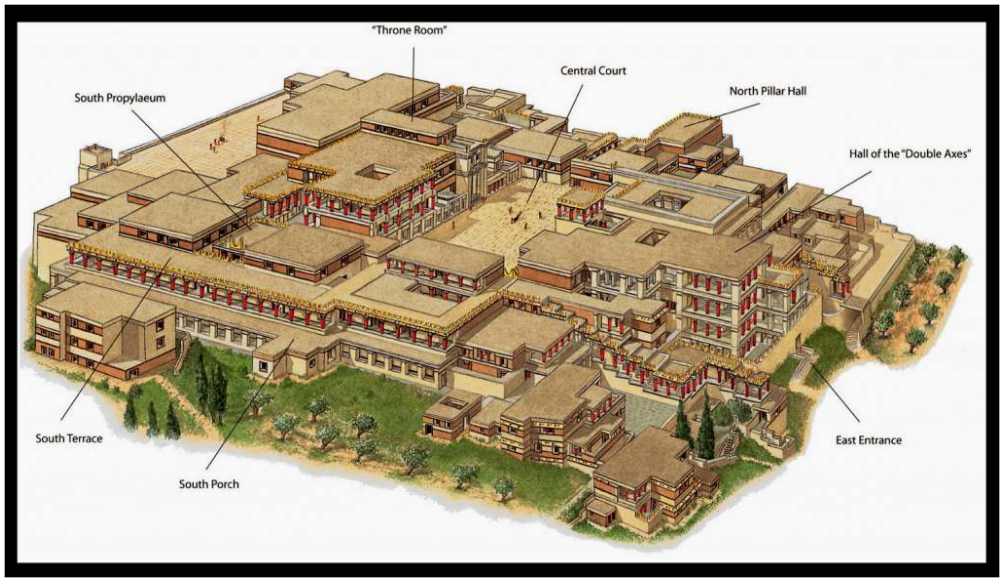
The most well known and excavated architectural buildings of the Minoans were the administrative palace centers, although small temple structures are known.

When Sir Arthur Evans first excavated at Knossos, not only did he mistakenly believe he was looking at the legendary labyrinth of King Minos, he also thought he was excavating a palace. However, the small rooms and excavation of large pithoi, storage vessels, and archives led researchers to believe that these palaces were actually administrative centers. Even so, the name became ingrained, and these large, communal buildings across Crete are known as palaces.

Although each one is unique, they share similar features and functions. The largest and oldest palace centers are at Knossos, Malia, Phaistos, and Kato Zakro.

The Complex at Knossos

The complex at Knossos provides an example of the monumental architecture built by the Minoans. The most prominent feature on the plan is the palace's large, central courtyard. This courtyard may have been the location of large ritual events, including bull leaping, and a similar courtyard is found in every Minoan palace center.



Plan of the palace at Knossos: An overview map of the palace at Knossos, Crete, Greece

Several small tripartite shrines surround the courtyard. The numerous corridors and rooms of the palace center create multiple areas for storage, meeting rooms, shrines, and workshops.

The absence of a central room and living chambers suggest the absence of a king and, instead, the presence and rule of a strong, centralized government. The palaces also have multiple entrances that often take long paths to reach the central courtyard or a set of rooms. There are no fortification walls, although the multitude of rooms creates a protective, continuous façade. While this provides some level of fortification, it also provides structural stability for earthquakes. Even without a wall, the rocky and mountainous landscape of Crete and its location as an island creates a high level of natural protection.



Restored north portico: The rocky and mountainous landscape of Crete creates a high level of natural protection

The palaces are organized not only into zones along a horizontal plane, but also have multiple stories. Grand staircases decorated with columns and frescos connect to the upper levels of the palaces, only some parts of which survive today. Interior spaces have wells which are open to the sky to provide ventilation and light. The Minoans also created careful drainage systems and cisterns for collecting and storing water, as well as sanitation.

Their architectural columns are uniquely constructed and easily identified as Minoan. They are constructed from wood, as opposed to stone, and are tapered at the bottom. They stood on stone bases and had large, bulbous tops, now known as cushion capitals. The Minoans painted their columns bright red and the capitals were often painted black.



Restored interior stairwell: Palace at Knossos, Crete, Greece. Circa 1700–1400 BCE
Minoan Painting

Minoan Painting

Minoan painting is distinguished by its vivid colors and curvilinear shapes that bring a liveliness and vitality to scenes.

Key Points

- The fresco known as Bull Leaping, found in the palace of Knossos, is one of the seminal Minoan paintings. It depicts the Minoan culture ‘s fascination with the bull and the unique event of bull leaping—all painted in the distinctive Minoan style.

- The Minoan city of Akrotiri on the island of Thera was destroyed by a volcanic eruption that preserved the wall paintings in the town's homes. One fresco, known as Flotilla, depicts a highly developed society.
- Kamares ware is pottery made from a fine clay. These vessels are painted with marine scenes and abstract flowers, shapes, and geometric lines.
- Marine-style vase painting depicts marine life and scenes with organic shapes that fill the entire surface of the pot, using a technique known as horror vacui. Unlike Kamares ware, Marine-style scenes are painted in dark colors on a light surface.

Key Terms

- **horrorvacui**: Latin, meaning fear of empty space; this is also the name for a style of painting when the entire surface of a space is filled with patterns and figures.
- **fresco**: In painting, the technique of applying water-based pigment to plaster.
- **buon fresco**: A more durable mural painting technique in which alkaline resistant pigments, ground in water, are applied to plaster when it is still wet, as opposed to fresco-secco when the plaster has been allowed to dry and is remoistened.
- **flying gallop:** an image of an animal depicted with all four feet off the ground at once to suggest speed and force.

Fresco

The Minoans decorated their palace complexes and homes with buon fresco wall paintings which have remained colorful and intact with the wall for centuries.

In the Minoan variation, the stone walls are first covered with a mixture of mud and straw, then thinly coated with lime plaster, and lastly with layers of fine plaster. The Minoan color palette is based in earth tones of white, brown, red, and yellow. Black and vivid blue are also used. These color combinations reflect the colors of nature that surrounded the Minoan people and create vivid and rich decoration.

Because the Minoan "alphabet", known as Linear A, has yet to be deciphered, scholars must rely on the culture's visual art to provide insights into Minoan life. The frescoes discovered in locations such as Knossos and Akrotiri inform us of the plant and animal life of the islands of Crete and Thera (Santorini), the common styles of clothing, and the activities the people practiced. For example, men wore kilts and loincloths. Women wore short-sleeve dresses with flounced skirts whose bodices were open to the navel, allowing their breasts to be exposed.



Fresco depicting three women: This fresco from the complex at Knossos depicts a popular fashion for Minoan women

Bull Leaping (aka Toreador) Fresco at Knossos

Fragments of frescoes found at Knossos provide us with glimpses into Minoan culture and rituals. A fresco found on an upper story of the palace has come to be known as Bull Leaping. The image depicts a bull in **flying gallop** with one person at his horns, another at his feet, and a third, whose skin color is brown instead of white, inverted in a handstand leaping over the bull.

While the different skin color of the figures may differentiate male (dark) and female (light) figures, the similarity of their clothing and body shapes (lean with few curves) suggest that the figures may all be male. The figures participate in an activity known as bull-leaping.

The human figures are stylized with narrow waists, broad shoulders, long, slender, muscular legs, and cylindrical arms. Unlike the twisted – or composite – perspective seen in Egyptian or Ancient Near Eastern works of art, these figures are shown in full profile, an element that adds to the lifelike quality of the scene.



Bull Leaping: A fresco found on an upper story of the palace at Knossos, Crete, Greece. Circa 1450–1400 BCE

Although the specifics of bull leaping remain a matter of debate, it is commonly interpreted as a ritualistic activity performed in connection with bull worship. In most cases, the leaper would literally grab a bull by his horns, which caused the bull to jerk his neck up and back. This motion gave the leaper the momentum necessary to perform somersaults and other acrobatic tricks or stunts. Bull leaping appears to divide these steps between two participants, with a third extending his or her arms, possibly to catch the leaper.

Thera

The Minoans settled on other islands besides Crete, including the volcanic, Cycladic island of Thera (present-day Santorini). The volcano on Thera erupted in mid-second millennium BCE and destroyed the Minoan city of Akrotiri. Akrotiri was entombed by pumice and ash and since its rediscovery has been referred to as the Minoan Pompeii. The frescoes on Akrotiri were preserved by the blanketing volcanic ash.

The wall paintings found on Thera provide significant information about Minoan life and culture, depicting a highly developed society. A fresco commonly called Flotilla or Akrotiri Ship Procession represents a culture adept at a variety of seafaring occupations.

Differences in clothing styles could refer to different ranks and roles in society. Deer, dolphins, and large felines point to a sense of biodiversity among the islands of the Minoan civilization.

Long row of ships in between cities

Flotilla or Akrotiri Ship Procession: This panoramic fresco depicts the Minoans as a highly developed civilization

A wall painting known as the Landscape with Swallows, or as the Spring Fresco, depicts a whimsical, hilly landscape with lilies sprouting from the ground. Sparrows, painted in blue, white, and red, swoop around the landscape. The lilies sway gracefully and the hills create an undulating rhythm around the room. The fresco does not depict a naturalistic landscape, but instead suggests an essence of the land and nature whose liveliness is enhanced through the colors and curvilinear lines. It evokes the integrated quality of the Minoans culture with the natural environment.



Landscape with Sparrows, or Spring Fresco: Akrotiri, Thera, Greece. c. 1650 BCE

Vase Painting

Minoan ceramics and vase painting are uniquely stylized and are similar in artistic style to Minoan wall painting. As with Minoan frescoes, themes from nature and marine life are often depicted on their pottery. Similar earth-tone colors are used, including black, white, brown, red, and blue.

Kamares ware, a distinctive type of pottery painted in white, red, and blue over a black backdrop, is created from a fine clay. The paintings depict marine scenes, as well as abstract floral shapes, and they often include abstract lines and shapes, including spirals and waves. These stylized, floral shapes include lilies, palms, papyrus, and leaves that fill the entire surface of the pot with bold designs. The pottery is named for the location where it was first found in the late nineteenth century—a cave sanctuary at Kamares, on Mount Ida. This style of pottery is found throughout the island of Crete as well in a variety of locations on the Mediterranean.



Kamares ware vessel: This is a Kamares ware vessel with an abstract floral design. Minoan, circa 2100– 1700 BCE

The Marine style emerged during the late Minoan period. As the name suggests, the decorations on these vessels take their cue from the sea. The vessels are almost entirely covered with sea creatures such as dolphins, fish, and octopi, along with seaweed, rock, and sponges.

Unlike their Kamares ware predecessors, the light and dark color scheme is inverted: the figures are dark on a light background. Like the landscape frescoes at Thera, these paintings demonstrate a keen understanding and intimate knowledge of the marine environment.

In the Marine-style Octopus Vase from the city of Palaikastro, the octopus wraps around the jug, mimicking and accentuating its round shape. The octopus is painted in great detail, from each of its distinct stylized suckers to its bulbous head and the extension of its long tentacles. The surface of this vessel is covered by the main image; bits of seaweed fill the negative space.

This filling of the empty space with additional images or designs is another characteristic of Minoan Marine-style pottery. The style is known as horror vacui, which is Latin for fear of empty space. The same aesthetic is seen later, in Greek Geometric pottery.



Octopus vase: Octopus vase from Palaikastro, Crete, Greece. Circa 1500 BCE

Minoan Sculpture

Minoan sculpture consists of figurines that reflect the culture's artistic style and important aspects of daily life.

Key Points

- Most known Minoan sculptures are small scale. They range from single figures, often frontal, to figure groups that include both people and animals. The wide variety of materials used for these figurines represent the extent of the Minoan trade network throughout the Mediterranean.
- The Snake Goddess statue from Knossos represents an important female figure in Minoan culture. Due to her connection with snakes and felines, as well as her bare breasts, she is perhaps an earth goddess or a Minoan priestess.
- The Bull Leaper demonstrates the Minoan use of bronze in art as well as highlighting the importance of the bull in Minoan sculpture and artistic style.
- An ivory bull leaper from Knossos demonstrates another position the acrobat's body assumed during the act.
- The Palaikastro Kouros is a rare example of a large-scale Minoan sculpture. Its size and rare materials lead experts to believe that it was used as a cult image.

Key Terms

- **lost-wax casting**: The most common method of using molten metal to make hollow, one-of-a-kind sculptures. When heat is applied to the clay mold, the wax layer within melts and forms channels, which the artist then fills with molten metal.
- **faience**: A low-fired, opaque, quartz ceramic that creates a glass-like material in bright shades of blue, green, white, and brown that originates from Ancient Egypt.
- **chthonic**: Dwelling within or under the earth.
- **curvilinear**: Having bends; curved; formed by curved lines.

As with their painting, Minoan sculpture demonstrates stylistic conventions including curvilinear forms; active, energized scenes; and long-limbed humans with broad shoulders and narrow waists. Women are often depicted in large, long, layered skirts that accentuate their hips. So far, the majority of sculptures and figurines found during Minoan excavations have been small scale.



Minoan Woman, c. 1600-1500 BCE.: Bronze. Crete

Materials

The small-scale sculptures of the Minoans were produced in many different materials including ivory, gold, faience, and bronze. The variety of materials acknowledges the extensive trade network established by the Minoans. For instance, faience, a quartz ceramic, is an Egyptian material. Its presence in sculpture found on Crete demonstrates that the material was shipped raw from Egypt to Crete, where it was then formed to create Minoan sculpture. Bronze was an important material in Minoan culture and many figurines were produced in this medium, mostly created using the lost-wax casting technique.

Snake Goddess

One figurine, known as the Snake Goddess, depicts a woman with open arms who holds a snake in each hand, with a feline sitting on her head. The purpose or function of the statue is unknown, although it is believed that she may have been an earth goddess or priestess.

The snakes are considered chthonic animals—related to the earth and the ground— and are often symbols of earth deities. Furthermore, the Snake Goddess is dressed in a layered skirt with a tight bodice, covered shoulders, and exposed breasts. The prominence of her breasts may suggest that she is fertility figure. Although her function remains unknown, the figure's significance to the culture is unquestionable.



Snake Goddess, circa 1600 BCE.: Palace at Knossos, Knossos, Crete

Other figures in similar poses and outfits have also been found among Minoan ruins.

Bull Leaper

The Bull Leaper bronze, depicting a bull and an acrobat, was created as a single group. The figures are similar in style and position, as seen in several bull-leaping frescoes, including one from the palatial complex at Knossos.



Bull Leaper, circa 1550–1450 BCE.: Bronze. Southwest Crete

The bull stands frozen in a **flying gallop**, while a leaper appears to be flipping over his back. The acrobat's feet are planted firmly on the bull's rump, and the figure bends backwards with its arms planted on the bull's head, perhaps preparing to launch off of the bull. The two figures, bull and leaper, mirror each other, as the bull's back sways in the gallop and the figure's back is arched in a deep back bend. The object is made with curvilinear lines and the positioning of both figures adds a high degree of movement and action that was commonly found in Minoan art.

The Minoan culture appears by the artifacts left behind to be a peaceful, nature-loving, athletic culture which existed in an idyllic setting for centuries.

Mycenaean Architecture

The architecture of Mycenaean citadel sites reflects the war-like culture and its constant need for protection and fortification.

Key Points

- The city of Mycenae was the center of Mycenaean culture. It is especially known for its protective gateway, the Lion Gate, and the Treasury of Atreus, an example of a tholos tomb. Mycenaean architecture reflects their warring society. A wide, strong wall built from large, roughly cut stones (known as cyclopean masonry) was one method of protection, as was limited access to citadel sites and well-protected gates.
- Since a lintel over a doorway could not support the wall above it without collapsing, the Mycenaeans used corbeled vaults and a relieving triangle over lintels to redistribute the weight off the horizontal beam and into the supporting walls.
- The central feature of a Mycenaean citadel site was the megaron, a room that functioned as the king's audience chamber. The megaron is entered through a porch with two columns and the main room included four columns around a central hearth.
- Uniformity among the citadel sites throughout the Mycenaean civilization allow us to easily compare components such as megarons.

Key Terms

- **post-and-lintel**: A simple construction method using a header as the horizontal member over a building void supported at its ends by two vertical columns.
- **corbel**: A structural member jutting out of a wall to carry a superincumbent weight.
- **ashlar**: Masonry made of large, square-cut stones.
- **megaron**: The rectangular great hall in a Mycenaean building, usually supported with pillars.
- **cyclopeanmasonry**: A type of stonework found in Mycenaean architecture, built with massive limestone boulders that are roughly fitted together with minimal clearance between adjacent stones and no use of mortar.
- **citadel**: The core fortified area of a town or city.

Mycenaean culture can be summarized by its architecture, whose remains demonstrate the Mycenaeans' war-like culture and the dominance of citadel sites ruled by a single ruler. The Mycenaeans populated Greece and built citadels on high, rocky outcroppings that provided natural fortification and overlooked the plains used for farming and raising livestock. The citadels vary from city to city but each share common attributes, including building techniques and architectural features.

Building Techniques

The walls of Mycenaean citadel sites were often built with ashlar and massive stone blocks. The blocks were considered too large to be moved by humans and were believed by ancient Greeks to have been erected by the Cyclopes—one-eyed giants. Due to this ancient belief, the use of large, roughly cut, ashlar blocks in building is referred to as Cyclopean masonry. The thick Cyclopean walls reflect a need for protection and self-defense since these walls often encircled the citadel site and the acropolis on which the site was located.

Corbel Arch

The Mycenaeans also relied on new techniques of building to create supportive archways and vaults. A typical post and lintel structure is not strong enough to support the heavy structures built above it. Therefore, a corbeled (or corbel) arch is employed over doorways to relieve the weight on the lintel.

The corbel arch is constructed by offsetting (cantilevering) successive courses of stone (or brick) at the springline of the walls so that they project towards the archway's center from each supporting side, until the courses meet at the apex of the archway (often, the last gap is bridged with a flat stone). The corbel arch was often used by the Mycenaeans in conjunction with a relieving triangle, which was a triangular block of stone that fit into the recess of the corbeled arch and helped to redistribute weight from the lintel to the supporting walls. The triangular space may have been left open in some structures.



Corbeled vault, Tiryns: This photo shows the offsetting successive courses of stone at the springline of the walls so that they project towards the archway's center from each supporting side, until the courses meet at the apex of the archway.By User:Alexikoua, User:Panthera tigris tigris, TL User:Reedside – Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Εκδοτική Αθηνών, τ. Α' χάρτες σε σελ. 263-265, σελ. 290, 292-293 (επίσης [1], CC BY-SA 3.0

Citadel Sites

Mycenaean citadel sites were centered around the megaron, a reception area for the king. The megaron was a rectangular hall, fronted by an open, two-columned porch. It contained a more or less central open hearth, which was vented though an oculus in the roof above it and surrounded by four columns. The architectural plan of the megaron became the basic shape of Greek temples, demonstrating the cultural shift as the gods of ancient Greece took the place of the Mycenaean rulers.

Citadel sites were protected from invasion through natural and man-made fortification. In addition to thick walls, the sites were protected by controlled access. Entrance to the site was through one or two large gates, and the pathway into the main part of the citadel was often controlled by more gates or narrow passageways. Since citadels had to protect the area's people in times of warfare, the sites were equipped for sieges. Deep water wells, storage rooms, and open space for livestock and additional citizens allowed a city to access basic needs while being protected during times of war.

Mycenae

The citadel site of Mycenae was the center of Mycenaean culture. It overlooks the Argos plain on the Peloponnesian peninsula, and according to Greek mythology was the home to King Agamemnon.

The site's megaron sits on the highest part of the acropolis and is reached through a large staircase. Inside the walls are various rooms for administration and storage along with palace quarters, living spaces, and temples. A large gravesite, known as Grave Circle A, is also built within the walls.

The main approach to the citadel is through the Lion Gate, a cyclopean-walled entrance way. The gate is 20 feet wide, which is large enough for citizens and wagons to pass through, but its size and the walls on either side create a tunneling effect that makes it difficult for an invading army to penetrate.

The gate is famous for its use of the relieving arch, a corbeled arch that leaves an opening and lightens the weight carried by the lintel. The Lion Gate received its name from its decorated relieving triangle of lions one either side of a single column. This composition of lions or another feline animal flanking a single object is known as a heraldic composition. The lions represent cultural influences from the Ancient Near East. Their heads are turned to face outwards and confront those who enter the gate.



Lion Gate, limestone, circa 1300–1250 BCE, Mycenae, Greece: The Lion Gate is famous for its use of the relieving arch, a corbeled arch that leaves an opening and lightens the weight carried by the lintel

Mycenae is also home to a subterranean beehive-shaped tomb (also known as a tholos tomb) that was located outside the citadel walls. The tomb is known today as the Treasury of Atreus, due to the wealth of grave goods found there. This tomb and others like it are demonstrations of corbeled vaulting that covers an expansive open space. The vault is 44 feet high and 48 feet in diameter. The tombs are entered through a narrow passageway known as a dromos and a post-and-lintel doorway topped by a relieving triangle.

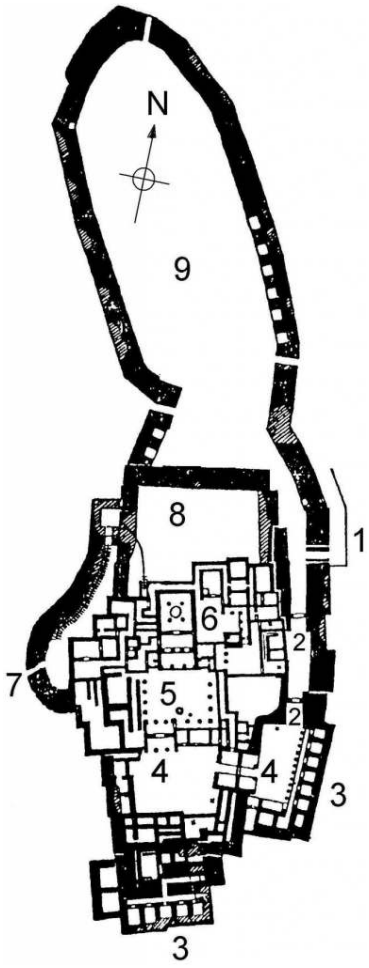


Treasury of Atreus, Mycenae, Greece, circa 1300–1250 BCE.: The Treasury of Atreus and others tombs like it are demonstrations of corbeled vaulting that covers an expansive open space

Tiryns

The citadel site of Tiryns, another example of Mycenaean fortification, was a hill fort that has been occupied over the course of 7000 years. It reached its height between 1400 and 1200 BCE, when it was one of the most important centers of the Mycenaean world. Its most notable features were its palace, its Cyclopean tunnels, its walls, and its tightly controlled access to the megaron and main rooms of the citadel.

Just a few gates provide access to the hill but only one path leads to the main site. This path is narrow and protected by a series of gates that could be opened and closed to trap invaders. The central megaron is easy to locate, and it is surrounded by various palatial and administrative rooms. The megaron is accessed through a courtyard that is decorated on three sides with a colonnade.



Ground plan of the citadel of Tiryns, circa 1400–1200 BCE, Tiryns, Greece: The citadel site of Tiryns is known for its Cyclopean vaulted tunnels that run next to its walls and its tightly controlled access to the megaron and the main rooms of the citadel

The famous megaron has a large reception hall, the main room of which had a throne placed against the right wall and a central hearth bordered by four wooden columns that served as supports for the roof. It was laid out around a circular hearth surrounded by four columns. Although individual citadel sites varied to a degree, their overall uniformity allows us to compare design elements easily. For example, the hearth of the megaron at the citadel of Pylos provides an idea of how its counterpart at Tiryns appears.



Megaron hearth at the citadel of Pylos: Due to the uniformity of citadel plans throughout the Mycenaean civilization, we can get an idea of how the hearth of the megaron at Tiryns looked by comparing it to its counterpart at Pylos. The holes at the corners of the surrounding square once held wooden columns

Mycenaean Metallurgy

The Mycenaeans were masterful metalworkers, as their gold, silver, and bronze daggers, drinking cups, and other objects demonstrate.

Key Points

- Grave Circle A and B, at Mycenae, are a series of shaft graves enclosed by a wall from the 16th century BCE. These grave sites were originally excavated by Heinrich Schleimann, and the grave goods found there demonstrate the incredible skill Mycenaeans possessed in metalwork.
- Gold death masks were commonly placed over the face of the wealthy deceased. These death masks record the main features of the dead and are made with repoussé, a metalworking technique. When compared to other masks, the Death Mask of Agamemnon is most likely a fake.
- Bronze daggers inlaid with gold, silver, and niello are a common grave good found at Mycenaean burial sites. These daggers represent international trade and cultural connections between the Mycenaeans and the Minoans, Egyptians, and Near Eastern cultures.
- Rhytons were also crafted out of gold and silver. Some, such as the Silver Siege Rhyton, were used for ritual libations, or the offering of liquids.
- Other objects of gold, silver, and bronze have been excavated from Mycenaean grave sites and cities, including armor, jewelry, signet rings, and seals.

Key Terms

- **diadem**: A crown or headband worn as a symbol of sovereignty.
- **repoussé**: A metalworking technique in which a thin sheet of malleable metal is shaped by hammering from the reverse side to create a design in low relief.
- **rhyton**: A container, having a base in the form of a head, from which fluids are intended to be drunk.
- **niello**: Any of various black metal alloys, made of sulphur with copper, silver or lead, used to create decorative designs on other metals.

Grave Circle A at Mycenae

Grave Circle A is a set of graves from the sixteenth century BCE located at Mycenae. The grave circle was originally located outside the walls of the city but was later encompassed inside the walls of the citadel when the city's walls were enlarged during the thirteenth century BCE.

The grave circle is surrounded by a second wall and only has one entrance. Inside are six tombs for nineteen bodies that were buried inside shaft graves. The shaft graves were deep, narrow shafts dug into the ground.

The body would be placed inside a stone coffin and placed at the bottom of the grave along with grave goods. The graves were often marked by a mound of earth above them and grave stele.

The gravesite was excavated by **Heinrich Schleimann** in 1876, who excavated ancient sites such as Mycenae and Troy based on the writings of Homer and was determined to find archaeological remains that aligned with observations discussed in the Iliad and the Odyssey. The archaeological methods of the nineteenth century were different than those of the twenty-first century and Schleimann's desire to discover remains that aligned with mythologies and Homeric stories did not seem as unusual as it does today. Upon excavating the tombs, Schleimann declared that he found the remains of Agamemnon and many of his followers, a claim discounted by modern archaeology.

Grave Circle B

An additional grave circle, Grave Circle B, is also located at Mycenae, although this one was never incorporated into the citadel site. The two grave circles were elite burial grounds for the ruling dynasty. The graves were filled with precious items made from expensive material, including gold, silver, and bronze.

The amount of gold, silver, and previous materials in these tombs not only depict the wealth of the ruling class of the Mycenae but also demonstrates the talent and artistry of Mycenaean metalworking. Reoccurring themes and motifs underline the culture's propensity for war and the cross-cultural connections that the Mycenaeans established with other Mediterranean cultures through trade, including the Minoans, Egyptians, and even the Orientalizing style of the Ancient Near East

Gold Death Masks

Repoussé death masks were found in many of the tombs. The death masks were created from thin sheets of gold, through a careful method of metalworking to create a low relief.

These objects are fragile, carefully crafted, and laid over the face of the dead. Schleimann called the most famous of the death masks the Mask of Agamemnon, under the assumption that this was the burial site of the Homeric king. The mask depicts a man with a triangular face, bushy eyebrows, a narrow nose, pursed lips, a mustache, and stylized ears.

This mask is an impressive and beautiful specimen but looks quite different from other death masks found at the site. The faces on other death masks are rounder; the eyes are more bulbous; and at least one bears a hint of a smile. None of the other figures have a mustache or even the hint of beard.

In fact, the mustache looks distinctly nineteenth century and is comparable to the mustache that Schleimann himself had. The artistic quality between the Mask of Agamemnon and the others seems dramatically different. Despite these differences, the Mask of Agamemnon has inserted itself into the story of Mycenaean art.



Mycenaean death mask: Mycenaean death mask with a hint of a smile. Gold, circa 1600–1500 BCE. It was found in Grave Circle A, Grave Shaft IV, at Mycenae, Greece



Mask of Agamemnon: The Mask of Agamemnon, identified by Heinrich Schliemann. Gold, circa 1600– 1500 BCE (?). It was found in Grave Circle A, Grave shaft V, at Mycenae, Greece

Bronze Daggers

Decorative bronze daggers found in the grave shafts suggest there were multicultural influences on Mycenaean artists. These ceremonial daggers were made of bronze and inlaid in silver, gold, and niello with scenes that were clearly influenced from foreign cultures.

Two daggers that were excavated depict scenes of hunts, which suggest an Ancient Near East influence. One of these scenes depicts lions hunting prey, while the other scene depicts a lion hunt. The portrayal of the figures in the lion hunt scene draws distinctly from the style of figures found in Minoan painting. These figures have narrow waists, broad shoulders, and large, muscular thighs.

The scene between the hunters and the lions is dramatic and full of energy, another Minoan influence. Another dagger depicts the influence of Minoan painting and imagery through the depiction of marine life, and Egyptian influences are seen on a dagger filled with lotus and papyrus reeds along with fowl.



Mycenaean hunting dagger: A mycenaean hunting dagger with a scene of a lion hunt. Bronze with gold, silver, and niello inlay. Circa 16th century BCE. It was found in Grave Circle A, at Mycenae, Greece

Gold and Silver Rhytons (Drinking Cups)

A variety of gold and silver drinking cups have also been found in these grave shafts. These include a **rhyton** in the shape of a bull's head, with golden horns and a decorative, stylized gold flower, made from silver repoussé.

Other cups include the golden Cup of Nestor, a large two handle cup that Schleimann attributed to the legendary Mycenaean hero Nestor, a Trojan War veteran who plays a peripheral role in The Odyssey.



The Cup of Nestor: The Cup of Nestor. Gold, circa 1600–1500 BCE. It was found in Grave Circle A, Grave Shaft IV, at Mycenae, Greece



Rhyton in the form of a bull's head: Mycenaean. Circa 1600–1500 BCE. Found in Grave Circle A



A gold rhyton in the form of a lion's head. From Grave Circle A, Mycenae, 16th c. BCE (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Other Objects

Additional gold trinkets include signet rings that depict images of hunts, combat, and animals, along with other decorative jewelry, such as bracelets, earrings, pendants, and diadems (headbands designating their wearers' sovereign status).

Bronze armor, including breastplates and helmets, were also uncovered in excavations of the tomb sites.

There are few examples of large-scale, freestanding sculptures from the Mycenaeans. A painted plaster head of a female—perhaps depicting a priestess, goddess, or sphinx —is one of the few examples of large-scale sculpture. The head is painted white, suggesting that it depicts a female. A red band wraps around her head with bits of hair underneath. The eyes and eyebrows are outlined in blue, the lips are red, and red circles surrounded by small red dots are on her cheeks and chin.

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3.5: Ancient Greece

Introduction to Ancient Greece

Ancient Greek culture spans over a thousand years, from the earliest civilizations to the cultures that became the Ancient Greeks.

Key Points

- Ancient Greek culture is noted for its government, art, architecture, philosophy, and sports, all of which became foundations for modern western society. It was admired and adopted by others, including Alexander the Great and the Romans, who helped spread Greek culture around the world. Before Greek culture took root in Greece, early civilizations thrived on the Greek mainland and the Aegean Islands. The fall of these cultures and the aftermath, known as the Dark Age, is believed to be the time when the Homeric epics were first recited.
- Greek culture began to develop during the Geometric, Orientalizing, and Archaic periods, which lasted from 900 to 480 BCE. During this time the population of city-states began to grow, Panhellenic traditions were established, and art and architecture began to reflect Greek values.
- The Early, High, and Late Classical periods in Greece occurred from 480 to 323 BCE. During these periods, Greece flourished and the polis of Athens saw its Golden Age under the leadership of Pericles. However, city-state rivalries lead to wars, and Greece was never truly stable until conquered.
- The Hellenistic period in Greece is the last period before Greek culture becomes a subset of Roman hegemony. This period occurs from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, to the Greek defeat at the Battle of Actium in 30 BCE. It marks the spread of Greek culture across the Mediterranean.

Key Terms

- **polis**: A city, or a city-state. Its plural is poleis.

Ancient Greek Culture

Ancient Greek culture covers over a thousand years of history, from the earliest civilizations in the area to the cultures that became the Ancient Greeks. Following a Greek Dark Age, Greece once more flourished and developed into the ancient culture that we recognize today.



Classical Greece: Map of Ancient Greece

Greek culture is based on a series of shared values that connected independent city- states throughout the region and expanded as far north as Mount Olympus. Greek society was insular, and loyalties were focused around one's polis (city-state). Greeks considered themselves civilized and considered outsiders to be barbaric.

While Greek daily life and loyalty was centered on one's polis, the Greeks did create leagues, which vied for control of the peninsula, and were able to unite together against a common threat (such as the Persians).

Greek culture is focused on their government, art, architecture, philosophy, and sport. Athens was intensely proud of its creation of democracy, and citizens from all poleis (city-states) took part in civic duties. Cities commissioned artists and architects to honor their gods and beautify their cities.

As a religious people, the Greeks worshipped a number of gods through sacrifices, rituals, and festivals.

Review: Bronze Age and Proto-Greek Civilizations

Cycladic Civilization

During the Bronze Age, several distinct cultures developed around the Aegean. The Cycladic civilization, around the Cyclades Islands, thrived from 3,000 to 2,000 BCE. Little is known about the Cycladic civilization because they left no written records. Their material culture is mainly excavated from grave sites, which reveal that the people produced unique, geometric marble figures.

Minoan Civilization

The Minoan civilization stretches from 3700 BCE until 1200 BCE and thrived during their Neopalatial period (from 1700 to 1400 BCE), with the large-scale building of communal palaces. Numerous archives have been discovered at Minoan sites; however their language, Linear A, has yet to be deciphered. The culture was centered on trade and production, and the Minoans were great seafarers on the Mediterranean Sea.

Mycenaean Civilization

A proto-Greek culture known as the Mycenaeans developed and flourished on the mainland, eventually conquering the Aegean Islands and Crete, where the Minoan civilization was centered. The Mycenaeans developed a fractious, war-like culture that was centered on the authority of a single ruler. Their culture eventually collapsed, but many of their citadel sites were occupied through the Greek Dark Age and rebuilt into Greek city-states.

The Dark Age

From around 1200 BCE, the palace centers and outlying settlements of the Mycenaeans' culture began to be abandoned or destroyed. By 1050 BCE, the recognizable features of Mycenaean culture had disappeared. Many explanations attribute the fall of the Mycenaean civilization and the collapse of the Bronze Age to climatic or environmental catastrophe, combined with an invasion by the Dorians or by the Sea Peoples, or to the widespread availability of edged weapons of iron, but no single explanation fits the available archaeological evidence.

This two- to three-century span of history is also known as the Homeric Age. It is believed that the Homeric epics The Iliad and The Odyssey were first recited around this time.

Ancient Greece after the Dark Ages

The Geometric and Orientalizing Periods

The Geometric period (c. 900–700 BCE), which derives its name from the proliferation of geometric designs and rendering of figures in art, witnessed the emergence of a new culture on the Greek mainland. The culture's change in language, its adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet, and its new funerary practices and material culture suggest the ethnic population changed from the mainland's previous inhabitants, the Mycenaeans. During this time, the new culture was centered on the people and independent poleis, which divided the land into regional populations. This period witnessed a growth in population and the revival of trade.

The Orientalizing period (c. 700–600 BCE) is named for the cultural exchanges the Greeks had with Eastern, or Oriental civilizations. During this time, international trade began to flourish. Art from this period reflects contact with locations such as Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Phoenicia, and Israel.

Archaic Greece

Greece's Archaic period lasted from 600 to 480 BCE, in which the Greek culture expanded. The population in Greece began to rise and the Greeks began to colonize along the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The poleis at this time were typically ruled by a single ruler who commanded the city by force. For the city of Athens, this led to the creation of democracy. Several city-states emerged as major powers, including Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes. These poleis were often warring with each other and formed coalitions to gain power and allies. The Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE marked the end of the Archaic period.

Classical Greece

The era of Classical Greece began in 480 BCE with the sacking of Athens by the Persians. The Persian invasion of Greece, first lead by Darius I and then by his son Xerxes, united Greece against a common enemy.

With the defeat of the Persian threat, Athens became the most powerful polis until the start of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BCE. These wars continued on and off until 400 BCE. While marred by war, the Classical period saw the height of Greek culture and the creation of some of Greece's most famous art and architecture. However, peace and stability in Greece was not achieved until it was conquered and united by Macedonia under the leadership of Philip II and Alexander the Great in the mid-third century BCE.

Late Classical Greece

After the Peloponnesian wars a new style of sculpture seemed to emerge. Figures became taller in proportion and gods exhibited a new moral laxity unseen in earlier periods. For the first time, goddesses were pictured nude, or semi-nude.

Hellenistic Greece

The Hellenistic period began with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE and ended with the Roman victory at the Battle of Actium in 30 BCE. Greece poleis spent this time under the hegemony of foreign rulers, first the Macedons and then the Romans, starting in 146 BCE.

New centers of Hellenic culture flourished through Greece and on foreign soil, including the cities of Pergamon, Antioch, and Alexandria—the capitals of the Attalids, Seleucids, and Ptolemies.

The Ancient Greek Gods and Their Temples

Greek religion played a central and daily role in the life of ancient Greeks, and group worship was centered on the temple and cult sites.

Greek religious traditions encompassed a large pantheon of gods, complex mythologies, rituals, and cult practices. Greece was a **polytheistic** society and looked to its gods and mythology to explain natural mysteries as well as current events. Religious festivals and ceremonies were held throughout the year, and animal sacrifice and **votive** offerings were popular ways to appease and worship the gods. Religious life, rituals, and practices were one of the unifying aspects of Greece across regions and **poleis** (cities, or city-states, such as Athens and Sparta).



The principal religious sanctuaries of the Greek Aegean: This map lists the major Greek gods and shows where their principal religious sanctuaries are located throughout the Greek Aegean region

Greek Gods

Greek gods were immortal beings who possessed human-like qualities and were represented as completely human – albeit perfectly formed – in visual art. They were moral and immoral, petty and just, and often vain. The gods were invoked to intervene and assist in matters large, small, private and public.

City-states claimed individual gods and goddess as their patrons. Temples and sanctuaries to the gods were built in every city. Many cities became cult sites due to their connection with a god or goddess and specific myths. For instance, the city of Delphi was known for its oracle and sanctuary of Apollo, because Apollo was believed to have killed a dragon that inhabited Delphi.

The history of the Greek pantheon begins with the primordial deities Gaia (Mother Earth) and Uranus (Father Sky), who were the parents of the first of twelve giants known as Titans. Among these Titans were six males and six females.

The Olympian Gods

Best known among the pantheon are the twelve Olympian gods and goddesses who resided on Mt. Olympus in northern Greece. Violence and power struggles were common in Greek mythology, and the Greeks used their mythologies to explain their lives around them, from the change in seasons to why the Persians were able to sack Athens.

The traditional pantheon of Greek gods includes:

- Zeus, the king of gods and the ruler of the sky.
- Zeus' two brothers, Poseidon (who ruled over the sea) and Hades (who ruled the underworld).
- Zeus's sister and wife, Hera, the goddess of marriage, who is frequently jealous and vindictive of Zeus's other lovers.
- Their sisters Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, and Demeter, the goddess of grain and culture.
- Zeus's children:
  - Athena (goddess of warfare and wisdom).
  - Hermes (a messenger god and god of commerce).
  - the twins Apollo (god of the sun, music, and prophecy) and Artemis (goddess of the hunt and of wild animals).
  - Dionysos (god of wine and theatre).
  - Aphrodite (goddess of beauty and love), who was married to Hephaestus (deformed god of the forge).
  - Ares (god of war and lover of Aphrodite) are also part of the traditional pantheon.
  - Hephaestus was in some mythologies the son of Zeus while in others the fatherless son of Hera.



Hermes and the Infant Dionysos by Praxiteles: Here, Hermes cares for the now motherless Dionysos. Originally, Hermes held a bunch of grapes, with which he teased the infant god of wine. c. 4th century BCE

Heroes

Heroes, who were often demigods, were also important characters in Greek mythology. The two most important heroes are Perseus and Hercules.

Perseus

Perseus is known for defeating the Gorgon, Medusa. He slew her with help from the gods: Athena gave him armor and a reflective shield, and Hermes provided Perseus with winged sandals so he could fly.

Hercules

Hercules was a strong but unkind man, a drunkard who conducted huge misdeeds and social faux pas. Hercules was sent on twelve labors to atone for his sins as punishment for his misdeeds. These deeds, and several other stories, were often depicted in art, on ceramic pots, or on temple metopes. The most famous of his deeds include slaying both the Nemean Lion and the Hydra, capturing Cerberus (the dog of the underworld), and obtaining the apples of the Hesperides.

Theseus

A third hero, Theseus, was an Athenian hero known for slaying King Minos's Minotaur. Other major heros in Greek mythology include the warriors and participants of the Trojan War, such as Achilles, Ajax, Odysseus, Agamemnon, Paris, Hector, and Helen.

Hero cults were another popular form of Greek worship that involved the honoring of the dead, specifically the dead heroes of the Trojan War. The sites of hero worship were usually old Bronze Age sites or tombs that the ancient Greeks recognized as important or sacred, which they then connected to their own legends and stories.



Hercules and Cerberus: Hercules bringing Cerberus back to King Eurystheus. Black figure hydra. c. 525 BCE

Sacred Spaces

Greek worship was centered on the temple. The temple was considered the home of the god, and a cult statue of the god would be erected in the central room, or the naos. Temples generally followed the same basic rectangular plan, although a round temple, known as a tholos, were used at some sites in starting in the Classical period.

Temples were oriented east to face the rising sun. Patrons would leave offerings for the gods, such as small votives, large statues, libations or costly goods. Due to the wealth dedicated to the gods, the temples often became treasuries that held and preserved the wealth of the city. Greek temples would be extensively decorated, and their construction was a long and costly endeavor.

Rituals and animal sacrifices in honor of the god or goddess would take place outside, in front of the temple. Rituals often included a large number of people, and sacrifice was a messy business that was best done outdoors. The development and decoration of temples is a primary focus in the study of Greek art and culture.



Sacrificial scene: Scene of a sacrifice. Attic red-figure bell krater. Circa 430–420 BCE. Athens, Greece

The Greek Geometric Period

The Geometric period in Greek art is distinguished by a reliance on geometric shapes to create human and animal figures as well as abstract décor.

Key Points

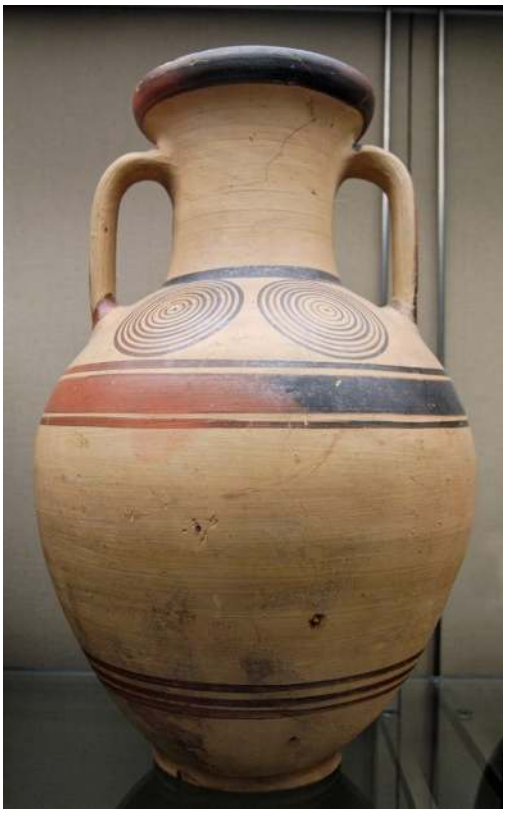
- The Geometric period marked the end of Greece's Dark Age and lasted from 900 to 700 BCE.
- The Geometric period derives its name from the dominance of geometric motifs in vase painting. Monumental kraters and amphorae were made and decorated as grave markers. These vessels are characteristic of Geometric vase painting during this period.
- The most famous vessels from this period uses a technique called horror vacui, in which every space of the surface is filled with imagery.

Key Terms

- **horrorvacui**: From the Latin, fear of empty space, it is a style of painting where the entire surface of a space is filled with patterns and figures.
- **amphora**: A two-handled jar with a narrow neck that was used in ancient times to store or carry wine or oils.
- **krater**: An ancient Greek vessel for mixing water and wine.

Geometric Pottery

In the eleventh century BCE, the citadel centers of the Mycenaeans were abandoned and Greece fell into a period with little cultural or social progression. Signs of civilization including literacy, writing, and trade were lost and the population on mainland Greece plummeted. During the Proto-Geometric period (1050–900 BCE), painting on ceramics began to re-emerge. These vessels were only decorated with abstract geometric shapes adopted from Mycenaean pottery. Ceramicists began using the fast wheel to create vessels, which allowed for new, more monumental objects.



Proto-Geometric amphora: Proto-Geometric amphora, c. 975–950 BCE

In the Geometric period that followed, figures once more became present on the vessel. The period lasted from 900 to 700 BCE and marked the end of the Greek Dark Ages. A new Greek culture emerged during this time. The population grew, trade began once more, and the Greeks adopted the Phoenician alphabet for writing. Unlike the Mycenaeans, this culture was more focused on the people of the polis, which is reflected in the art of this period. The period gets its name from the reliance on geometric shapes and patterns in its art, and even their use in depicting both human and animal figures.

Athens

The city of Athens became the center for pottery production. A potter's quarter in the section of the city known as the Kerameikos was located on either side of the Dipylon Gate, one of the city's west gates. The potters lived and work inside the gate in the city, while outside the gate, along the road, was a large cemetery. In the Geometric period, monumental-sized kraters and amphorae up to six feet tall were used as grave markers for the burials just outside the gate. Kraters marked male graves, while amphorae marked female graves.

The Dipylon Master, an unknown painter whose hand is recognized on many different vessels, displays the great expertise required for decorating these funerary markers. The vessels were first thrown a wheel, an important technological development at the time, before painting began. Both the Diplyon Krater and Dipylon Amphora demonstrate the main characteristics of painting during this time. For one, the entire vessel is decorated in a style known as horror vacui, a style in which the entire surface of the medium is filled with imagery. A decorative meander is on the lip of the krater and on many registers of the amphora. This geometric motif is constructed from a single, continuous line in a repeated shape or motif. The main scene is depicted on the widest part of the pot's body. These scenes relate to the funerary aspect of the pot and may depict mourners, a prothesis (a ritual of laying the body out and mourning), or even funerary games and processions.

On the Dipylon Krater, two registers depict a processional scene, an ekphora, (the transportation of the body to the cemetery) and the prothesis. The dead man of the prothesis scene is seen on the upper register. He is laid out on a bier and mourners, distinguished by their hands tearing at their hair, surround the body. Above the body is a shroud, which the artist depicts above and not over the body in order to allow the viewer to see the entirety of the scene.

On the register below, chariots and soldiers form a funerary procession. The soldiers are identified by their uniquely shaped shields. The Dipylon Amphora depicts just a prothesis in a wide a register around the pot.

In both vessels, men and women are distinguished by protruding triangles on their chest or waist to represent breasts or a penis. Every empty space in these scenes is filled with geometric shapes—M's, diamonds, starbursts—demonstrating the Geometric painter's horror vacui.



Geometric krater: Geometric krater. From the Dipylon Cemetery, Athens, Greece, c. 740 BCE

Sculpture in the Greek Geometric Period

Although derived from geometric shapes, the Ancient Greek sculptures of the Geometric period show some artistic observation of nature.

Key Points

- Geometric sculptures are primarily small scale and made of bronze, terra cotta, or ivory. The bronze figures were produced using the lost-wax method of casting.
- The human and animal figures produced during this period have geometric features, although the legs on humans appear relatively naturalistic.
- Geometric bronzes were typically left as votive offerings at shrines and sanctuaries, such as those at Delphi and Olympia.
- Horses came to symbolize wealth due to the high costs of their upkeep.

Key Terms

- **votive**: A type of offering deposited within a religious site without the purpose of display or retrieval.

The ancient Greek sculptures of the Geometric period, although derived from geometric shapes, bear evidence of an artistic observation of nature in some circumstances. Small-scale sculptures, usually made of bronze, terra cotta, or ivory, were commonly produced during this time. Bronzes were made using the lost-wax technique, probably introduced from Syria, and were often left as votive offerings at sanctuaries such as Delphi and Olympia.

Human Figures

The human figures are made of a triangle as a torso that supports a bulbous head with a triangular chin and nose. Their arms are cylindrical, and only their legs have a slightly more naturalistic shape. These attributes can be seen in a small sculpture of a seated man drinking from a cup that displays the typical modeling figures as simple, linear forms that enclose open space. Especially noteworthy are his elongated arms that mirror the dimensions of his legs.



Seated Male Figure: This is made of bronze and created around 750–700 BCE. Note how the statue's elongated arms mirror the dimensions of his legs

A relatively naturalistic rendering of human legs is also evident in Man and Centaur, also known as Heracles and Nessos (c. 750–730 BCE). Without the equine back and hind legs, the centaur portion of the sculpture is a shorter man with human legs. Like the seated man above, the two figures feature elongated arms, with the right arm of the centaur forming one continuous line with the left arm of the man. While the seated man appears to be clean shaven, the figures in Man and Centaur wear beards, which usually symbolized maturity. The hollow eye sockets of the figure of the man probably once held inlay for a more realistic appearance.



Man and Centaur (Heracles and Nessos): This bronze statue was made around 750–730 BCE

Animal Figures

Animals, including bulls, deer, horses, and birds, were also based in geometry. Horse figurines were commonly used as offerings to the gods. The animals themselves became symbols of wealth and status due to the high cost of keeping them. Equine bodies may be described as rectangles pinched in the middle with rectangular legs and tail and are similar in shape to deer or bulls.

The heads of these mammals are more distinctive, as the horse's neck arches, while the bull and deer have cylindrical faces distinguished by horns or ears. While the animals and people are based in basic geometric shapes, the artists clearly observed their subjects in order to highlight these distinguishing characters.



Geometric Horse statuette: This bronze statue from Olympia, Greece, circa 700 BCE

The Orientalizing Period

Ceramics in the Orientalizing Period

The Orientalizing Period followed the Geometric period and lasted for about a century, from 700 to 600 BCE. This period was distinguished by international influences—from the Ancient Near East, Egypt, and Asia Minor—each of which contributed a distinctive Eastern style to Greek art. The close contact between cultures developed from increasing trade and even colonization. Motifs, creatures, and styles were borrowed from other cultures by the Greeks, who transformed them into a unique Greek–Eastern mix of style and motifs.

Corinthian Pottery

During the Orientalizing period in Corinth human figures were rarely seen on vases. Animals such as lions, griffins, sphinxes, and sirens were depicted instead. Palmettes and lotus blossoms were used instead of geometric patterns to fill empty space, although on some vessels negative space became more prominent. This oriental black figure style originated in the city of Corinth, spread to Athens, and was exported throughout Greece.



Corinthian black figure jug: Corinthian black figure jug with animal frieze, circa 580 BCE

Black Figure Painting

The Corinthians developed the technique of black figure painting during this period. Black figure pottery was carefully constructed and fired three different times to produce the unique red and black colors on each vase.

The black color came from a slip painted onto the vessel, after which incised lines were drawn on to outline and detail the figures. Additionally, red and white pigments could be added for more color or to differentiate details. The unpainted portions of the vase would remain the original red-orange color of the pot. The full effect of this style of painting would not have been seen until after the vase emerged from its firings in the kiln. As the style spread, the subject matter changed from strictly Near Eastern animals to scenes from Greek mythology and everyday life.

The heat of the kiln in which the pottery was fired and the length of time each firing occupied was essential in the final look of the piece. The sophistication of the work in a culture without thermometers or clocks suggests the skill of the Greek artists.

Sculpture in the Greek Orientalizing Period

Sculpture produced during the Orientalizing period shares stylistic attributes with sculpture produced in Egypt and the Near East.

Key Points

- Sculpture during this time was influenced by Egyptian and Near Eastern artistic conventions. Rigid, plank-like bodies, as well as its reliance on pattern to depict texture, characterized Greek sculpture in the Orientalizing period.
- The Daedalic style, named for the mythical inventor Daedalus, refers the use of patterning and geometric shapes (reminiscent of the Geometric period) during the seventh century BCE.
- The differences between the Lady of Auxerre and the Mantiklos Apollo demonstrate the early establishment of traditional social expectations of the sexes in ancient Greek culture.

Key Terms

- **kore**: A sculpture of a young woman from pre-Classical Greece.

- **Daedalic**: A style of sculpture during the Greek Orientalizing period noted for its use of patterns to create texture, as well as its reliance on geometric shapes and stiff, rigid bodily postures.

The Orientalizing Period lasted for about a century, from 700 to 600 BCE. This period was distinguished by international influences, from the Ancient Near East, Egypt, and Asia Minor, each of which contributed a distinctive Eastern style to Greek art. The close contact between cultures developed from increasing trade and even colonization.

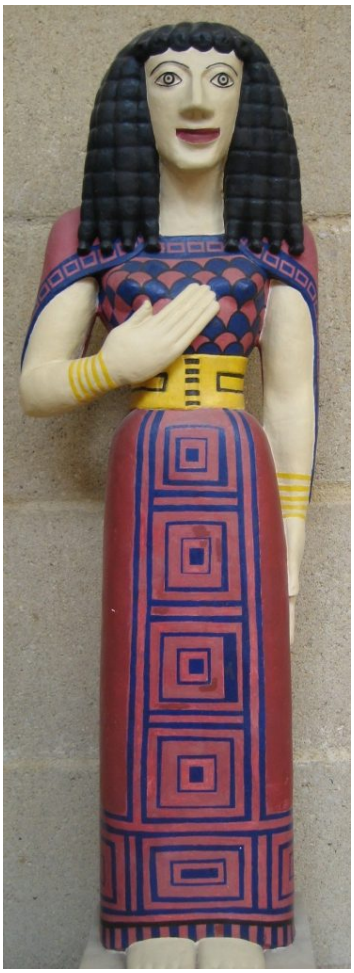
Styles were borrowed from other cultures by the Greeks who transformed them into a unique Greek-Eastern mix of style and motifs. Male and female sculptures produced during this time share interesting similarities, but also bear differences that inform the viewer about society's expectations of men and women.

The Lady of Auxerre

A small limestone statue of a kore (maiden), known as the Lady of Auxerre (650– 625 BCE), from Crete demonstrates the style of early Greek figural sculptures. This style is known as **Daedalic** sculpture, named for the mythical creator of King Minos's labyrinth, Daedalus. The style combines Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian motifs.



The Lady of Auxerre, circa 650–625 BCE: This small limestone statue is possibly from Crete



Lady of Auxerre reconstruction: A painted reconstruction of the original Orientalizing sculpture. Cambridge University

The Lady of Auxerre is stocky and plank-like. Her waist is narrow and cinched, like the waists seen in Minoan art. She is disproportionate, with long rigid legs and a short torso. A dress encompasses nearly her entire body—it tethers her legs together and restricts her potential for movement. The rigidity of the body recalls pharaonic portraiture from Ancient Egypt.

Her head is distinguished with large facial features, a low brow, and stylized hair. The hair appears to be braided, and falls down in rigid rows divided by horizontal bands. This style recalls a Near Eastern use of patterns to depict texture and decoration, as in the bronze Akkadian head of Sargon.

Her face and hair are reminiscent of the Geometric period. The face forms an inverted triangle wedged between the triangles formed be the hair that frames her face. Traces of paint tell us that this statue would have originally been painted with black hair and a dress of red and blue with a yellow belt.

The Greek Archaic Period

Sculpture during the Archaic period became increasing naturalistic, although this varies depending on the gender of the subject.

Key Points

- Dedicatory male kouroi figures were originally based on Egyptian statues and over the Archaic period these figures developed more naturalistic nude bodies. The athletic body was an ideal form for a young Greek male and is comparable to the ideal body of the god Apollo.
- Instead of focusing on the body, female korai statues were clothed and throughout the Archaic period artists spent more time elaborating on the detailed folds and drapery of a woman's clothing. This reflected the Greek ideals for women, who were supposed to be fully clothed, modest, and demure.
- To add an additional naturalistic element to the body, the typical Archaic smile was added to both male and female statues. While today the smile seems false, to the ancient Greeks it added a level of realism.

- Pedimental sculpture in the Archaic period was often scaled to fit into the space of the pediment and served an apotropaic instead of a decorative function.
- Pedimental sculptures from the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina show a gradual move toward the naturalism of the Classical style that followed the Archaic.

Key Terms

- **Archaic smile**: A stylized expression used in sculpture from 600 to 480 BCE to suggest a sense of lifelikeness in the subject.
- **peplos**: An Ancient Greek garment, worn by women, made of a tubular piece of cloth that is folded back upon itself halfway down, until the top of the tube is worn around the waist, and the bottom covers the legs down to the ankles; the open top is then worn over the shoulders, and draped, in folds, down to the waist.
- **apotropaic**: Intended to ward off evil.
- **kouros**: A sculpture of a naked youth in Ancient Greece; the male equivalent of a kore.
- **kore**: An Ancient Greek statue of a woman, portrayed standing, usually clothed, painted in bright colors, and having an elaborate hairstyle.
- **chiton**: A loose, woolen tunic, worn by both men and women in Ancient Greece.

Sculpture in the Archaic Period

Sculpture in the Archaic Period developed rapidly from its early influences, becoming more natural and showing a developing understanding of the body, specifically the musculature and the skin. Close examination of the style's development allows for precise dating.

Most statues were commissioned as memorials and votive offerings or as grave markers, replacing the vast amphora (two-handled, narrow-necked jars used for wine and oils) and kraters (wide-mouthed vessels) of the previous periods, yet still typically painted in vivid colors.

Kouroi

Kouroi statues (singular, kouros), depicting idealized, nude male youths, were first seen during this period. Carved in the round, often from marble, kouroi are thought to be associated with Apollo; many were found at his shrines and some even depict him. Emulating the statues of Egyptian pharaohs, the figure strides forward on flat feet, arms held stiffly at its side with fists clenched. However, there are some importance differences: kouroi are nude, mostly without identifying attributes and are free-standing.

Early kouroi figures share similarities with Geometric and Orientalizing sculpture, despite their larger scale. For instance, their hair is stylized and patterned, either held back with a headband or under a cap. The New York Kouros strikes a rigid stance and his facial features are blank and expressionless. The body is slightly rounded and the musculature is indicated by incised lines.



New York Kouros, c. 600 BCE: New York Kouros. Marble. Origin unknown

As kouroi figures developed, they began to lose their Egyptian rigidity and became increasingly naturalistic. The kouros figure of Kroisos, an Athenian youth killed in battle, still depicts a young man with an idealized body. This time though, the body's form shows realistic modeling.

The muscles of the legs, abdomen, chest and arms appear to actually exist and seem to function and work together. Kroisos's hair, while still stylized, falls naturally over his neck and onto his back, unlike that of the New York Kouros, which falls down stiffly and in a single sheet. The reddish appearance of his hair reminds the viewer that these sculptures were once painted.



Kroisos, c. 530 BCE: Kroisos, from the Anavysos Group. Marble. Greece

Archaic Smile

Kroisos's face also appears more naturalistic when compared to the earlier New York Kouros. His cheeks are round and his chin bulbous; however, his smile seems out of place. This is typical of this period and is known as the Archaic smile. It appears to have been added to infuse the sculpture with a sense of being alive, and possibly to give an added quality of realism.

Kore

A kore (plural korai) sculpture depicts a female youth. Unlike the kouroi – athletic, nude young men – the female korai are fully-clothed, in the idealized image of decorous women. Male bodies were perceived as public, belonging to the state, while women's bodies were deemed private and belonged to their fathers (if unmarried) or husbands.

However, they also have Archaic smiles, with arms either at their sides or extended, holding an offering. The figures are stiff and retain more block-like characteristics than their male counterparts. Their hair is also stylized, depicted in long strands or braids that cascade down the back or over the shoulder.

The Peplos Kore (c. 530 BCE) depicts a young woman wearing a peplos, a heavy wool garment that drapes over the whole body, obscuring most of it. A slight indentation between the legs, a division between her torso and legs, and the protrusion of her breasts merely hint at the form of the body underneath.

Remnants of paint on her dress tell us that it was painted yellow with details in blue and red that may have included images of animals. The presence of animals on her dress may indicate that she is the image of a goddess, perhaps Artemis, but she may also just be a nameless maiden.



Peplos Kore: Reconstruction of the paint on the Peplos Kore

Later korai figures also show stylistic development, although the bodies are still overshadowed by their clothing. The example of a Kore (520–510 BCE) from the Athenian Acropolis shows a bit more shape in the body such as defined hips instead of a dramatic belted waistline, although the primary focus of the kore is on the clothing and the drapery. This kore figure wears a chiton (a woolen tunic), a himation (a lightweight undergarment), and a mantle (a cloak). Her facial features are still generic and blank, and she has an Archaic smile. Even with the finer clothes and additional adornments such as jewelry, the figure depicts the idealized Greek female, fully clothed and demure.



Acropolis Kore, c. 520–510 BCE: Wearing a chiton and himation. Marble. Athens, Greece

Ceramics in the Greek Archaic Period

Archaic black- and red-figure painting began to depict more naturalistic bodies by conveying form and movement.

Key Points

- Black-figure painting was used throughout the Archaic period before diminishing under the popularity of red-figure painting.
- Exekias is considered one of the most talented and influential black-figure painters due to his ability to convey emotion, use intricate lines, and create scenes that trusted the viewer to comprehend the scene.
- Red-figure painting was developed in 530 BCE by the Andokides Painter, a style that allows for more naturalism in the body due to the use of a brush.
- The first red-figure paintings were produced on bilingual vases, depicting one scene on each side, one in black figure and the other in red figure.
- The painters Euthyides and Euphronios were two of the most talented Archaic red-figure painters, with their vessels depict space, movement, and naturalism.

Key Terms

- **burin**: A chisel with a sharp point, used for engraving; an engraver.
- **slip**: A thin, slippery mix of clay and water.
- **red-figure**: One of the most important styles of figural Greek vase painting, based on the figural depictions in red color on a black background.
- **black-figure**: A style of Greek vase painting that is distinguished by silhouette-like figures on a red background.

Pottery Decoration Overview

The Archaic period saw a shift in styles of pottery decoration, from the repeating patterns of the Geometric period, through the Eastern-influenced Orientalizing style, to the more naturalistic black- and red-figure techniques. During this time, figures became more dynamic and defined by more organic—as opposed to geometric—elements.

Black-Figure Painting

Black-figure painting, which derives its name from the black figures painted on red backgrounds, was developed by the Corinthians in the seventh century BCE and became popular throughout the Greek world during the Archaic period. As painters became more confident working in the medium, human figures began to appear on vases and painters and potters began signing their creations.

Exekias

Exekias, considered the most prominent black-figure painter of his time, worked between 545 and 530 BCE in Athens. He is regarded by art historians as an artistic visionary whose masterful use of incision and psychologically sensitive compositions mark him as one of the greatest of all Attic vase painters. His vessels display attention to detail and precise, intricate lines.

Exekias is also well-known for reinterpreting mythologies. Instead of providing the entire story, as Kleitias did on the François Vase, he paints single scenes and relies on the viewer to interpret and understand the narrative.

One example is an amphora that depicts the Greek warriors Achilles and Ajax playing dice. Both men are decorated with fine incised details, showing elaborate textile patterns and almost every hair in place. As they wait for the next battle with the Trojans, their game foreshadows their fates. Inscribed text allows the two figures to speak: “Achilles has rolled a four, while Ajax rolled a three.” Both men will die during the the Trojan War, but Achilles dies a hero while Ajax is consistently considered second best, eventually committing suicide.



Achilles and Ajax: By Exekias, Achilles and Ajax Playing a Dice Game. Athenian Black-figure amphora, c. 540–530 BCE. Vulci, Italy

Architecture of the Classical Period

Mathematical Scale

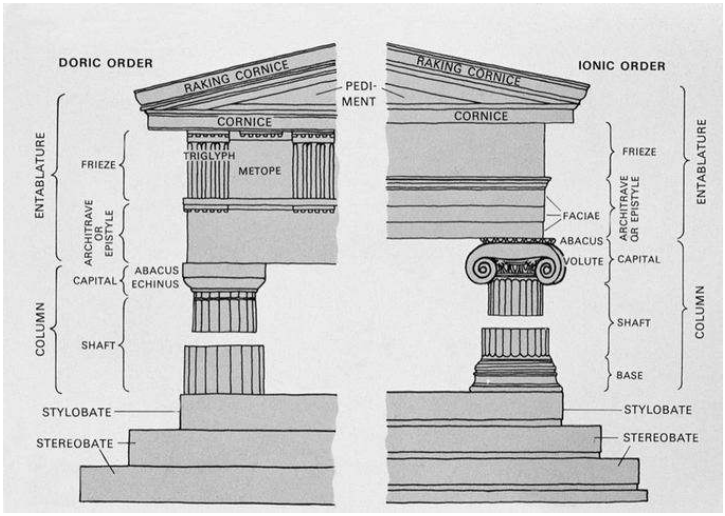
All temples, however, were built on a mathematical scale and every aspect of them is related to one another through ratios. For instance, most Greek temples (except the earliest) followed the equation 2x + 1 = y when determining the number of columns used in the peripteral colonnade.

In this equation, x stands for the number of columns across the front, the shorter end, while y designates the columns down the sides. The number of columns used along the length of the temple was twice the number plus one the number of columns across the front. Due to these mathematical ratios, we are able to accurately reconstruct temples from small fragments.

Doric Order

The style of Greek temples is divided into three different and distinct orders, the earliest of which is the Doric order. These temples had columns that rested directly on the stylobate without a base. Their shafts were fluted with twenty parallel grooves that tapered to a sharp point.

The capitals of Doric columns had a simple, unadorned square abacus and a flared echinus that was often short and squashed. Doric columns are also noted for the presence of entasis, or bulges in the middle of the column shaft. This was perhaps a way to create an optical illusion or to emphasize the weight of the entablature above, held up by the columns.



Doric and Ionic order: This drawing illustrates the stylistic differences between the Doric and Ionic order

The Doric entablature was also unique to this style of temples. The frieze was decorated with alternating panels of triglyphs and metopes. The triglyphs were decorative panels with three grooves or glyphs that gave the panel its name. The stone triglyphs mimicked the head of wooden beams used in earlier temples. Between the triglyphs were the metopes.

Decorative Spaces

Sculptors used the metope spaces to depict mythological occurrences, often with historical or cultural links to the site on which the temple stood.



Herakles fights the Cretan Bull: This is one of the metopes from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. It is one of the Twelve Labors depicted on the temple

The Early Classical Period

Marble Sculpture and Architecture

Early Classical Greek marble sculptures and temple decorations display new conventions to depict the body and severe style facial expressions.

Key Points

- The sculpture found on the pediment and metopes at the Temple of Zeus at Olympia represent the style of relief and pedimental sculptural during the Early Classical period.
- The Severe style is an Early Classical style of sculpting where the body is depicted naturalistically and the face remains blank and expressionless. This style notes the artist's understanding of the body's musculature, while maintaining a screen between art and reality with the stoic face.
- Contrapposto is a weight shift depicted in the body that rotates the waist, hips, chest, shoulders, and sometimes even the neck and head of the figure. It increases that naturalism in the body since it correctly mimics the inner workings of human musculature.
- Kritios Boy is an early example of contrapposto and Severe style. This marble statue depicts a nude male youth, muscular and well built, with an air of naturalism that dissolves when examining his Severe style face.
- Polykleitos, an artist and art theorist, developed a canon for the creation of the perfect male body based on mathematical proportions. His Doryphoros (Spear Bearer) is believed to be a sculptural representation of his treatise. The figure stands in contrapposto, with a Severe-style face.

Key Terms

- **Severestyle**: The dominant idiom of Greek sculpture in the period from 490 to 450 BCE. It marks the breakdown of the canonical forms of Archaic art and the transition to the greatly expanded vocabulary and expression of the classical movement of the late 5th century.
- **Perserchutt**: A German term meaning Persian debris or rubble, that refers to the location of ritually buried architectural and votive sculptures that were destroyed following the sack of Athens by the Persians. The area was first excavated by the Germans in the late 19th century.
- **hexastyle**: Describes a building with six columns in the front and back and 13 down each side.

Kritios Boy

A slightly smaller-than-life-sized sculpture known as the Kritios Boy was dedicated to Athena by an athlete and found in the rubble of the Athenian Acropolis. Its title derives from a famous artist to whom the sculpture was once attributed.

The marble statue is a prime example of the Early Classical sculptural style and demonstrates the shift away from the stiff style seen in Archaic kouroi. The torso suggests an understanding of the body and the plasticity of the muscles and skin that allows the statue to appear life-like. Part of this illusion is created by a stance known as **contrapposto**. This describes a person with his or her weight shifted onto one leg, which initiates a shift in the hips, chest, and shoulders and gives a stance that is more dramatic and naturalistic than a stiff, frontal pose. This contrapposto position animates the figure through the relationship of tense and relaxed limbs.

However, the face of the Kritios Boy is expressionless, which contradicts the naturalism seen in his body. This is known as the **Severe style**. The blank expression causes the sculpture to appear less naturalistic, which creates a psychological remove between the art and the viewer. This differs from the use of the **Archaicsmile** (now gone), which was added to sculpture to increase the naturalism. Contradicting the emotionless expression would have been the eyes which originally held inlaid stone to give the sculpture a more lifelike appearance.



Kritios Boy, marble, c. 480 BCE, Acropolis, Athens, Greece: This marble statue is a prime example of the Early Classical sculptural style and demonstrates the shift away from the style seen in Archaic kouroi

Polykleitos

Polykleitos was a well-known Greek sculptor and art theorist during the early- to mid-fifth century BCE. He is most renowned for his treatise on the male nude, known as the Canon, which describes the ideal, aesthetic body based on mathematical proportions and Classical conventions such as contrapposto.

His Doryphoros, or Spear Bearer, is believed to be his representation of the Canon in sculpted form. The statue depicts a young, well-built soldier holding a spear in his left hand with a shield attached to his left wrist. Both military implements are now lost. The figure has a Severe-style face and a contrapposto stance. In another development away from the stiff and seemingly immobile Archaic style, the Doryphoros' left heel is raised off the ground, implying an ability to walk.



Doryphoros: Polykleitos's Doryphoros, or Spear Bearer, is believed to be his representation of the Canon in sculpted form. This is a Roman marble copy of a Greek bronze original, c. 450 BCE

This sculpture demonstrates how the use of contrapposto creates an S-shaped composition. The juxtaposition of a tension leg and tense arm and relaxed leg and relaxed arm, both across the body from each other, creates an S through the body. The dynamic power of this composition shape places elements—in this case the figure's limbs—in opposition to each other and emphasizes the tension this creates. The statue, as a visualization of Polykleitos' canon, also depicts the Greek sense of symmetria, the harmony of parts, seen here in the body's proportions.

Bronze Sculpture in the Greek Early Classical Period

Surviving Greek bronze sculptures from the Early Classical period showcase the skill of Greek artists in representing the body and expressing motion.

Key Points

- While bronze was a popular material for Greek sculptors, few Greek bronzes exist today. We know a majority of famous sculptors and sculptures only through marble Roman copies and the few bronzes that survived, often from shipwrecks.
- Early Classical bronzes are sculpted in the lost wax method of casting. The figures are created in the Severe style with naturalistic bodies and blank, expressionless faces. The sculptures' lightweight appearance is due to their hollowness and contributes to their implied potential energy and movement.
- The Charioteer of Delphi, the Riace Warriors, and the Artemision Bronze all display the sculpting characteristics of the Early Classical Severe style while also demonstrating the characteristics of bronze sculpting, including the lightness of the material and liveliness that could be achieved.

Key Terms

- **strut**: A support rod.
- **contrapposto**: The position of a figure whose hips and legs are twisted away from the direction of the head and shoulders.
- **lostwax**: A method of casting in which a model of the sculpture is made from wax. The model is used to make a mold. When the mold has set, the wax is made to melt and is poured away, leaving the mold ready to be used to cast the sculpture.

Greek Bronze Sculpture

Bronze was a popular sculpting material for the Greeks. Composed of a metal alloy of copper and tin, it provides a strong and lightweight material for use in the ancient world, especially in the creation of weapons and art. The Greeks used bronze throughout their history.

Because bronze is a valuable material, throughout history bronze sculptures were melted down to forge weapons and ammunition or to create new sculptures. The Greek bronzes that we have today mainly survived because of shipwrecks, which kept the material from being reused, and the sculptures have since been recovered from the sea and restored.

The Greeks used bronze as a primary means of sculpting, but much of our knowledge of Greek sculpture comes from Roman copies. The Romans were very fond of Greek art and collecting marble replicas of them was a sign of status, wealth, and intelligence in the Roman world.

Roman copies worked in marble had a few differences from the original bronze. Struts, or supports, were added to help buttress the weight of the marble as well as the hanging limbs that did not need support when the statue was originally made in the lighter and hollow bronze. The struts appeared either as rectangular blocks that connect an arm to the torso or as tree stumps against the leg, which supports the weight of the sculpture, as in this Roman copy of the Diadoumenos Atenas.



Diadoumenos Atenas (Roman copy): The extension connecting the tree trunk to the leg of the figure is an example of a strut used in marble Roman copies of original Greek bronzes

Lost Wax Technique

The lost wax technique, which is also known by its French name, cire perdue, is the process that ancient Greeks used to create their bronze statues. The first step of the process involves creating a full-scale clay model of the intended work of art. This would be the

core of the model.

Once completed, a mold is made of the clay core and an additional wax mold is also created. The wax mold is then be placed between the clay core and the clay mold, creating a pocket, and the wax is melted out of the mold, after which the gap is filled with bronze. Once cooled, the exterior clay mold and interior clay core is are carefully removed and the bronze statue is cleaned, polished, and finished.

The multiple pieces are welded together, imperfections smoothed, and any additional elements, such as inlaid eyes and eyelashes, are then added. Because the clay mold must be broken when removing the figure, the lost wax method can be used only for making one-of-a-kind sculptures.

Riace Warriors

The Riace Warriors are a set of two nude, bronze sculptures of male warriors that were recovered off the coast of Riace, Italy. They are a prime example of Early Classical sculpture and the transition between Archaic to Classical sculpting styles. The figures are nude, unlike the Charioteer. Their bodies are idealized and appear dynamic, with freed limbs, a contrapposto shift in weight, and turned heads that imply movement. The muscles are modeled with a high degree of plasticity, which the bronze material amplifies through natural reflections of light. Additional elements, such as copper for the lips and nipples, silver teeth, and eyes inlaid with glass and bone, were added to the figures to increase their naturalism. Both figures originally held a shield and spear, which are now lost. Warrior B wears a helmet, and it appears that Warrior A once wore a wreath around his head.



Riace Warriors: Warrior A (right) and Warrior B (left). Bronze, c. 460–450 BCE, Riace, Italy

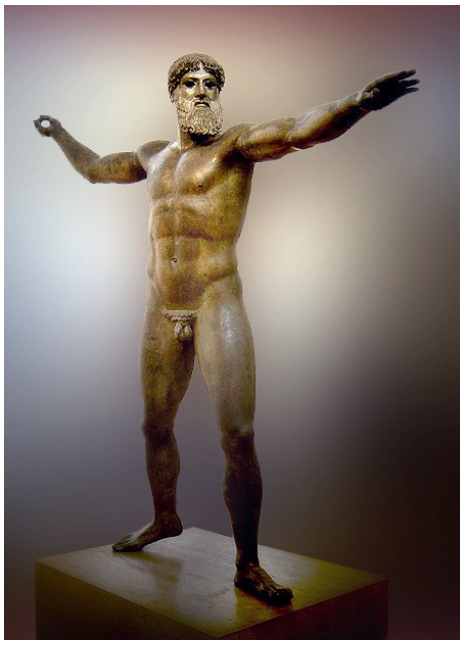
Artemision Bronze

The Artemision Bronze represents either Zeus or Poseidon. Both gods were represented with full beards to signify maturity. However, it is impossible to identify the sculpture as one god or the other because it can either be a lightning bolt (symbolic of Zeus) or a trident (symbolic of Poseidon) in his raised right hand.

The figure stands in heroic nude, as would be expected with a god, with his arms outstretched, preparing to strike. The bronze is in the Severe style with an idealized, muscular body and an expressionless face.

Like the Charioteer and the Riace Warriors, the Artemision Bronze once held inlaid glass or stone in its now-vacant eye sockets to heighten its lifelikeness. The right heel of the figure rises off the ground, which anticipates the motion the figure is about to undertake.

The full potential of the god’s motion and energy, as well as the grace of the body, is reflected in the modeling of the bronze.



Artemision Bronze: The Artemision Bronze figure depicts either Zeus or Poseidon, c. 460–450 BCE, Cape Artemision, Greece

The High Classical Period

Architecture in the Greek High Classical Period

High and Late Classical architecture is distinguished by its adherence to proportion, optical refinements, and its early exploration of monumentality.

Key Points

- Architecture during the Early and High Classical periods was refined and the optical illusions corrected to create the most aesthetically pleasing proportions. The High and Late Classical periods begin to tweak these principles and experiment with monumentality and space.
- Temples during the Late Classical period began to experiment with new architectural designs and decoration. The Tholos of Athena Pronaia at Delphi is a circular shrine with two rings of columns, the outer Doric and the inner Corinthian.
- The Temple of Epicurious at Bassae is noted for its unique ground plan and the use of architectural elements from all three Classical orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. The temple's use of architectural decoration and a ground plan demonstrate changing aesthetics.
- The theater in the city of Epidauros is a prime example of advanced engineering skills during this period. The theater is built with refined acoustics that could amplify the sounds on the stage to every one of the theater's 14,000 spectators.

Key Terms

- **aniconic**: Of, or pertaining to, representations without human or animal form.
- **tholos**: A circular structure, often a temple.
- **peripteral**: Surrounded by a single row of columns.
- **prostyle**: Free-standing columns across the front of a building.
- **entablature**: The area of a temple facade that lies horizontally atop the columns.
- **elevation**: A geometric projection of a building, or other object, on a plane perpendicular to the horizon.
- **Geometric period**: An era of abstract and stylized motifs in ancient Greek vase painting and sculpture. The period was centered in Athens and flourished from 900 to 700 BCE.
- **Pericles**: A prominent and influential Greek statesman, orator, and the general of Athens during the city's Golden Age—specifically, the time between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars.
- **capital**: The topmost part of a column.

Classical Greek Architecture Overview

During the Classical period, Greek architecture underwent several significant changes. The columns became more slender, and the entablature lighter during this period. In the mid-fifth century BCE, the Corinthian column is believed to have made its debut. Gradually, the Corinthian order became more common as the Classical period came to a close, appearing in conjunction with older orders, such as the Doric. Additionally, architects began to examine proportion and the chromatic effects of Pentelic marble more closely. In the construction of theaters, architects perfected the effects of acoustics through the design and materials used in the seating area. The architectural refinements perfected during the Late Classical period opened the doors of experimentation with how architecture could define space, an aspect that became the forefront of Hellenistic architecture.

Temples

Throughout the Archaic period, the Greeks experimented with building in stone and slowly developed their concept of the ideal temple. It was decided that the ideal number of columns would be determined by a formula in which twice the number of columns across the front of the temple plus one was the number of columns down each side ($2x + 1 = y$).

Many temples during the Classical period followed this formula for their peripteral colonnade, although not all. Furthermore, many temples in the Classical period and beyond are noted for the curvature given to the stylobate of the temple that compensated for optical distortions.

The Acropolis

The Athenian Acropolis is an ancient citadel in Athens containing the remains of several ancient buildings, including the Parthenon.

Key Points

- The Acropolis, dedicated to the goddess Athena, has played a significant role in the city from the time that the area was first inhabited during the Neolithic era. In recent centuries, its architecture has influenced the design of many public buildings in the Western hemisphere.
- Immediately following the Persian war in the mid-fifth century BCE, the Athenian general and statesman Pericles coordinated the construction of the site's most important buildings including the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Erechtheion, and the temple of Athena Nike.
- The structures on the Acropolis incorporated the Cyclopean foundations of older Mycenaean-era structures.
- In its heyday, the Parthenon featured a Doric facade and Ionic frieze interior, while the Doric Propylaea—the gateway to the Acropolis and an art gallery in the Classical era—lacked friezes and pedimental sculptures. The Ionic Erechtheion, believed to have been dedicated to the legendary King Erechtheus, features a porch supported by columnar caryatids. The Temple of Athena Nike, which celebrates Athenian war victories, was built in the Ionic order.
- The sculptures from each of these buildings depict scenes specific to their historical and mythological significance to Athens.

The Athenian Acropolis

The study of Classical-era architecture is dominated by the study of the construction of the Athenian Acropolis and the development of the Athenian agora. The Acropolis is an ancient citadel located on a high, rocky outcrop above and at the center of the city of Athens. It contains the remains of several ancient buildings of great architectural and historic significance.

The word acropolis comes from the Greek words ἄκ (akron, meaning edge or extremity) and πολις (polis, meaning city). Although there are many other acropoleis in Greece, the significance of the Acropolis of Athens is such that it is commonly known as The Acropolis without qualification.



The Acropolis at Athens: The Acropolis has played an important role in the city of Athens from the time the area was first inhabited

The Acropolis has played a significant role in the city from the time that the area was first inhabited during the Neolithic era. While there is evidence that the hill was inhabited as far back as the fourth millennium BCE, in the High Classical Period it was Pericles (c. 495–429 BCE) who coordinated the construction of the site's most important buildings, including the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Erechtheion, and the temple of Athena Nike.

The buildings on the Acropolis were constructed in the Doric and Ionic orders, with dramatic reliefs adorning many of their pediments, friezes, and metopes. In recent centuries, its architecture has influenced the design of many public buildings in the Western hemisphere.

Early History

Archaeological evidence shows that the acropolis was once home to a Mycenaean citadel. The citadel's Cyclopean walls defended the Acropolis for centuries, and still remains today. The Acropolis was continually inhabited, even through the Greek Dark Ages when Mycenaean civilization fell.

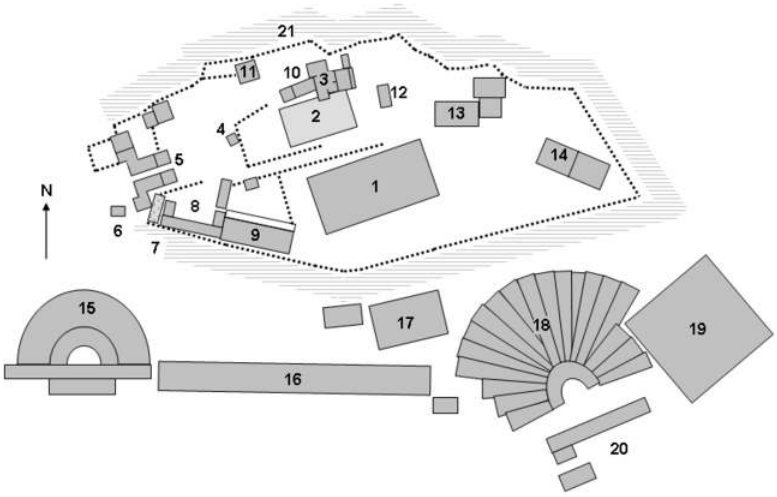
It is during the Geometric period that the Acropolis shifted from being the home of a king to being a sanctuary site dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their patron. The Archaic-era Acropolis saw the first stone temple dedicated to Athena, known as the Hekatompedon (Greek for hundred-footed).

This building was built from limestone around 570 to 550 BCE and was a hundred feet long. It has the original home of the olive-wood statue of Athena Polias, known as the Palladium, that was believed to have come from Troy.

In the early fifth century the Persians invaded Greece, and the city of Athens—along with the Acropolis—was destroyed, looted, and burnt to the ground in 480 BCE. Later the Athenians, before the final battle at Plataea, swore an oath that if they won the battle—that if Athena once more protected her city—then the Athenian citizens would leave the Acropolis as it is, destroyed, as a monument to the war. The Athenians did indeed win the war, and the Acropolis was left in ruins for thirty years.

Periclean Revival

It was immediately following the Persian war that the Athenian general and statesman Pericles funded an extensive building program on the Athenian Acropolis. Despite the vow to leave the Acropolis in a state of ruin, the site was rebuilt, incorporating all the remaining old materials into the spaces of the new site. The building program began in 447 BCE and was completed by 415 BCE. It employed the most famous architects and artists of the age and its sculpture and buildings were designed to complement and be in dialog with one another.



Plan of the Acropolis: Plan of the Acropolis and surrounding area. The buildings include: (1) Parthenon (2) Old Temple of Athena (3) Erechtheum (4) Statue of Athena Promachos (5) Propylaea (6) Temple of Athena Nike (7) Eleusinion (8) Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia or Brauroneion (9) Chalkotheke (10) Pandroseion (11) Arrephorion (12) Altar of Athena (13) Sanctuary of Zeus Polieus (14) Sanctuary of Pandion (15) Odeon of Herodes Atticus (16) Stoa of Eumenes (17) Sanctuary of Asclepius or Asclepieion Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus (19) Odeon of Pericles (20) Temenos of Dionysus Eleuthereus (21) Aglaureion

The Parthenon

The Parthenon represents a culmination of style in Greek temple architecture. The optical refinements found in the Parthenon—the slight curve given to the whole building and the ideal placement of the metopes and triglyphs over the column capitals —represent the Greek desire to achieve a perfect and harmonious design known as **symmetria**.

While the artist **Phidias** was in charge of the overall plan of the Acropolis, a sort of general contractor, the architects **IktinosandKallikrates** designed and oversaw the construction of the Parthenon (447–438 BCE), the temple dedicated to Athena. The Parthenon is built completely from Pentalic marble, although parts of its foundations are limestone from a pre-480 BCE temple that was never completed. The design of the Parthenon varies slightly from the basic temple ground plan. The temple is peripteral, and so is surrounded by a row of columns. In front of both the pronaos (porch) and opisthodomos is a single row of prostyle columns. The opisthodomos is large, accounting for the size of the treasury of the Delian League, which Pericles moved from Delos to the Parthenon, appropriating the funds in order to restore the Akropolis. The pronaos is so small it is almost non-existent. Inside the naos is a two-story row of columns around the interior, and set in front of the columns is the cult statue of Athena. It is the most important surviving building of Classical Greece.



The Parthenon: The Parthenon, designed by Iktinos and Kallikrates, is a temple on the Athenian Acropolis, Greece, dedicated to the maiden goddess Athena, the patron of Athens. Its construction began in 447 BCE when the Athenian Empire was at the height of its power

The Parthenon's elevation has been streamlined and shows a mix of Doric and Ionic elements. The exterior Doric columns are more slender and their capitals are rigid and cone-like. The entablature also appears smaller and less weighty then earlier Doric temples. The exterior of the temple has a Doric frieze consisting of **metopes** and **triglyphs**.

Inside the temple are Ionic columns and an Ionic frieze that wraps around the exterior of the interior building. The whole building curves slightly in the center to compensate for the human eye. The columns also are said to have an **entasis,** a slight swelling in the center to make them appear more solid and stable. If the building was built perfectly at right angles and with straight lines, the human eye would see the lines as bowed. In order for the Parthenon to appear straight to the eye, Iktinos and Kallikrates added curvature to the building that the eye would interpret as straight.

The sculpted reliefs on the Parthenon's metopes are both decorative and symbolic, and relate stories of the Greeks against the others. Each side depicts a different set of battles.

- Over the entrance on the east side is a **Gigantomachy,** depicting the battle between the giants and the Olympian gods.
- The west side depicts an **Amazonomachy**, showing a battle between the Athenians and the Amazons.
- The north side depicts scenes of the Greek sack of Troy at the end of the Trojan War.
- The south side depicts a **Centauromachy**, or a battle with centaurs. The Centauromachy depicts the mythical battle between the Greek Lapiths and the Centaurs that occurred during a Lapith wedding.

These scenes are the most preserved of the metopes and demonstrate how Phidias mastered fitting episodic narrative into square spaces. Taken in total, they symbolize the Greeks' pride in their victory over the Persians represented by the various "monstrous" or barbaric creatures in the metopes.



Centauromachy: A metope from the south side of the Parthenon, of a Lapith and a centaur. Acropolis, Athens, Greece. c. 447–438 BCE

The interior Ionic processional frieze wraps around the exterior walls of the naos. While the frieze may depict a mythical or historical procession, many scholars believe that it depicts a **Panatheniacprocession**.

The Panathenaic procession occurred yearly through the city, leading from the Dipylon Gate to the Acropolis and culminating in a ritual changing of the **peplos,** or garment, worn by the ancient olive-wood statue of Athena. The processional scene begins in the southwest corner and wraps around the building in both directions before culminating in the middle of the of the west wall.

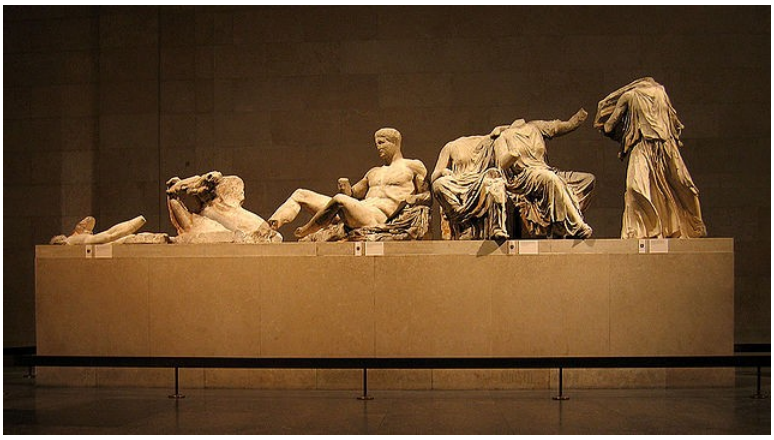
It begins with images of horsemen preparing their mounts, followed by riders and chariots, Athenian youth with sacrificial animals, elders and maidens, then the gods before culminating at the central event. The central image depicts Athenian maidens with textiles, replacing the old peplos with a new one.



Horsemen in the Processional Scene: An Ionic frieze from the interior of the Parthenon. Acropolis, Athens, Greece. c. 447–438 BCE

The east and west pediments depict scenes from the life of Athena and the east pediment is better preserved than the west; fortunately, both were described by ancient writers. The west pediment depicted the contest between Athena and Poseidon for the patronage of Athens. At the center of the pediment stood Athena and Poseidon, pulling away from each to create a strongly charged, dynamic, diagonal composition.

The east pediment depicted the birth of Athena. While the central image of Zeus, Athena, and Haphaestus has been lost, the surrounding gods, in various states of reaction, have survived.



Sculpture group from the east pediment of the Parthenon: While the central image of Zeus, Athena, and Haphaestus has been lost, the surrounding gods, in various states of reaction, have survived (c. 447– 439 BCE)



Three Goddesses from the east pediment of the Parthenon: Hestia, Dione, and Aphrodite. Attributed to Agoracritos. British Museum. CC-BY MaryG90

Notice how the figures are all to the same scale and are arranged in a composition that allows them to fill the long, increasingly narrow space of the pediment. In addition, it is keeping with tradition up to this point in Greek art that the Goddesses are clothed while the male Gods are not. The drapery on the three Goddesses, however, is fluid and reveals the forms of the bodies underneath.

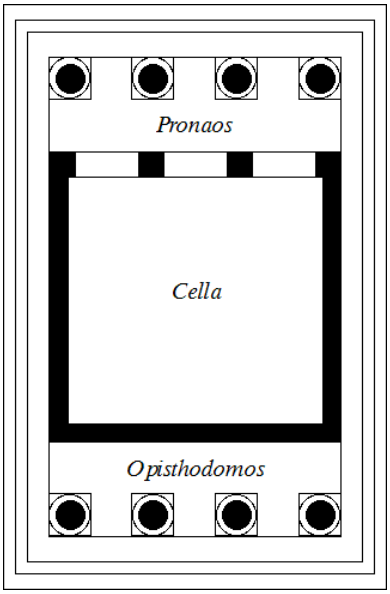
Upon entering the Acropolis from the Propylaea, or central gateway, visitors were greeted by a colossal bronze statue of Athena Promachos (c. 456 BCE), designed by Phidias. Accounts and a few coins minted with images of the statue allow us to conclude that the bronze statue portrayed a fearsome image of a helmeted Athena striding forward, with her shield at her side and her spear raised high, ready to strike.



Temple of Athena Nike: The Temple of Athena Nike, c. 427–425 BCE. Acropolis, Athens, Greece

The Temple of Athena Nike

One of the smaller but most elegant structures on the Acropolis is the Temple of Athena Nike (427–425 BCE), designed by Kallikrates in honor of the goddess of victory. It stands on the parapet of the Acropolis, to the southwest and to the right of the Propylaea. The temple is a small Ionic temple that consists of a single naos, where a cult statue stood fronted by four piers. The four piers aligned to the four Ionic prostyle columns of the pronaos. Both the pronaos and opisthodomos are very small, nearly non-existent, and are defined by their four prostyle columns.



The plan for the Temple of Athena Nike: This temple is a small Ionic temple that consists of a single naos, where a cult statue stood fronted by four piers, c. 427–425 BCE

The continuous frieze around the temple depicts battle scenes from Greek history. These representations include battles from the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, including a cavalry scene from the Battle at Marathon and the Greek victory over the Persians at the Battle of Plataea.

The scenes on the Temple of Athena Nike are similar to the battle scenes on the Parthenon, which represented Greek dominance over non-Greeks and foreigners in mythical allegory. The scenes depicted on the frieze of the Temple of Athena Nike frieze display Greek and Athenian dominance and military power throughout historical events.



Nike Adjusting Her Sandal: This statue is in the Temple of Athena Nike, c. 425–420 BCE. It is located in the Acropolis in Athens, Greece

A parapet was added on the balustrade to protect visitors from falling down the steep hillside. Images of Nike, such as Nike Adjusting Her Sandal, are carved in relief. In this scene Nike is portrayed standing on one leg as she bends over a raised foot and knee to adjust her sandal. Her body is depicted in the new High Classical style.

Unlike Archaic sculpture, this scene actually depicts Nike's body. Her body and muscles are clearly distinguished underneath her transparent yet heavy clothing.

This style, known as **wetdrapery,** allows sculptors to depict the body of a woman while still preserving the modesty of the female figure. Although Nike's body is visible, she remains fully clothed. This style is found elsewhere on the Acropolis, such as on the caryatids and, as noted above, on the women in the Parthenon's pediment.

Sculpture in the Greek High Classical Period

High Classical sculpture demonstrates the shifting style in Greek sculptural work as figures became more dynamic and less static.

Key Points

- After mastering the portrayal of naturalistic bodies from stone, Greek sculptors began to experiment with new poses that expanded the repertoire of Greek art. The sculptures of this later period are moving away from the Classical characteristics they still maintain: idealism and the Severe style.

- Polykleitos is most well known for his Canon, depicted in the Doryphoros, but is also known for his Diadumenos and Discophoros. These two, sculpted athletes are also done in accordance to his canon and are depicted in contrapposto with chiastic poses.
- Phidias was one of the most renowned sculptors his time. He oversaw the sculptural program for the Athenian Acropolis and is also known for his giant chryselephantine cult statues of Zeus and Athena Parthenos.
- Myron is a bronze sculptor of the High Classical period. His statues are known for being imbued with potential energy. His Discobolos is poised to spring, preparing to throw a discus. While still idealized, the figure appears to be frozen in an action of intense movement.

Key Terms

- **chryselephantine**: Made of gold and ivory.
- **aegis**: An attribute of Zeus or Athena, usually represented as a goatskin shield.

Polykleitos

Polykleitos was a famous Greek sculptor who worked in bronze. He was also an art theorist who developed a **canon of proportion** (called the Canon) that is demonstrated in his statue of Doryphoros (Spear Bearer) Many of Polykleitos's bronze statues from the Classical period, including the Doryphoros, survive only as Roman copies executed in marble. Polykleitos, along with Phidias, is thought to have created the style recognized as Classical Greek sculpture.

Another example of the Canon at work is seen in Polykleitos's statue of Diadumenos, a youth trying on a headband, and his statue Discophoros, a discus bearer. Both Roman marble copies depict athletic, nude, male figures. The bodies of the two figures are idealized. The nudity allows the harmony of parts, or **symmetria**, to easily be seen and illustrates the principles discussed in the Canon. The Canon focused on the proportion of parts of the body in relationship to each other to create the ideal male form. Both statues demonstrate fine proportion, ideal balance, and the definable parts of the body.



Polykleitos, Doryphoros (the Canon), c. 1st century BCE, Carrara marble, 78.7" High. Naples

Doryphoros is shown in the contrapposto stance. He shifts his weight to his right leg. The sculpture, demonstrates the flexibility of composition based on the Canon and the innate liveliness produced by contrapposto postures. Despite the lively aspects and unique pose of the figure, it still retain the Severe style and expressionless face of early Greek sculpture.

Polykleitos not only worked in bronze but is also known for his chryselephantine cult statue of Hera at Argos, which in ancient times was compared to Phidias' colossal chryselephantine cult statues.

Phidias

Phidias was the sculptor and artistic director of the Athenian Acropolis and oversaw the sculptural program of all the Acropolis' buildings. He was considered one of the greatest sculptors of his time and he created monumental cult statues of gold and ivory for city-states across Greece.

Phidias is well known for the Athena Parthenos, the colossal cult statue in the naos of the Parthenon. While the statue has been lost, written accounts and reproductions (miniatures and representations on coins and gems) provide us with an idea of how the sculpture appeared.

It was made out of ivory, silver, and gold and had a wooden core support. Athena stood crowned, wearing her helmet and **aegis**. Her shield stood upright at her left side and her left hand rested on it while in her right hand she held a statue of Nike. An artist's reconstruction is housed in the Parthenon in Nashville.



Reconstruction of Phidias's Athena Parthenos: This is housed in the Parthenon in Centennial Park, Nashville, TN

Sculpture in the Hellenistic Period

A key component of Hellenistic sculpture is the expression of a sculpture's face and body to elicit an emotional response from the viewer.

Key Points

- Hellenistic sculpture takes the naturalism of the body's form and expression to level of hyper-realism where the expression of the sculpture's face and body elicit an emotional response.
- Drama and pathos are new factors in Hellenistic sculpture. The style of the sculpting is no longer idealized. Rather, they are often exaggerated, and details are emphasized to add a new, heightened level of motion and pathos.
- New compositions and states of mind are explored in Hellenistic sculptures including old age, drunkenness, sleep, agony, and despair.
- Portraiture became popular in this period. The subjects are depicted with a sense of naturalism that displays their imperfections.
- Hellenistic sculpture was in especially high demand after the Greek peninsula fell to the Romans in 146 BCE. Notable sculptures produced for Roman patrons include Laocoön and His Sons and the Farnese Bull.

Key Terms

- **satyr**: A male companion of Pan or Dionysus with the tail of a horse and a perpetual erection. Also known as a faun.
- **patrician**: An aristocrat or other elite member of society; it may also be used as an adjective.
- **pathos**: That quality or property of anything that touches the feelings or excites emotions and passions, especially that which awakens tender emotions, such as pity, sorrow, and the like; a contagious warmth of feeling, action, or expression; a pathetic quality.

Hellenistic sculpture continues the trend of increasing naturalism seen in the stylistic development of Greek art. During this time, the rules of Classical art were pushed and abandoned in favor of new themes, genres, drama, and pathos that were never explored by previous Greek artists.

Furthermore, the Greek artists added a new level of naturalism to their figures by adding an elasticity to their form and expressions, both facial and physical. These figures interact with their audience in a new theatrical manner by eliciting an emotional reaction from their view—this is known as pathos.

Nike of Samothrace

One of the most iconic statues of the period, the Nike of Samothrace, also known as the Winged Victory (c. 190 BCE), commemorates a naval victory. This Parian marble statue depicts Nike, now armless and headless, alighting onto the prow of the ship. The prow is visible beneath her feet, and the scene is filled with theatricality and naturalism as the statue reacts to her surroundings.

Nike's feet, legs, and body thrust forward in contradiction to her drapery and wings that stream backwards. Her clothing whips around her from the wind and her wings lift upwards. This depiction provides the impression that she has just landed and that this is the precise moment that she is settling onto the ship's prow. In addition to the sculpting, the figure was most likely set within a fountain, creating a theatrical setting where both the imagery and the auditory effect of the fountain would create a striking image of action and triumph.



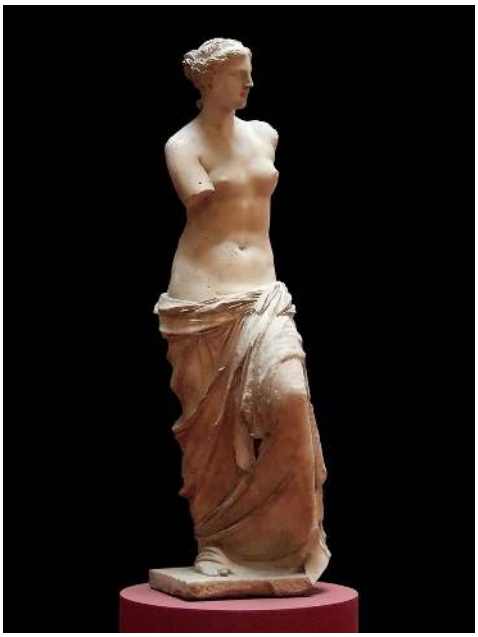
Nike of Samothrace: Also known as the Winged Victory (c. 190 BCE), this marble statue, in Samothrace, Greece, commemorates a naval victory

Venus de Milo

Also known as the Aphrodite of Melos (c. 130–100 BCE), this sculpture by Alexandros of Antioch, is another well-known icon of the Hellenistic period. Today the goddess's arms are missing. It has been suggested that one arm clutched at her slipping drapery while the other arm held out an apple, an allusion to the Judgment of Paris and the abduction of Helen.

Originally, like all Greek sculptures, the statue would have been painted and adorned with metal jewelry, which is evident from the attachment holes. This image is in some ways similar to Praxitiles' Late Classical sculpture Aphrodite of Knidos (fourth century BCE), but it is considered to be more erotic than its earlier counterpart.

For instance, while she is covered below the waist, Aphrodite makes little attempt to cover herself. She appears to be teasing and ignoring her viewer, instead of accosting him and making eye contact.



Venus de Milo: This marble statue, in Melos, Greece, was sculpted by Alexandros of Antioch, c. 130–100 BCE

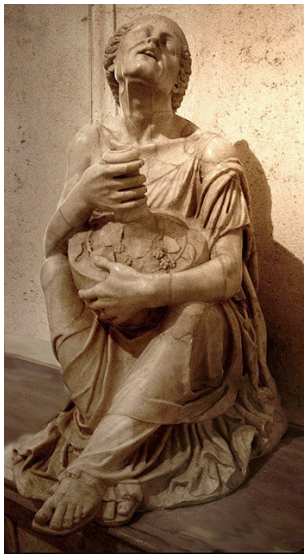
Altered States

While the Nike of Samothrace exudes a sense of drama and the Venus de Milo a new level of feminine sexuality, other Greek sculptors explored new states of being. Instead of reproducing images of the ideal Greek male or female, as was favored during the Classical period, sculptors began to depict images of the old, tired, sleeping, and drunk—none of which are ideal representations of a man or woman.

Drunken Old Woman

Images of drunkenness were also created of women, which can be seen in a statue attributed to the Hellenistic artist Myron of a drunken beggar woman. This woman sits on the floor with her arms and legs wrapped around a large jug and a hand gripping the jug's neck.

Grape vines decorating the top of the jug make it clear that it holds wine. The woman's face, instead of being expressionless, is turned upward and she appears to be calling out, possibly to passersby. Not only is she intoxicated, but she is old: deep wrinkles line her face, her eyes are sunken, and her bones stick out through her skin.



Drunken Old Woman: This is a Roman marble copy of the Greek bronze original by Myron, c. 200–180 BCE

Roman Patronage

The Greek peninsula fell to Roman power in 146 BCE. Greece was a key province of the Roman Empire, and the Roman's interest in Greek culture helped to circulate Greek art around the empire, especially in Italy, during the Hellenistic period and into the Imperial period of Roman hegemony.

Greek sculptors were in high demand throughout the remaining territories of the Alexander's empire and then throughout the Roman Empire. Famous Greek statues were copied and replicated for wealthy Roman patricians and Greek artists were commissioned for large-scale sculptures in the Hellenistic style. Originally cast in bronze, many Greek sculptures that we have today survive only as marble Roman copies. Some of the most famous colossal marble groups were sculpted in the Hellenistic style for wealthy Roman patrons and for the imperial court. Despite their Roman audience, these were purposely created in the Greek style and continued to display the drama, tension, and pathos of Hellenistic art.

Laocoön and His Sons

Laocoön was a Trojan priest of Poseidon who warned the Trojans, "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts," when the Greeks left a large wooden horse at the gates of Troy. Athena or Poseidon (depending on the story's version), upset by his vain warning to his people, sent two sea serpents to torture and kill the priest and his two sons.

Laocoön and His Sons, a Hellenistic marble sculpture group (attributed by the Roman historian Pliny the Elder to the sculptors Agesander, Athenodoros, and Polydorus from the island of Rhodes) was created in the early first century CE to depict this scene from Virgil's epic, The Aeneid.



Laocoön and His Sons: This marble statue is attributed by the Roman historian Pliny the Elder to the sculptors Agesander, Athenodoros, and Polydorus from the island of Rhodes

Similar to other examples of Hellenistic sculpture, Laocoön and His Sons depicts a chiastic scene filled with drama, tension, and pathos. The figures writhe as they are caught in the coils of the serpents. The faces of the three men are filled with agony and toil, which is reflected in the tension and strain of their muscles. Laocoön stretches out in a long diagonal from his right arm to his left as he attempts to free himself.

His sons are also entangled by the serpents, and their faces react to their doom with confusion and despair. The carving and detail, the attention to the musculature of the body, and the deep drilling, seen in Laocoön's hair and beard, are all characteristic elements of the Hellenistic style.



Laocoön and His Sons: This detail of Laocoön's face shows the carving and detail, the attention to the musculature of the body, and the deep drilling that are all characteristic elements of the Hellenistic style

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3.6: Ancient Rome

The Etruscans

Italy as a unified country did not exist until the 19th century. The area we know as Italy, or the boot-shaped peninsula that extends into the Mediterranean Sea was originally colonized by peoples from Greece, areas from around the Mediterranean and other areas from the North including the Celts. By the 6th c. BCE a group known as the Etruscans had gained control of much of the north and central Italy. The Etruscan society was largely centered on Etruria (modern Tuscany) but would eventually rule the little Latin-speaking town on the Tiber River, Rome. With the rise of Romans, the Etrurians were assimilated into that larger body that would go on to be the largest Empire of the early Common Era.

Key Points

- Etruscans were originally located in what is present-day Tuscany.
- Much of Etruscan architecture was inspired by ancient Greece.
- They were both an agrarian and sea-faring people trading with the Greeks and Phoenicians.
- Women in Etruria were given a position of greater equality than had been those of ancient Greece.
- Etruscans incorporated Greek deities and elements of Greek temple architecture.
- Etruscan cemeteries (necropolis – city of the dead) were planned like urban cities with tomb chambers or tumula partly carved from the local limestone.

Key Terms

- **Atrium –** a shallow indoor pool for household uses that collected rainwater through an opening in the roof.
- **Prostyle** – a style of temple with a row of columns across the front.
- **Tuscan order** – Vetruvius described this sturdy, unfluted column with a pedestal, base, and cornice, capital and entablature as coming from the Etruscan-modified Doric order.
- **Archaic smile** – as in the early Greek koroi; a small up-turning of the corners of the mouth, apparently to signify life.
- **Sarcophagi** – coffins or “eaters of the dead”. Etrurian sarcophagi were often made of terra-cotta.
- **Apotropaic** – meant to ward off evil, protective images.

The Etruscan peoples were originally the most successful of the early populations of what is today Italy. The height of the civilization was around 900–27 BCE. They were a highly organized society with a religion gleaned largely from the Greek pantheon and a government that would be something of a model for the early Romans. The first Roman kings were from Etruscan heritage.

The Etruscans had a written language that seems to have been based on early Greek. It has not been entirely translated by modern scholars and so much of what can be known about the early Etruscans is through the objects they left behind and from a few oblique historical references. The objects that have been recovered from places like the necropolises of Cerveteri and Veii.



Map of Ertruria. CC BY-SA 3.0

The Etruscans built walled cities and houses of mud brick that were probably square. The tombs in the cities they built for their dead were elaborate and seem to have echoed the interior decoration of their homes. The tumuli tombs were mounds over chambers carved into the dark limestone of the region.

The Etruscans were also navigators of the seas surrounding the Italian peninsula trading with the advanced cultures of Greece, the islands, and areas further to the north and south. They were adept at bronze work and created sculpture, practical implements and weapons for exchange in trade. Etruscans built their cities on high places, which is not uncommon in areas vulnerable to attack across the land. Early Rome seems to have been built on the Etruscan model with the seven hills proving an optimum site.

They had an organized system of governance, the groups were still individual city-states although there is evidence that some of these organized themselves into a confederation or league at one point with a more centralized rule. Because trade was so lucrative, families could accrue wealth and so move up in the social construct of the city. That family life was central to the Etruscans is evidenced by the multiple members buried in the tombs and that they were wealthy by the burial goods placed with them. There is something of an Egyptian quality to the focus on burial places and goods in the Etruscan necropolis.



Etruscan, Chimera of Arezzo, bronze, CC BY-SA 3.0, unknown source, created ca. 400 BCE

The prominence of the names of mothers and the picturing of the wives on sarcophagi may indicate that they enjoyed a greater degree of freedom and significance than did the more sequestered women of Greece. Greek women could never have attended symposia, or social gatherings like the one pictured here.



Sarcophagus of the Spouses (Villa Giulia). CC SA-BY 3.0. Orig. Sailko

The image most suggestive of this is the Sarcophagus of the Spouses which is a terra-cotta burial casket decorated with the images of the couple that occupy it, or that is the implication. The couple is shown reclining in the sort of posture that later Romans will adopt for social occasions. Their hands suggest they might originally have held cups or eating utensils as if they were at a banquet. This sort of social freedom was not allowed Greek women; Theopompus, a Greek historian of the fourth century BCE, commented on the scandalous behaviour of the Etruscan women although he also commented that they were all very good looking.

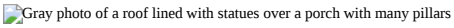
Etruscan Temples

As with many aspects of Etruscan life, Greek models are suggestive but with significant differences. Firstly, Etruscan temples, like their homes, were made of mud brick instead of marble or stone. This means that unlike the Parthenon history has no examples remaining of actual Etruscan temple architecture. However, Vetruvius, a 1st c. BCE Roman writer, architect, and engineer, gave an account of the Etruscan temple in his *De Architectura*.



Foundation of an Etruscan temple at Orvieto. From Boundless

According to Vitruvius the temples had a wooden structure with mud brick walls which were then covered in stucco which could be painted or polished. Two rows of columns stood across the front porch (or pronaos) and were usually made of painted wood, although a temple at Veii had marble columns. There was a central staircase approach. There might be more than one cella, or interior space, on a tufa foundation. The tufa foundation you see in the image above is what remains of an Etruscan temple at Orvieto. While Greek temples tended to be rectangular the Etruscan model was more square in configuration.



Model of Portonaccio Sanctuary of Minerva, c. 510 BCE, Veii. From Boundless

Etruscan temples had low wooden roofs covered in tile that extended beyond the foundation. This created some protection from the elements for the mud brick structure. Unlike Greek temples with relief carving primarily reserved for the pediment and entablature areas, Etruscan temples had akroteria on the roofline which added to the visibility of the sculpture.

Like most sculpture of the ancient world, this would have been painted in bright colors. The Apulu (Apollo) of Veii is a terra cotta figure that would have been affixed to the roofline of the temple. According to Barbara Borg, the statue may have been made by the artist known as Vulca, the only Etruscan artist known by name. Note the dynamic striding posture of the figure with drapery that falls in stylized decorative folds. His lyre sits between his feet and he wears the archaic smile that signified life.

Other stone carvings called antefixes stood at the ends of the wooden roof beams offering some physical protection to the organic materials. They were often carved to represent the god Dionysus or Medusa, the Gorgon – **apotropaic** figures meant to offer spiritual protection from evil.



Vulca, Apulu, terracotta life-sized figure from Portonaccio at Veii

Etruscan Tombs

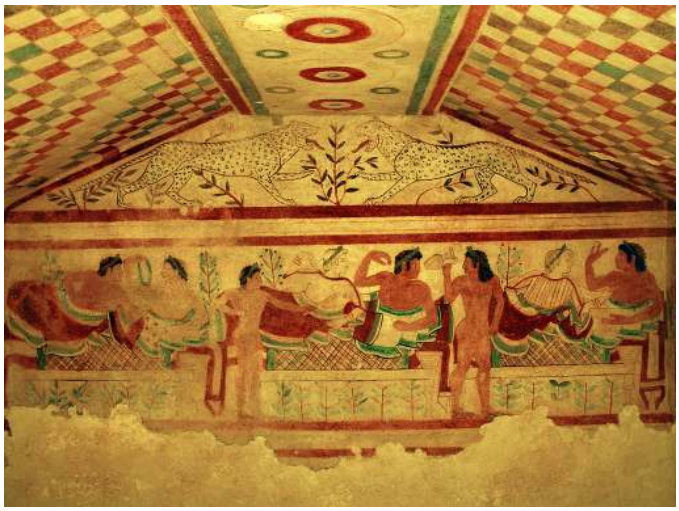
Etruscan tombs are sophisticated and complex structures which are very suggestive of the outlook on life and death shared by that culture. Like other ancient peoples the Etruscans created special “cities of the dead” (necropolises) outside the walls of the cities of the living, but arranged them both outside and in to mirror the places they had occupied while alive. The tumulus, or mound, of the tombs stood over multichambered depressions or rooms cut out of the tufa, a kind of local limestone. These tombs could cover a very large area and are thought to have housed the remains of generations of entire families. The tombs were laid out in an orderly manner like streets in a literal city. A number of these necropolises have been discovered, among them the large one of Banditaccia which contains several significant structures.

Tomb of the Reliefs

Built in the Banditaccia necropolis at Cerveteri, Italy, during the late fourth or early third century BCE, the Tomb of the Reliefs has walls decorated with painted relief sculpture of the household items that would have been found in an Etruscan home. The knives, jugs, lengths of rope and other domestic items suggest that the Etruscans shared the desire of the Egyptians to continue their earthly lives in their next. Religious imagery is also included is the three-headed dog – Cerberus – under the carved relief of a funeral couch. Cerberus was the guardian of the gate to the underworld, a reference to passage from one life to the another.



Tomb of the Reliefs, Cerveteri. CC BY-SA2.0 Roberto Ferrari



Tomb of the Leopards, Tarquinia, c. 480 BCE. CC By-SA 3.0 Waugsberg

Tomb of the Leopards

Like the Egyptians, Etruscans painted scenes of activities from life on the walls of their tombs. In the Tomb of the Leopards from the necropolis at Monterozzi in Tarquinia, Italy, c. 480 BCE, an elaborate banquet scene decorates the room. Male figures – signified by dark skin – and females – light skin – recline on couches while musicians play and servants bring food and drink. On the pediment above them on the back wall of the tomb a pair of leopards face each other like the guardians of ancient gates and temples. One couple shows a man holding up an egg, a symbol of regeneration or renewed life. The figures interact in lively poses

with composite bodies in both profile and frontal positions. The eyes, however, are depicted in profile, unlike those of the Egyptian figures and the plant life that surrounds them suggests a garden party. The colors are a reddish brown, blue, and crème with black outlines. Two figures have blonde hair while all the rest are dark.

End of the Etruscans

The eventual dominance of Rome spelled the end of the Etruscan wealth and society. The people and their art continue but under the rule of the Romans and in the service of that culture. One of the objects from this later period of Etruscan art is the Capitoline Wolf, ca. 500-480 BCE. Some scholars suggest this work is not Etruscan and the two infants, Romulus and Remus, were definitely created during the 15th century. But most agree this represents an Etruscan workshop at the height of its powers, even if the subject belongs to the origin story of their successors.



Capitoline Wolf, Rome, 500-480 BCE. CC BY-SA 3.0 Marcin Floryan

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The Romans

Rome was founded in the mid-eighth century BCE by eight tribes who settled in Etruria and on the famous Seven Hills. The early inhabitants were called "Etruscans" and the present day area is called "Tuscany" after them.

Key Points

- The foundation myths of Romulus and Aeneas are the most common means of recounting the founding of Rome, and ancient historians used them to justify their often violent and warlike culture. However, the historical record provides a more reliable story. April 21, 753 BCE, is the date given by ancient Roman historians to the founding of Rome. Archaeological research supports this assertion, confirming that the site of Rome was inhabited by the mid-eighth century BCE.
- The Romans were descended from the Italic tribes, mainly the Latins (originally from the Alban Hills to the southeast) and the Sabines (originally from the Apennines to the northeast).
- What was to become Rome originally existed as a collection of autonomous villages atop each of the city's famous Seven Hills. The Palatine Hill, located at the city center, marked the original settlement of the Romans, as well as significant temples and religious festivals. The Quirinal Hill became the home of the Sabines until the sixth century BCE, as well as the sites of significant temples and sanctuaries.

Key Terms

- **Septimontium**: A festival celebrating the first federation of the Seven Hills of Rome.

- **wattle-and-daub**: A composite building material used for making walls, in which a woven lattice of wooden strips are coated with a sticky material usually made of some combination of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung and straw.

Foundation Myths

The Romans relied on two sets of myths to explain their origins: the first story tells the tale of Romulus and Remus, while the second tells the story of Aeneas and the Trojans, who survived the sack of Troy by the Greeks. Oddly, both stories relate the founding of Rome and the origins of its people to brutal murders. Romulus killed his twin brother, Remus, in a fit of rage, and Aeneas slaughtered his rival Turnus in combat. Roman historians used these mythical episodes as the reason for Rome's own bloody history and periods of civil war. While foundation myths are the most common vehicle through which we learn about the origins of Rome and the Roman people, the actual history is often overlooked.

The Historical Record

Archaeological evidence shows that the area that eventually became Rome has been inhabited continuously for the past 14,000 years. The historical record provides evidence of habitation on and fortification of the Palatine Hill during the eighth century BCE, which supports the date of April 21, 753 BCE, as the date that ancient historians applied to the founding of Rome in association with a festival to Pales, the goddess of shepherds. Given the importance of agriculture to pre-Roman tribes, as well as most ancestors of civilization, it is logical that the Romans would link the celebration of their founding as a city to an agrarian goddess.

Romulus, whose name is believed to be the namesake of Rome, is credited for Rome's founding. He is also credited with establishing the period of monarchical rule. Six kings ruled after him until 509 BCE, when the people rebelled against the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and established the Republic. Throughout its history, the people—including plebeians, patricians, and senators—were wary of giving one person too much power and feared the tyranny of a king.

Roman Society

Ancient Roman society was based on class-based and political structures, as well as by religious practices.

Key Points

- Roman society consisted of several divisions of social classes that held varying degrees of power and prestige. This structure was echoed on a familial level under the power of the father, or pater familias.
- In matters of government, the Senate remained a fixture from the founding of Rome to the collapse of the Empire, although its power and influence grew and weakened over time.
- As Rome became a global power, its government consisted of levels on the colonial and municipal levels, as well as on the central level in the imperial capital.
- The Roman pantheon of gods is comparable to its Greek counterparts, who Romans worshiped and sent prayers to throughout their lives. The Romans were flexible in their worship and absorbed foreign gods into their pantheon.
- In the Imperial period, an imperial cult developed to worship the emperors who were deified upon their death.

Key Terms

- **PontifexMaximus**: The official head, or chief priest, of the Roman state's religion. In Imperial Rome this title and office was given to the Emperor.
- **plebeian**: A free Roman citizen who was not a patrician.
- **equite**: The lower of the two aristocratic classes of ancient Rome, ranking below the patricians.
- **paterfamilias**: The father, or (male) head of household.
- **insula**: An apartment building that housed most of the urban citizen population of ancient Rome, including ordinary people of lower- or middle- class status (the plebians) and all but the wealthiest from the upper-middle class (the equites).
- **patrician**: A member of a hereditary ruling-class family.

Social Structure

Life in ancient Rome centered around the capital city with its for a (plural for forum or civic center), temples, theaters, baths, gymnasia, brothels, and other forms of culture and entertainment. Private housing ranged from elegant urban palaces and country villas for the social elites to crowded insulae (apartment buildings) for the majority of the population.The large urban population required an endless supply of food, which was a complex logistical task. Area farms provided produce, while animal-derived products were considered luxuries. The aqueducts brought water to urban centers, and wine and oil were imported from Hispania (Spain and Portugal), Gaul (France and Belgium), and Africa. Egypt became known as the breadbasket of Rome.

Highly efficient technology allowed for frequent commerce among the provinces.While the population within the city of Rome might have exceeded one million, most Romans lived in rural areas, each with an average population of 10,000 inhabitants.

Roman society consisted of patricians, equites (equestrians, or knights), plebeians, and slaves. All categories except slaves enjoyed the status of citizenship. In the beginning of the Roman republic, plebeians could neither intermarry with patricians or hold elite status, but this changed by the Late Republic, when the plebeian-born Octavian rose to elite status and eventually became the first emperor.

Over time, legislation was passed to protect the lives and health of slaves. Although many prostitutes were slaves, for instance, the bill of sale for some slaves stipulated that they could not be used for commercial prostitution. Slaves could become freedmen—and thus citizens—if their owners freed them or if they purchased their freedom by paying their owners. Free-born women were considered citizens, although they could neither vote nor hold political office.

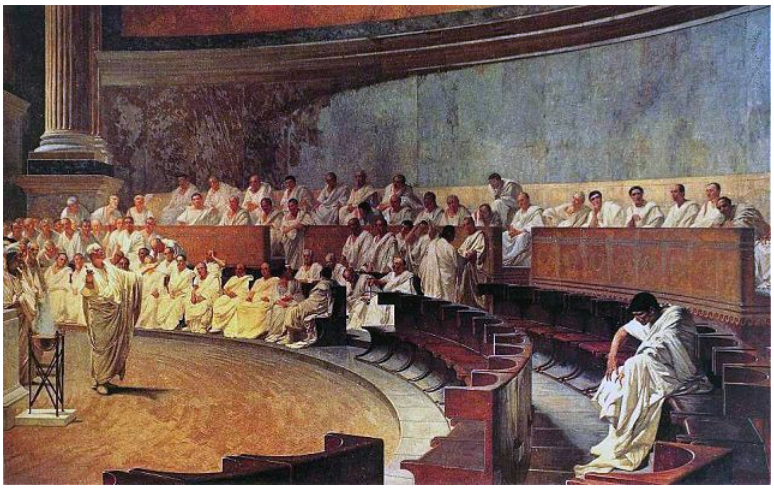
Government

Over the course of its history, Rome existed as a kingdom (hereditary monarchy), a republic (in which leaders were elected), and an empire (a kingdom encompassing a wider swath of territory). From the establishment of the city in 753 BCE to the fall of the empire in 476 CE, the Senate was a fixture in the political culture of Rome, although the power it exerted did not remain constant.

During the days of the kingdom, it was little more than an advisory council to the king. Over the course of the Republic, the Senate reached the height of its power, with old-age becoming a symbol of prestige, as only elders could serve as senators. The modern term “senior citizen” derives from this moment and was represented in sculpture by “**veristic** (**verism**)” portraits in which male age was often exaggerated. However the late Republic witnessed the beginning of its decline. After Augustus ended the Republic to form the Empire, the Senate lost much of its power, and with the reforms of Diocletian in the third century CE, it became irrelevant.

As Rome grew as a global power, its government was subdivided into colonial and municipal levels. Colonies were modeled closely on the Roman constitution, with roles being defined for magistrates, council, and assemblies. Colonists enjoyed full Roman citizenship and were thus extensions of Rome itself. The second most prestigious class of cities was the municipium (a town or city). Municipia were originally communities of non-citizens among Rome’s Italic allies.

Later, Roman citizenship was awarded to all Italy, with the result that a municipium was effectively now a community of citizens. The category was also used in the provinces to describe cities that used Roman law but were not colonies.



The Roman Senate: A nineteenth-century fresco in the Palazzo Madama in Rome, depicting a sitting of the Roman Senate in which the senator Cicero attacks the senator Catiline. Public Domain

Religion

The Roman people considered themselves to be very religious. Religious beliefs and practices helped establish stability and social order among the Romans during the reign of Romulus and the period of the legendary kings. Some of the highest religious offices, such as the Pontifex Maximus, the head of the state’s religion— which eventually became one of the titles of the emperor—were sought-after political positions. Women who became Vestal Virgins served the goddess of the hearth, Vesta, and received a high degree of autonomy within the state, including rights that other women would never receive.

The Roman pantheon corresponded to the Etruscan and Greek deities. Jupiter was considered the most powerful and important of all the Gods, corresponding to the Greek's Zeus. In nearly every Roman city, there was a central temple known as the Capitolia that was dedicated to the supreme triad of deities: Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva (Zeus, Hera, and Athena). Small household gods, known as Lares, were also popular.

Roman religious practice often centered around prayers, vows, oaths, and sacrifice. Many Romans looked to the gods for protection and would complete a promise sacrifice or offering as thanks when their wishes were fulfilled. The Romans were not exclusive in their religious practices and easily participated in numerous rituals for different gods. Furthermore, the Romans readily absorbed foreign gods and cults into their pantheon. With the rise of imperial rule, the emperors were considered gods, and temples were built to many emperors upon their death. Their family members could also be deified, and the household gods of the emperor's family were also incorporated into Roman worship.

The Republic

Roman Sculpture under the Republic

During the Roman Republic, members of all social classes used a variety of sculptural techniques to promote their distinguished social statuses.

Key Points

- Continuous narration arose during the Republic as a means of telling a story from beginning to end in a visual form. Art patrons used it on public monuments to celebrate their status in society.
- The patronage of public sculpture extended to freedmen, as seen in the massive and uniquely decorated tomb of Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces the Baker.
- Veristic portraiture depicts the subject in hyper- realism, wrinkles and individual facial characteristics are carefully formed in these images.
- Portraits of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar set precedents for future imperial portraiture by quoting iconographic characteristics and introducing a likeness of the living imperator on coins.
- Death masks provided a means for a family to remember their ancestors as well as to remind others of the illustriousness of their ancestry.

Key Terms

- **verism**: The style of portraiture favored during the Roman Republic in which the subjects were portrayed in a super-realistic likeness; from the Latin word for true. Age was exaggerated for effect.
- **continuousnarration**: A visual art technique that illustrates multiple scenes of a story within a single frame and without any separation between scenes and actions.
- **Imperator**: A Latin word meaning general or ruler; a title given to triumphant generals during the Republic.

Roman Art in the Republic

Early Roman art was influenced by the art of Greece and that of the neighboring Etruscans, themselves greatly influenced by their Greek trading partners. As the expanding Roman Republic began to conquer Greek territory, its official sculpture became largely an extension of the Hellenistic style, with its departure from the idealized body and flair for the dramatic. This is partly due to the large number of Greek sculptors working within Roman territory.

However, Roman sculpture during the Republic departed from the Greek traditions in several ways.

- It was the first to feature a new technique called continuous narration.
- Commoners, including freedmen, could commission public art and use it to cast their professions in a positive light.
- Portraiture throughout the Republic celebrated old age with its verism.
- In the closing decades of the Republic, Julius Caesar counteracted traditional propriety by becoming the first living person to place his own portrait on a coin.

In the examples that follow, the patrons use these techniques to promote their status in society.

Portraiture

Roman portraiture during the Republic is identified by its considerable realism, known as veristic portraiture. Verism refers to a hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics. The style originated from Hellenistic Greece; however, its use in the

Roman Republic is due to Roman values, customs, and political life.

As with other forms of Roman art, portraiture borrowed certain details from Greek art but adapted these to their own needs. Veristic images often show their male subjects with receding hairlines, deep winkles, and even with warts. While the faces of the portraits often display incredible detail and likeness, the subjects' bodies are idealized and do not correspond to the age shown in the face.



Portrait of a Roman General: When created as full-length sculptures, the veristic portrait busts appear to have been paired with idealized (mass-produced?) bodies that create a sense of disunity

TheDoublePortraitofGratidiaM.L.ChriteandM.GratidiusLibanus is another example of **verism**. This double bust was originally mounted on a funeral crypt or tomb and is illustrative on several levels. The wife of the couple makes a gesture of familial belonging that we have already seen in Egyptian representations like that of Menkaure and a Queen. It was also a gesture from the Roman marriage ceremony. [1]She is notably younger in appearance; perhaps she had her portrait done when she was a younger woman for use after her death at whatever age. Alternately, she may have been a second, younger wife. Or more likely, the tradition of verism in men to underscore age, wisdom, and service to the city was not valued in women. Son of an ex-slave, Gratidius Libanus draws attention to his mark of citizenship, his toga.



Double Portrait of Gratidia M.L. Chrite and M. Gratidius Libanus. Late 1st century BCE. White marble with traces of color. Height 23.75 inches. Museo Pio Clementino, Musei Vaticani, Rome Photo© LaCour Slide Library. PD-US



Bust of an old man: Verism refers to a hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics, such as the wrinkles on this man's face

The popularity and usefulness of verism appears to derive from the need to have a recognizable image. Veristic portrait busts provided a means of reminding people of distinguished ancestors or of displaying one's power, wisdom, experience, and authority. Statues were often erected of generals and elected officials in public forums—and a veristic image ensured that a passerby would recognize the person when they actually saw them.

The Late Republic

The use of veristic portraiture began to diminish in the first century BCE. During this time, civil wars threatened the empire, and individual men began to gain more power. The portraits of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar, two political rivals who were also the most powerful generals in the Republic, began to change the style of the portraits and their use.

The portraits of Pompey are not fully idealized, nor were they created in the same veristic style of Republican senators. Pompey borrowed a specific parting and curl of his hair from Alexander the Great. This similarity served to link Pompey visually with the likeness of Alexander and to remind people that he possessed similar characteristics and qualities.



Marble bust of Pompey the Great: Portraits of Pompey combine a degree of verism with an idealized hairstyle reminiscent of Alexander the Great

Death Masks

The creation and use of death masks demonstrate Romans' veneration of their ancestors. These masks were created from molds taken of a person at the time of his or her death. Made of wax, bronze, marble, and terra cotta, death masks were kept by families and displayed in the atrium of their homes.

Visitors and clients who entered the home would have been reminded of the family's ancestry and the honorable qualities of their ancestors. Such displays served to bolster the reputation and credibility of the family.

Death masks were also worn and paraded through the streets during funeral procession. Again, this served not only a memorial for the dead, but also to link the living members of a family to their illustrious ancestors in the eyes of the spectator. With the Empire which was ushered in with the elevation of Augustus Ceasar, verism became less important. Empirical portraiture was idealized with the ruler depicted as youthful and powerful.

The Empire

After the death of Julius Caesar at the hands of the Senators who believed him about to declare himself Emperor for life, Rome devolved into chaos for a time. Ironically, it took another strong man – Augustus Caesar – to actually declare himself Emperor to get Roman society back into line. The Empire stretched from 27 BC – 395 CE, then as a divided Empire with the Western rule in Italy from 395 -476/80 and Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) in the East from 395-1453 when it was conquered by Islamic peoples.

Sculpture in the Empire

Augustus Caesar ushered in a period of more than 100 years peace called the Pax Romana. He turned away from verism and was always pictured as young and vital. In this well-known sculpture, Augustus of Prima Porta, from the 1st century CE, the Emperor is shown as both a soldier and an orator, his armor decorated with images of Mars, the God of War, and barefoot as gods or heroes in classical sculpture are pictured. His upraised arm suggests the traditional pose of an orator and his body and facial features are idealized. At his feet is Cupic, son of Venus, the goddess Augustus reputedly was descended from. Emperors were elevated upon death to the position of a god. Here, Augustus's sculpture is essentially political propaganda for the position of Emperor in a Rome previously hostile to that office. It is believed that this sculpture, like most ancient work, was painted in vivid polychromy.

Images of Emperors after Augustus followed this idealized format until late in the Empire. Eventually, figural types began to change and become more abstract opening the door to the conceptual images of medieval Christianity.



Augustus of Prima Porta, 1st c. CE, marble, 80.3″ high. Vatican Museums, PD-US

Architecture

Concrete

The Romans perfected the recipe for concrete during the third century BCE by mixing together water, lime, and pozzolana, volcanic ash mined from the countryside surrounding Mt. Vesuvius. Concrete became the primary building material for the Romans, and it is largely the reason that they were such successful builders.

Most Roman buildings were built with concrete and brick that was then covered in façade of stucco, expensive stone, or marble. Concrete was a cheaper and lighter material than most other stones used for construction. This helped the Romans build structures that were taller, more complicated, and quicker to build than any previous ones.

Once dried, concrete was also extremely strong, yet flexible enough to remain standing during moderate seismic activity. The Romans were even able to use concrete underwater, allowing them build harbors and breakers for their ports. The ruins of a tomb on the Via Appia (the most famous thoroughfare through ancient Rome) expose the stones and aggregate that the Romans used to mix concrete.

Arches, Vaults, and Domes

The Romans effectively combined concrete and the structural shape of the arch. These two elements became the foundations for most Roman structures. Arches can bear immense weight, as they are designed to redistribute weight from the top, to its sides, and down into the ground. While the Romans did not invent the arch, they were the first culture to manipulate it and rely on its shape.

An arch is a pure compression form. It can span a large area by resolving forces into compressive stresses (pushing downward) that, in turn, eliminate tensile stresses (pushing outward). As the forces in the arch are carried to the ground, the arch will push outward at the base (called thrust). As the height of the arch decreases, the outward thrust increases. In order to maintain arch action and prevent the arch from collapsing, the thrust needs to be restrained, either with internal ties or external bracing, such as abutments.

The arch is a shape that can be manipulated into a variety of forms that create unique architectural spaces. Multiple arches can be used together to create a vault. The simplest type is known as a barrel vault. Barrel vaults consist of a line of arches in a row that create the shape of a tunnel.

When two barrel vaults intersect at right angles, they create a groin vault. These are easily identified by the x-shape they create in the ceiling of the vault. Furthermore, because of the direction, the thrust is concentrated along this x-shape, so only the corners of a groin vault need to be grounded. This allows an architect or engineer to manipulate the space below the groin vault in a variety of ways.

Arches and vaults can be stacked and intersected with each other in a multitude of ways. One of the most important forms that they can create is the dome. This is essentially an arch that is rotated around a single point to create a large hemispherical vault. The largest dome constructed during the Republic was on the Temple of Echo at Baiae, named for its remarkable acoustic properties

The Pantheon

This Roman temple dedicated to all the Gods (pan – theis) was made possible by the Roman use of concrete. It was for centuries one of the most iconic structures in the world. See a very good video about the Pantheon here:



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Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum)

Upon his succession, the emperor Vespasian began a vast building program in Rome that was continued by Titus and Domitian. It was a cunning political scheme to garner support from the people of Rome.

Vespasian transformed land from hated emperor Nero's Domus Aurea (Gold House) into public buildings for leisure and entertainment, such as the Baths of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre. Nero's private lake was drained and became the foundations for the amphitheater, the first permanent amphitheater built in the city of Rome. Before this time, gladiatorial contests in the city were held in temporary wooden arenas.



Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum): The exterior of the Flavian Amphitheater or Colosseum, 70–80 CE, in Rome, Italy

The amphitheater became known as the Colosseum for its size, but in also in reference to a colossal golden statue of Nero that stood nearby. Vespasian had the colossus reworked into an image of the sun god, Sol.

Painting in the Early Roman Empire

Roman frescoes were the primary method of interior decoration and their development is generally categorized into four different styles or periods. While it isn't necessary to categorize each style, it is notable that examples of each remain in buildings preserved in Pompeii.

Key Points

- The development of fresco -painting styles is a visual example of the changing tastes from the third century BCE through the first century CE. The change in styles reflects the changes that occurred in Roman society.

Key Terms

- **triclinium**: Formal dining room.
- **buonfresco**: A painting that involves applying wet paint to wet lime plaster. As both components dry, a chemical reaction causes them to fuse together, literally making the painting part of the wall.
- **encaustic**: A wax-based paint that is fixed in place by heating; a painting produced using this paint.
- **fresco**: In painting, the technique of applying water-based pigment to lime mortar or plaster.
- **Egyptomania**: Roman fascination with all things related to Egypt following the death of Cleopatra in 31 BCE and the annexation of Egypt in 30 BCE.
- **trompel'oeil**: A genre of still-life painting that exploits human vision to create the illusion that the subject of the painting is real.

Roman Painting

Roman painters often painted frescoes, specifically buon fresco, a technique that involved painting pigment on wet plaster. When the painting dried, the image became an integral part of the wall. Fresco painting was the primary method of decorating an interior

space. However, few examples survive, and the majority of them are from the remains of Roman houses and villas around Mt. Vesuvius.

Other examples of frescoes come from locations that were buried (burial protected and preserved the frescoes), such as parts of Nero's Domus Aurea and at the Villa of Livia. These frescoes demonstrate a wide variety of styles. Popular subjects include mythology, portraiture, still-life painting, and historical accounts.

The surviving Roman paintings reveal a high degree of sophistication. They employ visual techniques that include atmospheric and near one-point linear perspective to properly convey the idea of space. Furthermore, portraiture and still-life images demonstrate artistic talent when conveying real-life objects and likenesses. The attention to detail seen in still-life paintings include minute shadows and an attention to light to properly depict the material of the object, whether it be glass, food, ceramics, or animals.

Roman portraiture further exhibits the talent of Roman painters and often shows careful study on the artist's part in the techniques used to portray individual faces and people. Some of the most interesting portraits come from Egypt, from late first century BCE to early third century CE, when Egypt was a province of Rome.



Fayum mummy portrait: A mummy portrait of a young women found in the Fayum Necropolis, Egypt, from the second century CE

These encaustic-on-wood panel images from the Fayum necropolis were laid over the mummified body. They show remarkable realism, while conveying the ideals and changing fashions of the Egypto-Roman people.

Villa of the Mysteries

At the Villa of the Mysteries, just outside of Pompeii, there is a fantastic scene filled with life-size figures that depicts a ritual element from a Dionysian mystery cult. In this Second-Style example, architectural elements play a small role in creating the illusion of ritual space. The people and activity in the scene are the main focus. The architecture present is mainly piers or wall panels that divide the main scene into separate segments. The figures appear life-size, which brings them into the space of the room.



Villa of the Mysteries: One wall on the ritual scene depicted at the Villa of Mysteries, in Pompeii, Italy, c. 60–50 BCE

The scene wraps around the room, depicting what may be a rite of marriage. A woman is seen preparing her hair. She is surrounded by other women and cherubs while a figure, identified as Dionysus, waits. The ritual may reenact the marriage between Dionysus and Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos.

All the figures, except for Dionysus and one small boy, are female. The figures also appear to interact with one other from across the room. On the two walls in one corner, a woman reacts in terror to Dionysus and the mask over his head. On the opposite corner, a cherub appears to be whipping a woman on the adjoining wall. While the cult aspects of the ritual are unknown, the fresco demonstrates the ingenuity and inventiveness of Roman painters.

Pompeii

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE preserved many structures in the city of Pompeii, allowing scholars a rare glimpse into Roman life.

Key Points

- Pompeiian houses deviated greatly from the standard model created by historians. Examples demonstrate how the standard elements could be rearranged to fit almost any footprint and the wealth of the patron.

Key Terms

- **atrium**: A square hall lit by daylight from above, into which rooms open at one or more levels.
- **peristyle**: A colonnade that surrounds a courtyard, temple, etc.
- **patrician**: Originally, a member of any of the families constituting the populus Romanus, or body of Roman citizens, before the development of the plebeian order; later, one who, by right of birth or by special privilege conferred, belonged to the senior class of Romans, who, with certain property, had by right a seat in the Roman Senate.

During the Roman Republic and into the early Empire, the area today known as the Bay of Naples was developed as a resort-type area for elite Romans to escape the pressure and politics of Rome. The region was dominated by Mt. Vesuvius, which famously erupted in August 79 CE, burying and preserving the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, along with the region's villas and farms.

When Vesuvius erupted on August 25, a cloud of ash spewed south, burying the cities of Pompeii, Nuceria, and Stabiae. While not everyone left prior to the eruption, archaeological evidence shows that people did leave the city. Some houses give the impression of having been packed up and in some cases furniture and objects were excavated jumbled together. Other objects of value appear to have been buried or hidden. There is evidence of people returning after the eruption to dig through the remains—either recovering lost goods or looting for valuables.



The eruption of Mount Vesuvius: The black and gray areas show the direction in which the wind blew the ash and pyroclastic clouds

In Pompeii, an ash flow suffocated the remaining population and allowed all organic matter to decompose. However, where bodies and other organic objects (from bodies to wooden architectural frames) once lay or stood, empty cavities within the ash remained and preserved their outer forms.

A pyroclastic flow of superheated gas and rock went west to the coast and the city of Herculaneum. Unlike the ash blanket of Pompeii, the pyroclastic flow in Herculaneum petrified organic material, ensuring the preservation of human remains and wood, including the preservation of wooden screens, beds, and shelving. Many of the frescoes, mosaics, and other non-organic materials in both the ash and pyroclastic flows were preserved until their excavation in the modern period.



Part of a Roman mosaic from Pompeii (house n. 16, insula 2, Regio VIII; first century CE) that described predator–prey interactions between an octopus, a spiny lobster, and a moray eel (Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei) https://www.researchgate.net/figure/...2_fig5_Figure- 5-Part-of-a-Roman-mosaic-from-Pompeii-house-n-16-insula-2-Regio-VIII-first

Returning to images from Fayum in Egypt, the mummy case of Artemidoros, 100 – 200 CE, shows the conflation of cultures at the end of the Roman period.



Mummy case of Artemidoros, from Fayum. 100-200 CE. Stucco casing with portrait in encaustic on limewood with added gold leaf, 67 ¼" H. The British Museum, London. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

The image of the young man is done in a Roman style; his name is Greek and he wears a Greek victory wreath, yet his mummy case is covered in traditional Egyptian burial symbols. Rome's influence would end with the rise of a new religion and that will be where we will turn our attention next.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: THE HISTORY OF ART—EARLY CHRISTIAN TO DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

4.1: Early Christianity and Byzantine Art
4.2: Early Islamic Art and Architecture
4.3: Medieval Europe and the Romanesque
4.4: Gothic Art and Architecture
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4.1: Early Christianity and Byzantine Art

Constantine seized sole power over Rome to establish authority and stability, and then moved the capital from Rome to Constantinople.

Key Points

- Constantine reigned from 306 to 337 CE. He managed to re-establish stability in the empire and rule as a single emperor, legalize Christianity, and move the imperial capital to the newly-formed city of Constantinople.
- The Arch of Constantine, a triumphal arch commemorating Constantine's victory over Maxentius, makes use of **spolia** from monuments dedicated to Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius.
- Constantine completed the **Basilica** Nova, the construction of which was begun by his rival, Maxentius. This massive concrete building displayed the impressive power and authority of Constantine.
- At one end of the Basilica Nova sat the **Colossus** of Constantine: over 40 feet tall and made of marble, brick, wood frames, and bronze gilding. The Colossus further emphasized the sole authority, control, and power held by Constantine.
- After Constantine relocated, the city of Rome became vulnerable to barbarian hoards who pillaged local monuments and buildings. Outside Rome, Constantine oversaw the construction of the imperial district of Constantinople and the Aula Palatina in Trier (present-day Germany).

Key Terms

- **nave**: The central area of a basilica.
- **apse**: A semicircular recess covered with a hemispherical vault, also known as an exedra.
- **colossus**: A statue of gigantic proportions. The name was especially applied to certain famous statues in antiquity, such as the Colossus of Nero in Rome, and the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- **basilica**: A building having a nave with a semicircular apse, side aisles, a narthex, and a clerestory. The Roman design of the basilica became the model for Christian churches.
- **spolia**: The reuse of building material or decorative sculpture for new buildings or monuments. Latin for spoils.

Constantine

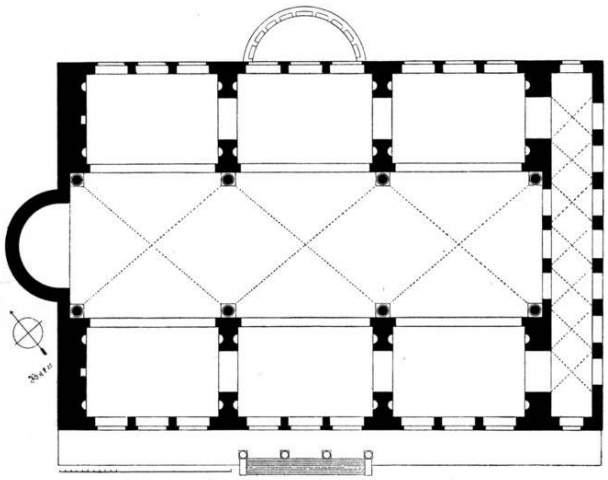
The far-flung Roman Empire began to come apart and by 410 CE the last Roman legion had left Britain. Divided internally and pressed from invaders from the north, numerous individuals vied for the title of Emperor. By 312, two of these, Constantine and Maxentius, were engaged in open hostilities, culminating in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, in which Constantine emerged victorious.

Although he attributed this victory to the aid of the Christian god, he did not convert to Christianity until he was on his deathbed. The following year, however, he enacted the Edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity and allowed its followers to begin building churches. With the Christian community growing in number and in influence, legalizing Christianity was, for Constantine, a pragmatic move.

Following a rebellion from Licinius, his own co-emperor in 324 CE, Constantine eventually had his former colleague executed and consolidated power under a single ruler. As the sole emperor of an empire with new-found stability, Constantine was able to patronize large building projects in Rome. However, despite his attention to that city, he moved the capital of the empire east to the newly founded city of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). For a time, a Christianized Roman Empire in the East will flourish as Byzantia.

Basilica Nova and the Colossus of Constantine

When Constantine and Maxentius clashed at the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius was in the middle of building a grand basilica. It was eventually renamed the Basilica Nova, and was located near the Roman Forum. The basilica consisted of one side aisle on either side of a central nave.



2. ROM: CONSTANTINSBASILICA.

Basilica Nova: The ground plan of the Basilica Nova in Rome

When Constantine took over and completed the grand building, it was 300 feet long, 215 feet wide, and stood 115 feet tall down the nave. Concrete walls 15 feet thick supported the basilica's massive scale and expansive vaults. It was lavishly decorated with marble veneer and stucco. The southern end of the basilica was flanked by a porch, with an apse at the northern end.



Basilica Nova: As it stands today in Rome, Italy

The apse of the Basilica Nova was the location of the Colossus of Constantine. This colossus was built from many parts. The head, arms, hands, legs, and feet were carved from marble, while the body was built with a brick core and wooden framework and then gilded.



The head of the colossus of Constantine: The head is over eight feet tall and 6.5 feet long

Only parts of the Colossus remain, including the head that is over eight feet tall and 5.5 feet long. It shows a portrait of an individual with clearly defined features: a hooked nose, prominent jaw, and large eyes that look upwards. Like the porphyry (a type of purple marble) bust of Galerius, Constantine's portrait combines naturalism in his nose, mouth, and chin with a growing sense of abstraction in his eyes and geometric hairstyle.

He also held an orb and, possibly, a scepter, and one hand points upwards towards the heavens. Both the immensity of the scale and his depiction as Jupiter (seated, heroic, and semi-nude) inspire a feeling of awe and overwhelming power and authority.

The basilica was a common Roman building and functioned as a multipurpose space for law courts, senate meetings, and business transactions. The form was appropriated for Christian worship and most churches, even today, still maintain this basic shape.

Rome after Constantine

Following Constantine's founding of a New Rome at Constantinople, the prominence and importance of the city of Rome diminished. The empire was then divided into east and west. The more prosperous eastern half of the empire continued to thrive, mainly due to its connection to important trade routes, while the western half of the empire fell apart.

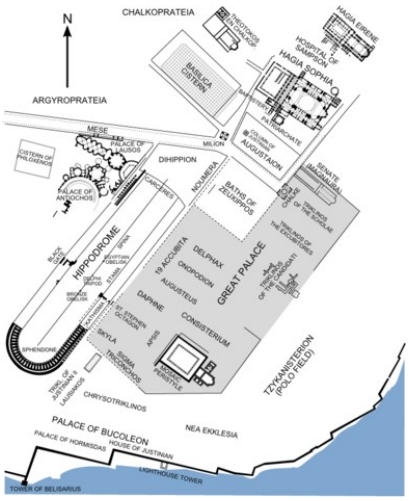
While Byzantium controlled Italy and the city Rome at times over the next several centuries, for the most part the Western Roman Empire, due to being less urban and less prosperous, was difficult to protect. Indeed, the city of Rome was sacked multiple times by invading armies, including the Ostrogoths and Visigoths, over the next century.

The multiple sackings of Rome resulted in the raiding of the marble, facades, décor, and columns from the monuments and buildings of the city. Parts of ancient Rome, especially the Republican Forum, returned once again to the cow pastures that they originally were at the time of the city's founding, as floods from the Tiber washed them over in debris and sediment.

Constantinople

Constantine laid out a new square at the center of old Byzantium, naming it the Augustaeum. The new senate-house was housed in a basilica on the east side. On the south side of the great square was erected the Great Palace of the Emperor with its imposing entrance and its ceremonial suite known as the Palace of Daphne.

Nearby was the vast Hippodrome for chariot races, seating over 80,000 spectators, and the famed Baths of Zeuxippus. At the western entrance to the Augustaeum was the Milion, a vaulted monument from which distances were measured across the Eastern Roman Empire.



The Imperial district of Constantinople: Present-day Istanbul, Turkey

The Mese, a great street lined with colonnades , led from the Augustaeum. As it descended the First Hill of the city and climbed the Second Hill, it passed the Praetorium or law-court. Then it passed through the oval Forum of Constantine where there was a second Senate house and a high column with a statue of Constantine in the guise of Helios, crowned with a halo of seven rays and looking toward the rising sun. From there the Mese passed on and through the Forum Tauri and then the Forum Bovis, and finally up the Seventh Hill (or Xerolophus) and through to the Golden Gate in the Constantinian Wall.

Early Christian Iconography

Christianity was only one of a number of “new” religions in Rome at the end of Empire. It did prove to be the most successful. Literally an underground religion in the days before Constantine’s Edict of Milan, Christian congregations gathered in private homes and in the underground burial tunnels, or catacombs, of the city. These necropolises, or cities of the dead, were originally located outside the walls of the city, but larger spaces were also created underneath the city eventually. One of the spaces used for early Christian worship is underneath St. Peter’s. It is there that this fragment of early Christian mosaic is located.



Christ as Sol (Christ as the Sun), mosaic, 3rd c. CE, Vatican grottoes under St. Peter’s Basilica, on the ceiling of the tomb of the Julii. PD-US

In this mosaic, a youthful Christ is shown in a chariot being pulled by two white horses and surrounded by a decorative border of grapevines. Christian teachings refer to the East as the direction from which Christ ascended and where he will return in the Second Coming. Most Christian churches are organized with the apse and altar in the East. This was also the direction the pagans prayed to because it was the direction from which the sun rose. Here we see Christ conflated with Apollo the Sun God whose chariot drew

the Sun from East to West everyday for the Greeks. Grapes and grapevines were associated with the Greek God Dionysus (Roman Bacchus), but here the Christians have appropriated the image to refer to the lines from the Bible that equate Jesus with the one true vine from which all things come. Without traditional images to rely on it is reasonable to expect the early Christians to take their imagery from sources they knew – the Greek and Roman deities. It is also strategic for a new religion, looking for converts, to use images and ideas from the existing tradition and overlay them with their own meaning.

The same impulse may have been behind the early Christian churches. In 313 when Constantine made it possible for all religions to worship openly, structures had to be designed to fit the Christian congregational style. Believing his reign to be the gift of the Christian god, Constantine financed a number of imposing new structures including the Old St. Peter's. It was built on the site in Rome where it was believed the apostle Peter had been buried. Many searches underneath the new St. Peter's have been conducted in an attempt to locate the relics of the Saint, but nothing conclusive has been found. Old St. Peter's was torn down in 1506 to make way for the current St. Peter's, and no images of the old church survive. Historical accounts and another structure which was said to be visually similar, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, stood until the 19th century and provided some ideas about what the older structure must have been like.

Architecture of the Early Christian Church

After their persecution ended, Christians began to build larger buildings for worship than the meeting places they had been using.

Key Points

- Architectural formulas for temples were unsuitable, so the Christians used the model of the basilica, which had a central nave with one aisle at each side and an apse at one end. The transept was added to give the building a cruciform shape.
- A Christian basilica of the fourth or fifth century that stood behind an entirely enclosed forecourt that was ringed with a colonnade or arcade. This forecourt was entered from the outside through a range of buildings that ran along the public street.
- In the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire, churches tended to be centrally planned, with a central dome surrounded by at least one ambulatory.
- The church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy is a prime example of an Eastern, centrally planned church.

Key Terms

- **lunette**: A half-moon shaped space, usually above a door or window, either filled with recessed masonry or void.
- **presbytery**: A section of the church reserved for the clergy.
- **theophany**: A manifestation of a deity to a human.
- **prothesis**: The place in the sanctuary in which the Liturgy of Preparation takes place in the Eastern Orthodox churches.
- **fascia**: A wide band of material that covers the ends of roof rafters, and sometimes supports a gutter in steep-slope roofing; typically it is a border or trim in low-slope roofing.
- **basilica**: A Christian church building that has a nave with a semicircular apse, side aisles, a narthex and a clerestory.
- **cloister**: A covered walk, especially in a monastery, with an open colonnade on one side that runs along the walls of the buildings that face a quadrangle.
- **mullion**: A vertical element that forms a division between the units of a window, door, or screen, or that is used decoratively.
- **triforium**: A shallow, arched gallery within the thickness of an inner wall, above the nave of a church or cathedral.
- **diaconicon**: In Eastern Orthodox churches, the name given to a chamber on the south side of the central apse of the church, where the vestments, books, and so on that are used in the Divine Services of the church are kept.
- **clerestory**: The upper part of a wall that contains windows that let in natural light to a building, especially in the nave, transept, and choir of a church or cathedral.

Early Christian Architecture

After their persecution ended in the fourth century, Christians began to erect buildings that were larger and more elaborate than the house churches where they used to worship. However, what emerged was an architectural style distinct from classical pagan forms.

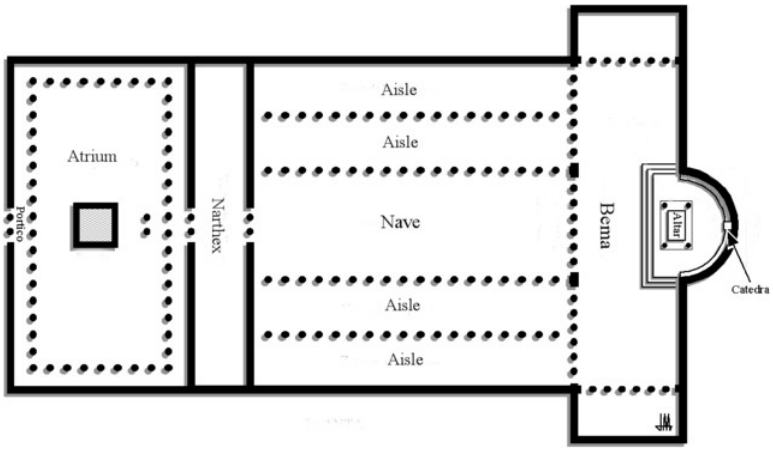
Architectural formulas for temples were deemed unsuitable. This was not simply for their pagan associations, but because pagan cult and sacrifices occurred outdoors under the open sky in the sight of the gods. The temple, housing the cult figures and the treasury, served as a backdrop. Therefore, Christians began using the model of the basilica, which had a central nave with one aisle at each side and an apse at one end.

Old St. Peter's and the Western Basilica

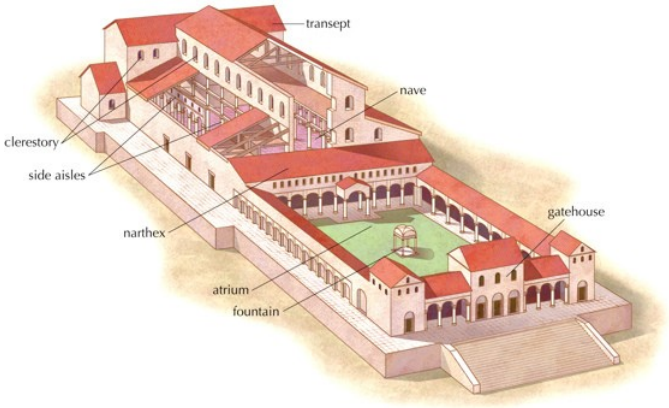
The basilica model was adopted in the construction of Old St. Peter's church in Rome. What stands today is New St. Peter's church, which replaced the original during the Italian Renaissance.

Whereas the original Roman basilica was rectangular with at least one apse, usually facing North, the Christian builders made several symbolic modifications. Between the nave and the apse, they added a transept, which ran perpendicular to the nave. This addition gave the building a cruciform shape to memorialize the Crucifixion.

The apse, which held the altar and the Eucharist, now faced East, in the direction of the rising sun. However, the apse of Old St. Peter's faced West to commemorate the church's namesake, who, according to the popular narrative, was crucified upside down.



Plan of Old St. Peter's Basilica: One of the first Christian churches in Rome, Old St. Peter's followed the plan of the Roman basilica and added a transept (labeled Bema in this diagram) to give the church a cruciform shape



Exterior reconstruction of Old St. Peter's: This reconstruction depicts an idea of how the church appeared in the fourth century

A Christian basilica of the fourth or fifth century stood behind its entirely enclosed forecourt. It was ringed with a colonnade or arcade, like the Greek stoa or peristyle that was its ancestor, or like the cloister that was its descendant. This forecourt was entered from outside through a range of buildings along the public street.

In basilicas of the former Western Roman Empire, the central nave is taller than the aisles and forms a row of windows called a clerestory. In the Eastern Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire, which continued until the fifteenth century), churches were centrally planned. The Church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy is prime example of an Eastern church.

San Vitale

The church of San Vitale is highly significant in Byzantine art, as it is the only major church from the period of the Eastern Emperor Justinian I to survive virtually intact to the present day. While much of Italy was under the rule of the Western Emperor, Ravenna came under the rule of Justinian I in 540.

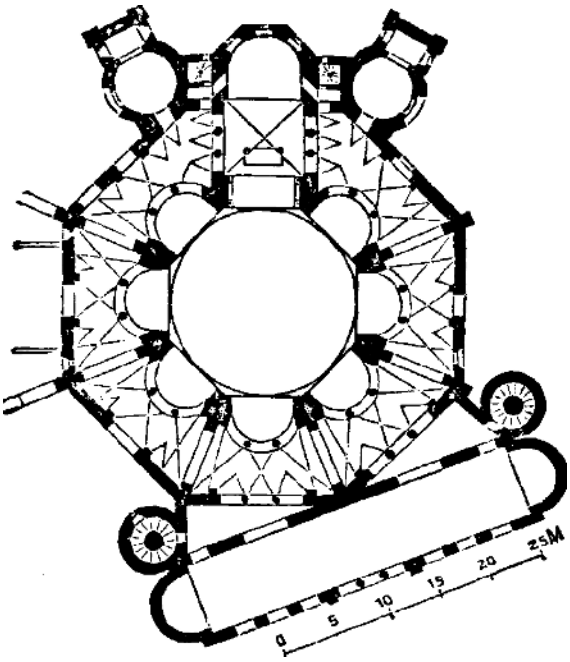


San Vitale: Unlike Western churches like St. Peter's, San Vitale consists of a central dome surrounded by two ambulatories. This is known as a centrally planned church

The church was begun by Bishop Ecclesius in 527, when Ravenna was under the rule of the Ostrogoths, and completed by the twenty-seventh Bishop of Ravenna, Maximian, in 546 during the Byzantine Exarchate of Ravenna. The architect or architects of the church is unknown.

The construction of the church was sponsored by a Greek banker, Julius Argentarius, and the final cost amounted to 26,000 solidi (gold pieces). The church has an octagonal plan and combines Roman elements (the dome, shape of doorways, and stepped towers) with Byzantine elements (a polygonal apse, capitals, and narrow bricks). The church is most famous for its wealth of Byzantine mosaics —they are the largest and best preserved mosaics outside of Constantinople.

The central section is surrounded by two superposed ambulatories, or covered passages around a cloister. The upper one, the matrimoneum, was reserved for married women.



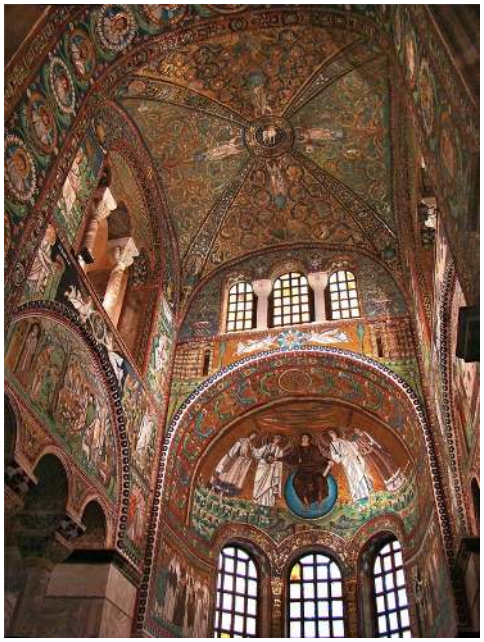
A central plan has the nave in a circle around the open center. There is an apse and altar placed on one wall with a long narthex, or porch, on an angle to the main octagonal building. San Vitale is known for its rich decoration on the interior of mosaics and inlaid

marble.

A series of mosaics in the lunettes above the triforia depict sacrifices from the Old Testament.

On the side walls, the corners, next to the mullioned windows, are mosaics of the Four Evangelists, who are dressed in white under their symbols (angel, lion, ox and eagle). The cross-ribbed vault in the presbytery is richly ornamented with mosaic festoons of leaves, fruit, and flowers that converge on a crown that encircles the Lamb of God.

The crown is supported by four angels, and every surface is covered with a profusion of flowers, stars, birds, and animals, specifically many peacocks. Above the arch , on both sides, two angels hold a disc. Beside them are representations of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. These two cities symbolize the human race. For a good video explanation of San Vitale visit: https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and- colonial-americas/medieval-europe-islamic-world/v/justinian-and-his-attendants- 6th-century-ravenna



The presbytery at San Vitale: The cross-ribbed vault in the presbytery is richly ornamented with mosaic festoons of leaves, fruit and flowers that converge on a crown encircling the Lamb of God

The Justinian and Theodora Mosaics, San Vitale

These mosaics are located on the east end on either side of the altar. Although Emperor Justinian I and his Empress Theodora never visited Ravenna their presence in these mosaics suggests that their influence is strong in the West as well as the East. Justinian sent his general Belisarius to rout the Aryan Visigoths led by Emperor Theodoric, who had himself been a hostage for many years as a youth in the court of Constantinople. Balisarius was finally successful but not until some 25 years after Theodoric's death.





Note that the mosaics are situated in such a way that the Emperor and Empress each move toward each other and toward the altar in the center of the apse. Theodoric holds a vessel like that used to hold the wafers in the Eucharist; Theodora holds a chalice like

those that would hold the wine/blood of Christ. In fact, only Justinian would have been able to physically approach the altar as women were confined to a space in the balcony or well away from the altar. Despite this tradition, Theodora appears to have had almost a co-equal share in the rule of the Empire even though she was reputed to be of low birth and had been an actress – possibly a euphemism for prostitute – and Justinian's long-time mistress before he married her. The video gives more detail about the Byzantine style of the figures.

Sculpture of the Early Christian Church

Despite an early opposition to monumental sculpture, artists for the early Christian church in the West eventually began producing life-sized sculptures.

Key Points

- Early Christians continued the ancient Roman traditions in portrait busts and sarcophagus reliefs, as well as in smaller objects such as the consular diptych.
- The Carolingian and Ottonian eras witnessed a return to the production of monumental sculpture. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, there are records of several apparently life-size sculptures in Anglo-Saxon churches.
- Monumental crosses sculpted from wood and stone became popular during the ninth and tenth centuries in Germany, Italy, and the British Isles.

Key Terms

- **diptych**: A pair of linked panels, generally in ivory, wood, or metal and decorated with rich sculpted decoration.
- **sculpture in the round**: Free-standing sculpture, such as a statue, that is not attached (except possibly at the base) to any other surface.
- **Iconoclasm**: the destruction of icons, or religious imagery.

The Early Christians were opposed to monumental religious sculpture. Nevertheless, they continued the ancient Roman sculptural traditions in portrait busts and sarcophagus reliefs. Smaller objects, such as consular diptychs, were also part of the Roman traditions that the Early Christians continued.

Small Ivory Reliefs

Carolingian art revived ivory carving, often in panels for the treasure bindings of grand illuminated manuscripts, as well as in crozier (bishop's staff) heads and other small fittings. The subjects were often narrative religious scenes in vertical sections, largely derived from Late Antique paintings and carvings, as were those with more hieratic images derived from consular diptychs and other imperial art.

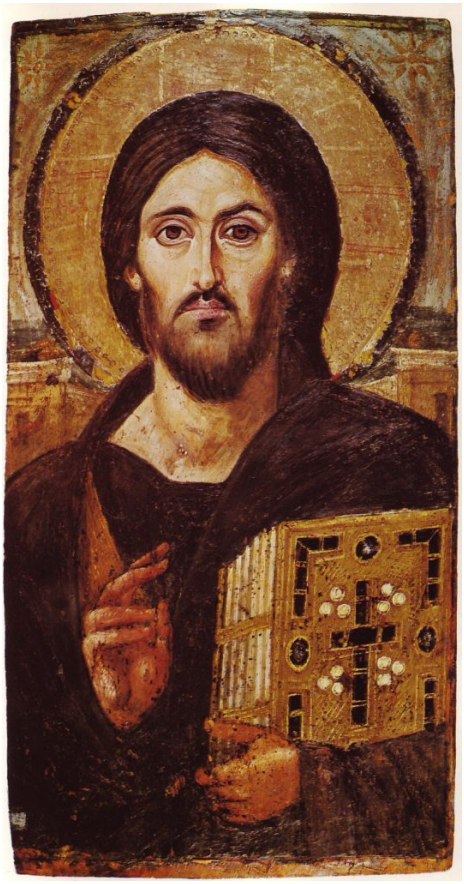
Byzantine examples of ivory icons provide an early idea into the figurative style of the period, and into the very early Renaissance. Icons could be private objects of worship and as such suffered from much handling. They eroded over time from human contact including kissing that was meant to bring the devotee into closer contact with their god. During an outbreak of **iconoclasm**, or the destruction of objects of worship, initiated by Leo III during the 8th c. CE, many of these objects were destroyed. Justinian I had established the first monastery in Egypt, St. Catherine's, and collected many of the most beautiful icons there. They escaped Leo's attention and have survived.



Mary and Child Enthroned with Sts. Theodor of Amasea, George, and Angels, encaustic from end of 6th c CE, 68.5 x 49.7 cm, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. PD

This typical composition shows Mary, the Queen of Heaven, on a throne with the Christ Child surrounded by saints and angels. The angels here behind Mary are particularly interesting because they tilt their faces upward to God but in a ¾ view instead of the usual frontal position. Mary is in purple to suggest her Heavenly Royalty. Note the large, Byzantine eyes, the schematic linear features and the columnar (like a column), weightless body-types.

Another icon saved at St. Catherine's is this one of Christ Pantokrator. Ruler of All or All-Powerful. This is typical of the image with gesture of blessing and holy book. Note the disparities or differences between the two sides of the face – one is smooth and perfect, the other rough, dark, and a little misshapen. The sides correspond to the gestures of the figure with the blessing – the Heavenly gesture – on the perfect side and the imperfect side holds the Bible or word of God meant for human beings here on Earth – the earthly realm v. the Heavenly. It suggests very subtly the dual nature of Christ – mortal and god.



Icon of Christ, 6th C. CE, encaustic, 84 fx 45.5 cm, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. OD

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4.2: Early Islamic Art and Architecture

Islamic art encompasses visual arts produced from the seventh century onwards by culturally Islamic populations.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the influences and the specific attributes of Islamic art.

Key Points

- Islamic art is not art of a specific religion, time, place, or of a single medium. Instead it spans some 1400 years, covers many lands and populations, and includes a range of artistic fields including architecture, calligraphy, painting, glass, ceramics, and textiles, among others.
- Islamic religious art differs from Christian religious art in that it is non- figural because many Muslims believe that the depiction of the human form is idolatry and thereby a sin against God, forbidden in the Qur'an. Calligraphy and architectural elements are given important religious significance in Islamic art.
- Islamic art developed from many sources: Roman, early Christian art, and Byzantine styles; Sassanian art of pre-Islamic Persia; Central Asian styles brought by various nomadic incursions, and Chinese influences appear on Islamic painting, pottery, and textiles.

Key Terms

- **Qu'ran**: The central religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be the verbatim word of God (Arabic: Allah). It is widely regarded as the finest piece of literature in the Arabic language.
- **arabesque**: A repetitive, stylized pattern based on a geometrical floral or vegetal design.
- **idolatry**: The worship of idols.
- **monotheistic**: Believing in a single god, deity, spirit, etc., especially for an organized religion, faith, or creed.

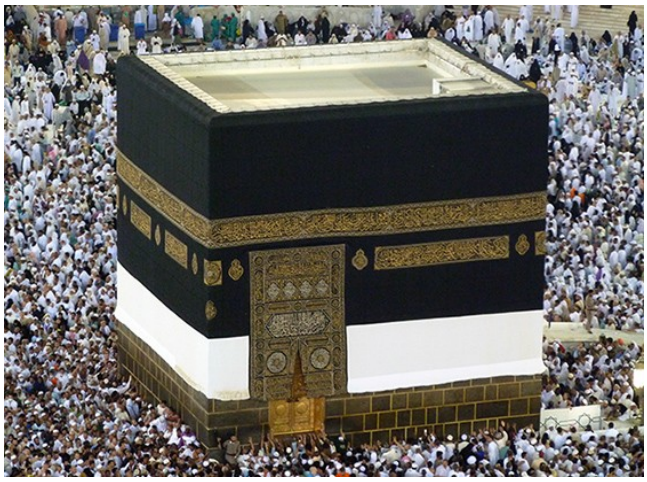
Islam

Islam is a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion articulated by the Qur'an, a book considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Allah) and the teachings of Muhammad, who is considered to be the last prophet of God. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim.

Most Muslims are of two denominations: Sunni (75–90%), or Shia (10–20%). Its essential religious concepts and practices include the five pillars of Islam, which are basic concepts and obligatory acts of worship, and the following of Islamic law, which touches on every aspect of life and society. The five pillars are:

- Shahadah (belief or confession of faith)
- Salat (worship in the form of prayer)
- Sawm Ramadan (fasting during the month of Ramadan)
- Zakat (alms or charitable giving)
- Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime)

Mohammad, the prophet of Islam, is said to have been born in Mecca, the holiest religious site for Muslims. He was a charismatic preacher who was ultimately driven from Mecca to Medina where he continued to preach. His home in Medina, with a walled courtyard and a porch with columns of palm trunks is said to be the model for traditional mosque architecture. Earlier structures are also sacred to the religion. The Kaaba – meaning cube, in Arabic, is a square structure in Mecca, draped in an ornamental covering. It is said to have been built by Abraham—known as Ibrahim in the Islamic tradition—and his son, Ismail, as a sanctuary. When Mohammad returned to Mecca in 629/30 CE he resanctified the Black Stone Kaaba and it has become the site of modern hajj, or pilgrimage, which every adherent of Islam tries to do once in her life.



The Kaaba, pre-Islamic monument, rededicated by Muhammad in 631-32 C.E., multiple renovations, granite masonry, covered with silk curtain and calligraphy in gold and silver-wrapped thread (Mecca, Saudi Arabia) Image credit: The Kaaba in the Masjid el Haram, 2010 Tab59, CC BY-SA 2.0

Islamic Art

Islamic art encompasses the visual arts produced from the seventh century onward by both Muslims and non-Muslims who lived within the territory that was inhabited by, or ruled by, culturally Islamic populations. It is thus a very difficult art to define because it spans some 1400 years, covering many lands and populations. This art is also not of a specific religion, time, place, or single medium. Instead Islamic art covers a range of artistic fields including architecture, calligraphy, painting, glass, ceramics, and textiles, among others.

Islamic art is not restricted to religious art, but instead includes all of the art of the rich and varied cultures of Islamic societies. It frequently includes secular elements and elements that are forbidden by some Islamic theologians. Islamic religious art differs greatly from Christian religious art traditions.

Because figural representations are generally considered to be forbidden in Islam, the word takes on religious meaning in art as seen in the tradition of calligraphic inscriptions. Calligraphy and the decoration of manuscript Qu'rans is an important aspect of Islamic art as the word takes on religious and artistic significance.

Islamic architecture, such as mosques and palatial gardens of paradise, are also embedded with religious significance. While examples of Islamic figurative painting do exist, and may cover religious scenes, these examples are typically from secular contexts, such as the walls of palaces or illuminated books of poetry.

Other religious art, such as glass mosque lamps, Girih tiles, woodwork, and carpets usually demonstrate the same style and motifs as contemporary secular art, although they exhibit more prominent religious inscriptions.



A calligraphic panel by Mustafa Râkim (late 18th–early 19th century) : Islamic art has focused on the depiction of patterns and Arabic calligraphy, rather than on figures, because it is feared by many Muslims that the depiction of the human form is idolatry. The panel reads: "God, there is no god but He, the Lord of His prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Lord of all that has been created."

Islamic art was influenced by Greek, Roman, early Christian, and Byzantine art styles, as well as the Sassanian art of pre-Islamic Persia. Central Asian styles were brought in with various nomadic incursions; and Chinese influences had a formative effect on

Islamic painting, pottery, and textiles.

Themes of Islamic Art

There are repeating elements in Islamic art, such as the use of stylized, geometrical floral or vegetal designs in a repetition known as the arabesque. The arabesque in Islamic art is often used to symbolize the transcendent, indivisible and infinite nature of God. Some scholars believe that mistakes in repetitions may be intentionally introduced as a show of humility by artists who believe only God can produce perfection.



Arabesque inlays at the Mughal Agra Fort, India: Geometrical designs in repetition, know as Arabesque, are used in Islamic art to symbolize the transcendent, indivisible, and infinite nature of God

Typically, though not entirely, Islamic art has focused on the depiction of patterns and Arabic calligraphy, rather than human or animal figures, because it is believed by many Muslims that the depiction of the human form is idolatry and thereby a sin against God that is forbidden in the Qur'an. However, depictions of the human form and animals can be found in all eras of Islamic secular art.

Islamic Architecture

Islamic architecture encompasses a wide range of styles and the principal example is the mosque.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the development of mosques, and their different features during different periods and dynasties.

Key Points

- A specifically recognizable Islamic architectural style emerged soon after Muhammad's time that incorporated Roman building traditions with the addition of localized adaptations of the former Sassanid and Byzantine models.
- The Islamic mosque has historically been both a place of prayer and a community meeting space. The early mosques are believed to be inspired by Muhammad's home in Medina, which was the first mosque.

Key Terms

- **mosque**: A place of worship for Muslims, corresponding to a church or synagogue in other religions, often having at least one minaret. In Arabic: masjid.
- **mihrab**: A semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque, that indicates the qibla (direction of Mecca), and into which the imam prays.
- **minaret**: The tall slender tower of an Islamic mosque, from which the muezzin recites the adhan (call to prayer).

Islamic Architecture

Islamic architecture encompasses a wide range of both secular and religious styles. The principal Islamic architectural example is the mosque. A specifically recognizable Islamic architectural style emerged soon after Muhammad's time that incorporated Roman building traditions with the addition of localized adaptations of the former Sassanid and Byzantine models.

The Dome of the Rock

One of the earliest Islamic buildings in Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock is literally built around a rock which is considered sacred to all three monotheistic religions. In Judaism it is believed that this was the place where God created the world and the first

human, Adam. Christians believe that it is where Abraham was instructed to sacrifice his son, Isaac, and Muslims believe it is the site from which Mohammad ascended to Heaven and returned in his Night Journey.

The structure was built by Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik and was finished in 691-92 CE. The octagonal plan of the structure is similar to a Byzantine church, the Church of the Seat of Mary, not far from where the Dome was built. Just as the Roman Christians used the example of the Roman basilicas to plan their original churches, an example to hand may have inspired this monument to Islam when a new people took charge and announced their arrival.

The exterior was redone in tilework, but the interior is all original – at least after the rebuilding of the dome in 1022-23.



Photo: Andrew Shiva / Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 4.0

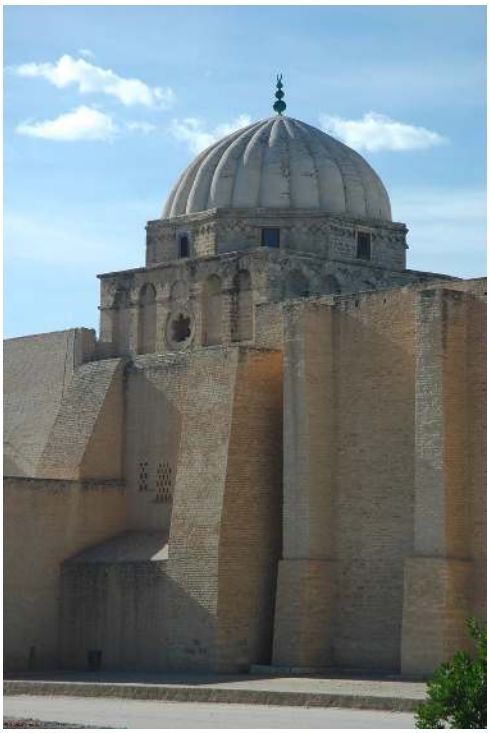


Photograph showing the interior of the Dome of the Rock and the Rock itself. PD

Early Mosques

The Islamic mosque has historically been both a place of prayer and a community meeting space. The early mosques are believed to be inspired by Muhammad's home in Medina, which was the first mosque.

The Great Mosque of Kairouan (in Tunisia) is one of the best preserved and most significant examples of early great mosques. Founded in 670, it contains all of the architectural features that distinguish early mosques: a minaret, a large courtyard surrounded by porticos, and a hypostyle prayer hall.



Dome of the mihrab (9th century) in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, also known as the Mosque of Uqba, in Kairouan, Tunisia: This is considered to be the ancestor of all the mosques in the western Islamic world

Great Mosque of Cordoba



Toni Castillo Quero, via Flickr CC BY-SA 2.0

In 748-50, the Umahhad dynasty in Damascus, Syria, was overthrown by the Abbasids and fled across the Middle East finally settling on the Iberian peninsula where they established a new dynasty. Caliph Abd al-Rahman began construction of the great mosque in about 786.1 The horseshoe-shaped arches which came to be associated with Muslim construction was actually adopted from structures already on the site created by the Visigoths, as in the Puerta del Batisterio (Door of the Baptistery – renamed after the Christian takeover) below.

The Great Mosque of Cordoba also had a mihrab in the qibla wall. The great dome above it is decorated with thousands of tesserae which came from the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople along with craftsmen to install them.

More on the mosque can be found at: Dr. Shadieh Mirmobiny, “The Great Mosque of Cordoba,” in *Smarthistory*, August 8, 2015, accessed June 5, 2019, https://smarthistory.org/the-great-mosque-of-cordoba/.

[1]



Puerta del Batisterio – Mezquita de Córdoba Photo: Américo Toledano CC BY-SA 3.0

During this period Christians, Jews, and Muslims lived in relative harmony. The Christians under Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand would ultimately drive Islam out of the Spanish territory in 1492.

The minaret at the Great Mosque of Cordoba is the single tall tower in the enclosing wall. Orange trees fill the courtyard which were said to have been brought over by Caliph Abd al-Rahman to remind him of his lost home of Damascus.



Mihrab dome, Great Mosque at Cordoba, Spain. photo: bongo vongo, CC BY-SA 2.0

Ottoman Mosques

Ottoman mosques and other architecture first emerged in the cities of Bursa and Edirne in the 14th and 15th centuries, developing from earlier Seljuk Turk architecture, with additional influences from Byzantine, Persian, and Islamic Mamluk traditions.

Sultan Mehmed II would later fuse European traditions in his rebuilding programs at Istanbul in the 19th century. Byzantine styles as seen in the Hagia Sophia served as particularly important models for Ottoman mosques, such as the mosque constructed by Sinan.

Building reached its peak in the 16th century when Ottoman architects mastered the technique of building vast inner spaces surmounted by seemingly weightless yet incredibly massive domes, and achieved perfect harmony between inner and outer spaces, as well as articulated light and shadow.

They incorporated vaults, domes, square dome plans, slender corner minarets, and columns into their mosques, which became sanctuaries of transcendently aesthetic and technical balance, as may be observed in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.



The Blue Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey: The Blue Mosque represents the culmination of Ottoman construction with its numerous domes, slender minarets and overall harmony

Architecture flourished in the Safavid Dynasty, attaining a high point with the building program of Shah Abbas in Isfahan, which included numerous gardens, palaces (such as Ali Qapu), an immense bazaar, and a large imperial mosque. Isfahan, the capital of both the Seljuk and Safavid dynasties, bears the most prominent samples of the Safavid architecture, such as the Imperial Mosque, which was constructed in the years after Shah Abbas I permanently moved the capital.



Imperial Mosque, Isfahan, Iran: Isfahan, the capital of both the Seljuk and Safavid dynasties, bears the most prominent samples of the Safavid architecture

Islamic Luxury Objects

Glassmaking was the most important Islamic luxury art of the early Middle Ages.

Key Points

- Between the 8th and early 11th centuries, the emphasis in luxury glass was on effects achieved by manipulating the surface of the glass, initially by incising into the glass on a wheel, and later by cutting away the background to leave a design in relief.
- Lustre painting uses techniques similar to lustreware in pottery and dates back to the 8th century in Egypt; it became widespread in the 12th century.

Islamic Glass

For most of the Middle Ages, Islamic luxury glass was the most sophisticated in Eurasia, exported to both Europe and China. Islam took over much of the traditional glass-producing territory of Sassanian and Ancient Roman glass. Since figurative decoration played a small part in pre-Islamic glass, the change in style was not abrupt—except that the whole area initially formed a political whole, and, for example, Persian innovations were now almost immediately taken up in Egypt.

Between the 8th and early 11th centuries, the emphasis in luxury glass was on effects achieved by manipulating the surface of the glass, initially by incising into the glass on a wheel, and later by cutting away the background to leave a design in relief. The very massive Hedwig glasses, only found in Europe, but normally considered Islamic (or possibly from Muslim craftsmen in Norman Sicily), are an example of this, though they are puzzlingly late in date.

These and other glass pieces probably represented cheaper versions of vessels of carved rock crystal (clear quartz). From the 12th century, the glass industry in Persia and Mesopotamia declined, and the main production of luxury glass shifted to Egypt and Syria. Throughout this period, local centers made simpler wares, such as Hebron glass in Palestine.



The Luck of Edenhall: This is a 13th-century Syrian beaker, in England since the Middle Ages. For most of the Middle Ages, Islamic glass was the most sophisticated in Eurasia, exported to both Europe and China.

Lustre painting

Lustre painting, by techniques similar to lustreware in pottery, dates back to the 8th century in Egypt, and involves the application of metallic pigments during the glass- making process. Another technique used by artisans was decoration with threads of glass of a different color, worked into the main surface, and sometimes manipulated by combing and other effects.

Gilded, painted, and enameled glass were added to the repertoire, as were shapes and motifs borrowed from other media, such as pottery and metalwork. Some of the finest work was in mosque lamps donated by a ruler or wealthy man.



Mosque lamp: Produced in Egypt, c. 1360

Islamic Calligraphy

Calligraphic design was omnipresent in Islamic art in the Middle Ages and is seen in all types of art including architecture and the decorative arts.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the purpose and characteristics of Islamic calligraphy.

Key Points

- In a religion where figural representations are considered an act of idolatry, it is no surprise that the word and its artistic representation became an important aspect in Islamic art.
- The earliest form of Arabic calligraphy is Kufic script.
- Besides Quranic verses, other inscriptions include verses of poetry, and inscriptions recording ownership or donation.

Key Terms

- **Kufic script**: The earliest form of Arabic calligraphy, noted for its angular form.
- **calligraphy**: The art of writing letters and words with decorative strokes.

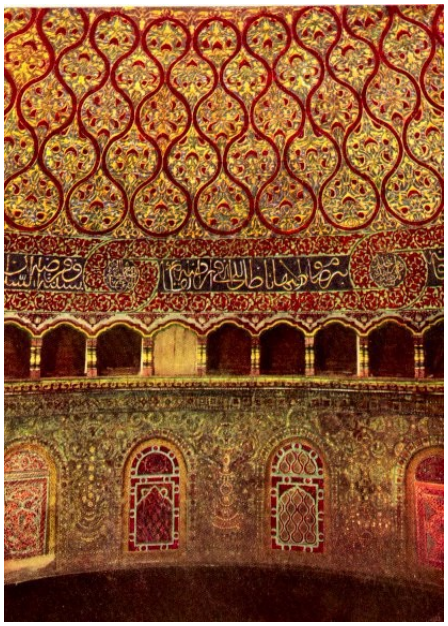
In a religion where figural representations are considered an act of idolatry, it is no surprise that the word and its artistic representation became an important aspect in Islamic art. The most important religious text in Islam is the Quran, which is believed to be the word of God. There are many examples of calligraphy and calligraphic inscriptions pertaining to verses from the Quran in Islamic arts.



9th century Quran: This early Quran demonstrates the Kufic script, noted for its angular form and as the earliest form of Arabic calligraphy

The earliest form of Arabic calligraphy is Kufic script, which is noted for its angular form. Arabic is read from right to left and only the consonants are written. The black ink in the image above from a 9th century Quran marks the consonants for the reader. The red dots that are visible on the page note the vowels.

However, calligraphic design is not limited to the book in Islamic art. Calligraphy is found in several different types of art, such as architecture. The interior of the Dome of the Rock (Jerusalem, circa 691), for example, features calligraphic inscriptions of verses from the Quran as well as from additional sources. As in Europe in the Middle Ages, religious exhortations such as Quranic verses may be included in secular objects, especially coins, tiles, and metalwork.



Interior view of the Dome of the Rock: The interior of The Dome of the Rock features many calligraphic inscriptions, from both the Quran and other sources; it demonstrates the importance of calligraphy in Islamic art and its use in several different media

Calligraphic inscriptions were not exclusive to the Quran, but also included verses of poetry or recorded ownership or donation. Calligraphers were highly regarded in Islam, which reinforces the importance of the word and its religious and artistic significance.

Islamic Book Painting

Manuscript painting in the late medieval Islamic world reached its height in Persia, Syria, Iraq, and the Ottoman Empire.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the origin and development of Islamic manuscript painting.

Key Points

- The art of the Persian book was born under the Ilkhanid dynasty and encouraged by the patronage of aristocrats for large illuminated manuscripts.
- Islamic manuscript painting witnessed its first golden age in the 13th century when it was influenced by the Byzantine visual vocabulary and combined with Mongol facial types from 12th-century book frontispieces.
- Under the rule of the Safavids in Iran (1501 to 1786), the art of manuscript illumination achieves new heights, in particular in the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp, an immense copy of Ferdowsi's epic poem that contains more than 250 paintings.
- The medieval Islamic texts called Maqamat were some of the earliest coffee- table books and among the first Islamic art to mirror daily life.
- Masterpieces of Ottoman manuscript illustration include the two books of festivals, one from the end of the 16th century and the other from the era of Sultan Murad III.

Key Terms

- **Mongols**: An umbrella term for a large group of Mongolic and Turkic tribes united under the rule of Genghis Khan in the 13th century.
- **illuminated manuscripts**: A book in which the text is supplemented by the addition of decoration, such as decorated initials, borders (marginalia), and miniature illustrations.
- **miniature**: An illustration in an ancient or medieval illuminated manuscript.

Islamic Book Painting

Book painting in the late medieval Islamic world reached its height in Persia, Syria, Iraq, and the Ottoman Empire. The art form blossomed across the different regions and was inspired by a range of cultural reference points.

The evolution of book painting first began in the 13th century, when the Mongols, under the leadership of Genghis Khan, swept through the Islamic world. Upon the death of Genghis Khan, his empire was divided among his sons and dynasties formed: the Yuan in China, the Ilkhanids in Iran, and the Golden Horde in northern Iran and southern Russia.

Miniatures

The tradition of the Persian miniature (a small painting on paper) developed during this period, and it strongly influenced the Ottoman miniature of Turkey and the Mughal miniature in India. Because illuminated manuscripts were an art of the court, and not seen in public, constraints on the depiction of the human figure were much more relaxed and the human form is represented with frequency within this medium.

Influence from the Byzantine visual vocabulary (blue and gold coloring, angelic and victorious motifs, symbology of drapery) was combined with Mongol facial types seen in 12th-century book frontispieces. Chinese influences in Islamic book painting include the early adoption of the vertical format natural to a book. Motifs such as peonies, clouds, dragons, and phoenixes were adapted from China as well, and incorporated into manuscript illumination.



Mongol soldiers, in Jami al-tawarikh by Rashid-al-Din Hamadani: The Jāmi al-tawārīkh is a work of literature and history, produced by the Mongol Ilkhanate in Persia. The breadth of the work has caused it to be called the first world history and its lavish illustrations and calligraphy required the efforts of hundreds of scribes and artists

The largest commissions of illustrated books were usually classics of Persian poetry, such as the Shahnameh. Under the rule of the Safavids in Iran (1501 to 1786), the art of manuscript illumination achieved new heights. The most noteworthy example of this is the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp, an immense copy of Ferdowsi's epic poem that contains more than 250 paintings.



The Court of Gayumars, from the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp: Illuminated manuscripts of the Shahnameh were often commissioned by royal patrons

Islamic Ceramics

Islamic art has notable achievements in ceramics that reached heights unmatched by other cultures.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss how developments such as opaque glazes and stonepaste ceramics made Islamic ceramics some of the most advanced of its time.

Key Points

- The first Islamic opaque glazes date to around the 8th century, and another significant contribution was the development of stonepaste ceramics in 9th century Iraq.
- Lusterwares with iridescent colors were either invented or considerably developed in Persia and Syria from the 9th century onward.
- The techniques, shapes, and decorative motifs of Chinese ceramics were admired and emulated by Islamic potters, especially after the Mongol and Timurid invasions.

Key Terms

- **lusterware**: A type of pottery or porcelain having an iridescent metallic glaze.
- **glaze**: The vitreous coating of pottery or porcelain, or a transparent or semi- transparent layer of paint.
- **ceramics**: Inorganic, nonmetallic solids created by the action of heat and their subsequent cooling. Most common ceramics are crystalline and the earliest uses of ceramics were in pottery.

Islamic Ceramics

Islamic art has notable achievements in ceramics, both in pottery and tiles for buildings, which reached heights unmatched by other cultures. Early pottery had usually been unglazed, but a tin-opacified glazing technique was developed by Islamic potters. The first Islamic opaque glazes can be found as blue-painted ware in Basra, dating to around the 8th century.

Another significant contribution was the development of stonepaste ceramics, originating from 9th century Iraq. The first industrial complex for glass and pottery production was built in Ar-Raqqah, Syria, in the 8th century.

Lusterware

Lusterware is a type of pottery or porcelain that has an iridescent metallic glaze. Luster first began as a painting technique in glassmaking, which was then translated to pottery in Mesopotamia in the 9th century.



10th century dish: Islamic art has very notable achievements in ceramics, both in pottery and tiles for walls, which reached heights unmatched by other cultures. This dish is from East Persia or Central Asia

The techniques, shapes, and decorative motifs of Chinese ceramics were admired and emulated by Islamic potters, especially after the Mongol and Timurid invasions. Until the Early Modern period, Western ceramics had little influence, but Islamic pottery was highly sought after in Europe, and was often copied.

Islamic Textiles

The most important textile produced in the Medieval and Early Modern Islamic Empires was the carpet.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the making and designs of Islamic textiles.

Key Points

- The production and trade of textiles pre-dates Islam, and had long been important to Middle Eastern cultures and cities, many of which flourished due to the Silk Road.

- When the Islamic dynasties formed and grew more powerful they gained control over textile production in the region, which was arguably the most important craft of the era.

Key Terms

- **textile arts**: The production of arts and crafts that use plant, animal, or synthetic fibers to create objects.

Islam and the Textile Arts

The textile arts refer to the production of arts and crafts that use plant, animal, or synthetic fibers to create objects. These objects can be for everyday use, or they can be decorative and luxury items. The production and trade of textiles pre-dates Islam, and had long been important to Middle Eastern cultures and cities, many of which flourished due to the Silk Road.

When the Islamic dynasties formed and grew more powerful they gained control over textile production in the region, which was arguably the most important craft of the era. The most important textile produced in Medieval and Early Modern Islamic Empires was the carpet.

The Ottoman Empire and Carpet Production

The art of carpet weaving was particularly important in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state was founded by Turkish tribes in northwestern Anatolia in 1299 and became an empire in 1453 after the momentous conquest of Constantinople.

Stretching across Asia, Europe, and Africa, the Empire was vast and long lived, lasting until 1922 when the monarchy was abolished in Turkey. Within the Ottoman Empire, carpets were immensely valued as decorative furnishings and for their practical value. They were used not just on floors but also as wall and door hangings, where they provided additional insulation.

These intricately knotted carpets were made of silk, or a combination of silk and cotton, and were often rich in religious and other symbolism. Hereke silk carpets, which were made in the coastal town of Hereke, were the most valued of the Ottoman carpets because of their fine weave. The Hereke carpets were typically used to furnish royal palaces.



Carpet and interior of the Harem room in Topkapi Palace, Istanbul: The Ottoman Turks were famed for the quality of their finely woven and intricately knotted silk carpets

Persian Carpets

The Iranian Safavid Empire (1501–1786) is distinguished from the Mughal and Ottoman dynasties by the Shia faith of its shahs, which was the majority Islamic denomination in Persia. Safavid art is contributed to several aesthetic traditions, particularly to the textile arts.

In the sixteenth century, carpet weaving evolved from a nomadic and peasant craft to a well-executed industry that used specialized design and manufacturing techniques on quality fibers such as silk. The carpets of Ardabil, for example, were commissioned to commemorate the Safavid dynasty and are now considered to be the best examples of classical Persian weaving, particularly for their use of graphical perspective.

Textiles became a large export, and Persian weaving became one of the most popular imported goods of Europe. Islamic carpets were a luxury item in Europe and there are several examples of European Renaissance paintings that document the presence of Islamic textiles in European homes during that time.



The Ardabil Carpet, Persia, 1540: The Ardabil Carpet is the finest example of 16th century Persian carpet production

1. [1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_al-Rahman_I ↵

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4.3: Medieval Europe and the Romanesque

This period is also known as the Dark Ages, an epithet (unflattering name) coined by the humanists of the Renaissance because they thought it represented the loss of all the learning of the Classical period. In fact, the period between the fall of the Roman Empire in Northern Europe – roughly 476 – and the Renaissance itself in the 15th and 16th centuries was rich in imagery in its own right.

England for much of this period was divided into separate kingdoms: Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, North Umbria, Essex, Kent and Sussex. It was also continually challenged by the Danes who had colonies established as well. King Alfred of Wessex managed to defeat the Danes substantially in 878. 1 Finally during the High Middle Ages, 1066 – 1272, William, Duke of Normandy, took control of the throne with the Battle of Hastings. England's history over the next centuries would be a series of bloody disputes over legitimate rule.

During that early moment of individual fiefs or areas ruled by strong men, the archeological record has been rewarded by the excavation of various burial sites like that at Sutton Hoo.



Purse cover, Sutton Hoo burial, 625 – 33. Gold with garnets and enamels, 7 ½" in length. The British Museum, London. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license

The body of significant person from the area was buried in a wooden ship like the ones we picture the Vikings using. The wood had long rotted but the shape remained in the soil. Buried with the body were expensive grave goods that suggested his stature. One of those items was this clasp for a purse – fabric or leather, long gone. The work is intricate interlace design with garnets and enamel-work laid into the gold areas. The images are symmetrical and show the man/animal motif common to this style.

The interlace design carried over into the work monks like those at Durrow or Lindesfarne were doing. This Gospel Book exhibits on its **carpet page** – so-called because of its resemblance to an Eastern carpet – an interlaced border surrounding the sigil of St. Mark, the lion. Clearly the monk was drawing an animal from written accounts or word-of-mouth so gives us a hybrid with both cat and wolf-like characteristics. The colorful interlace continues within the animal's body as well.

The Bayeux Tapestry

One of the most significant documents of the late Middle Ages is the Bayeux Tapestry, which is, in fact, not a tapestry at all. Unlike woven tapestries, this object is embroidered by hand in wool threads on a linen cloth about 20" high and over 230' in length. The events pictured on the "tapestry" record the Norman invasion of 1066. William of Normandy and his army invaded England and deposed Harold, the Anglo-Saxon ruler. One scene recounts the passing overhead of Halley's Comet during the invasion – an event taken as an omen by both sides. You can read an entire account of the tapestry and see all 72 scenes at the site below: **http://www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/**



The Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum) PD This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication



Bayeux Tapestry with Viewing of Halley's Comet, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

Characteristics of Romanesque Architecture

While Romanesque architecture tends to possess certain key features, these often vary in appearance and building material from region to region.

Key Points

- Variations in Romanesque architecture can be noted in earlier styles compared later styles; differences in building materials and local inspirations also led to variations across regions.
- Romanesque architecture varies in appearance of walls, piers, arches and openings, arcades, columns, vaults, and roofs and in the materials used to create these features.
- Columns were often used in Romanesque architecture, but varied in building material and decorative style. The alternation of piers and columns was found in both churches and castles.
- The majority of buildings have wooden roofs consisting of a simple truss, tie beam, or king post form. Vaults of stone or brick took on several different forms and showed marked development during the period, evolving into the pointed, ribbed arch characteristic of Gothic architecture.

Key Terms

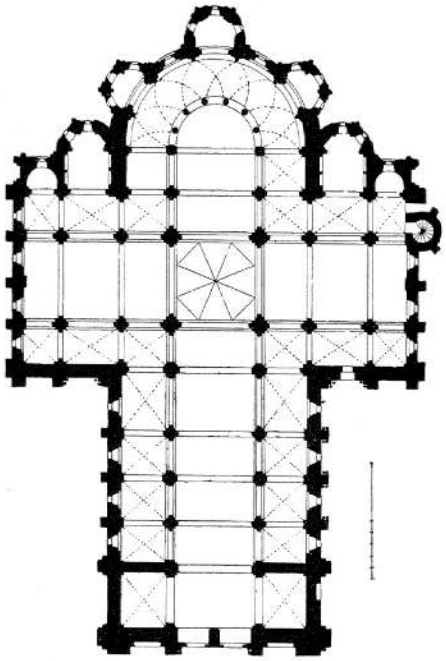
- **capital**: The uppermost part of a column.
- **blind arcade**: A series of arches often used in Romanesque and Gothic buildings with no actual openings and no load-bearing function, simply serving as a decorative element.
- **ocular window**: A circular opening without tracery, found in many Italian churches.
- **vault**: An arched structure of masonry forming a ceiling or canopy.
- **Piers**: In architecture, an upright support for a structure or superstructure such as an arch or bridge.

Variations in Romanesque Architecture

The general impression given by both ecclesiastical and secular Romanesque architecture is that of massive solidity and strength. Romanesque architecture relies upon its walls, or sections of walls called *piers*, to bear the load of the structure, rather than using arches, columns, vaults, and other systems to manage the weight. As a result, the walls are **massive**, giving the impression of sturdy solidity. Romanesque design is also characterized by the presence of arches and openings, arcades, columns, vaults, and roofs. In spite of the general existence of these items, Romanesque architecture varies in how these characteristics are presented. For example, walls may be made of different materials or arches and openings may vary in shape. Later examples of Romanesque architecture may also possess features that earlier forms do not.



Abbey Church of St. Foy, Conques, France. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share-Alike 3.0 Unported license. Mark Figuroa



CONQUES

Plan of St. Foy, PD This image is taken from Georg Dehio/Gustav von Bezold: Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes. Stuttgart: Verlag der Cotta'schen Buchhandlung 1887-1901, Plate No. ~. Due to its age, it is to be used with care. It may not reflect the latest knowledge or the current state of the depicted structure

Because the walls must be so massive, or thick, to support the load from above they cannot be pierced with large or numerous windows. This renders the interior of most Romanesque churches fairly dark.

Plan

Above you see the plan of St. Foy. One characteristic of the Romanesque is the addition of an ambulatory, or walkway, around the apse area. This was to allow for the easy circulation of the crowds of pilgrims who flocked to churches all over Europe during this period. The pilgrims came to worship the holy relics that were housed in rich **reliquaries** in the churches, and they spent money in the towns and churches alike during their visits. It was, in effect, religious tourism. The reliquary of St. Foy is pictured below. A reliquary is an object created to house a holy relic whether it be a bone, tooth, skull, or fragment of wood or cloth that was reputed to have belonged to one of the Saints or other significant figures in Catholic Christian history.



Golden statue reliquary of St. Foy, from the treasury of Conques. Shown here in the Abbey-Church of Saint-Foy on Saint-Foy day, in October 2013. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. ZiYouXunLu

Read more about pilgrimages and St Foy on Khan Academy

Walls

The building material used in Romanesque architecture varies across Europe depending on local stone and building traditions. In Italy, Poland, much of Germany, and parts of the Netherlands, brick was customary. Other areas saw extensive use of limestone, granite, and flint . The building stone was often used in small, irregular pieces bedded in thick mortar. Smooth ashlar masonry was not a distinguishing feature of the style in the earlier part of the period, but occurred where easily worked limestone was available.

Arches and Openings

A characteristic feature of Romanesque architecture, both ecclesiastic and domestic, is the pairing of two arched windows or arcade openings separated by a pillar or *colonette* and often set within a larger arch. Ocular windows are common in Italy, particularly in the facade gable, and are also seen in Germany. Later Romanesque churches may have wheel windows or rose windows with plate tracery, the masonry decoration that held the pieces of glass. In a few Romanesque buildings, such as Autun Cathedral in France and Monreale Cathedral in Sicily, pointed arches have been used extensively. These pointed arches would prefigure Gothic architecture to come.



St. Foy Interior. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license. Lasandaliadelpescador

Columns

Columns were often used in Romanesque architecture, but varied in building material and decorative style. In Italy, a great number of antique Roman columns were salvaged and reused in the interiors and on the porticos of churches. In most parts of Europe, Romanesque columns were massive, supporting thick upper walls with small windows, and sometimes heavy vaults. Where massive columns were called for they were constructed of ashlar masonry with a hollow core was filled with rubble. These huge untapered columns were sometimes ornamented with incised decorations.

A common characteristic of Romanesque buildings, found in both churches and in the arcades that separate large interior spaces of castles, is the alternation of piers and columns. The simplest form is a column between each adjoining pier.

Vaults and Roofs

The majority of buildings have wooden roofs in a simple truss, tie beam, or king post form. Trussed rafter roofs are sometimes lined with wooden ceilings in three sections like those that survive at Ely and Peterborough cathedrals in England. In churches, typically the aisles are vaulted but the nave is roofed with timber, as is the case at both Peterborough and Ely. In Italy, open wooden roofs were common, the beams frequently occurred in conjunction with vaults, and the timbers were often decorated, as at San Miniato al Monte, Florence.

Vaults of stone or brick took on several different forms and showed marked development during the period, evolving into the pointed, ribbed arch characteristic of Gothic architecture.

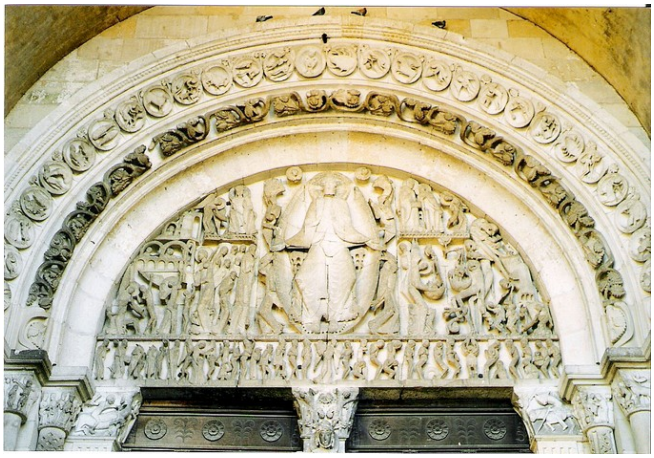
The Tympanum of Saint-Lazare

The Autun Cathedral, or the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, is a Roman Catholic cathedral and national monument in Autun, France. Famous for its Cluniac inspiration and Romanesque sculptures by Gislebertus, it epitomizes Romanesque art and architecture in Burgundy.

Due to the veneration of relics in this period, the Bishop of Autun ordered the creation of a larger cathedral to house these relics and accommodate the influx of pilgrims into Autun. The column capitals and main façade of the church are embellished with realistic sculptures, and the artwork is a means of teaching the masses about Christian ethics with dramatic scenes of heaven and hell. Work on the cathedral began around 1120 and advanced rapidly; the building was consecrated in 1130.

The West Tympanum

The West façade of Saint-Lazare contains the tympanum (1130–1135), signed *Gislebertushoc fecit* (meaning "Gislebertus made this") within the portico. Art historian Linda Seidel's 1999 book, *Legends in Limestone*, suggests that Gislebertus was the name of a wealthy family in Autun and represents the patron of the monument, not its sculptor. In any event it is ranked among the masterpieces of Romanesque sculpture in France. The sheer size of the tympanum required support by double lintels and middle column to further bolster the sculpture. The left side of the tympanum displays the rise to the heavenly kingdom, and on the right is a portrayal of demons in hell with an angel and a devil weighing the souls on a balance. Zodiac signs surround the archivault, with Christ in the center portrayed as a serene figure. Christ is placed in perfect symmetrical position with a balanced composition of elongated figures. Jesus is flanked by his mother, the Virgin Mary, and his apostles cast as penitents and observers of the last judgment. St. Peter guards the gate to heaven and looks on as resurrected individuals attempt to squeeze in with the assistance of the angels.



Last Judgment: Last Judgment attr. Gislebertus in the west tympanum

In the Last Judgment, the figures are integrated the modern view of heaven and hell and created a sculpture to act as a visual educational device for individuals who were illiterate. The tympanum inspired terror in believers who viewed the detailed high relief sculpture. Indeed, the bottom of the tympanum underneath the weighing of the souls has an inscription which states, "May this terror terrify those whom earthly error binds for the horror of the images here in this manner truly depicts what will be." The tympanum is framed by two archivolts: the inner has carved foliage, while the outer consists of magnificently detailed medallions representing the four seasons, zodiacs, and labors of the months.

The tympanum was the first thing the faithful would see when approaching the church and the last as they left. The Last Judgment was the central subject of Christendom – the event that would determine where a soul would spend eternity according to Church doctrine. It is understandable that this image would be the most frequently displayed in this area to remind the illiterate worshipers why they were there, and to reinforce the importance and power of the Church in the minds of the people.

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4.4: Gothic Art and Architecture

Gothic Architecture



Europe c. 1200

The 13th century in Europe was a time of invention, but also unrest. Scholasticism began the process of reconciling classical philosophy with Christian teachings. This would continue during the Renaissance as Neoplatonism. It is the century that saw the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) through the Ninth Crusade (1271-1272); many of these Crusades which were ostensibly meant to take the Holy Land back from the Muslims weren't always as advertised. The Fourth Crusade saw the Crusaders rerouted because of various political and economic reasons into a sack of the Christian city of Constantinople. The Children's Crusade (2012) never made it to the Middle East and saw many of the children taken into slavery or victims of other tragic circumstances. This century saw the rise of the mendicant (took vows of poverty) orders of monks – the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and the Carmelites. The writings of Roger Bacon and Thomas Aquinas are from this period, Genghis Khan's army invaded Russia, and the population of Western Europe grew significantly. Still a feudal economy, farming methods advanced including the use of a heavier plow and horses – something actually pictured in the Bayeux Tapestry.

This is also the moment when church architecture in Western Europe turns from the Romanesque to the more elaborate forms of the Gothic.

Abbot Suger

Abbot Suger (pr. Soo'-jhay; circa 1081-1151), Abbot of Saint Denis located just outside Paris from 1122 and a friend and confidant of French kings, began work around 1135 on rebuilding and enlarging the abbey church. Saint Denis was the traditional burial place of French kings, and as such Suger determined that the old Romanesque church was too low, too dark and not ornate enough to honor both the royal occupants and their God. He set out to remodel and in the act created a form of ecclesiastical architecture that would become the inspiration all over Europe for centuries.

Suger was the patron of the rebuilding of Saint Denis, but not the architect, as was often assumed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact it appears that two distinct architects, or master masons, were involved in the 12th century changes. Both remain anonymous, but their work can be distinguished stylistically.

Suger's western extension was completed in 1140 and the three new chapels in the narthex were consecrated on June 9th of that year. On completion of the west front, Abbot Suger moved on to the reconstruction of the eastern end. He wanted a choir (chancel)

that would be suffused with light. To achieve his aims, Suger's masons drew on the new elements that had evolved or been introduced to Romanesque architecture: **the pointed arch, the ribbed vault, the ambulatory with radiating chapels, the clustered columns supporting ribs springing in different directions, and the flying buttresses, which enabled the insertion of large clerestory windows**. This was the first time that these features had all been brought together. The new structure was finished and dedicated on June 11th of 1144, in the presence of the King.

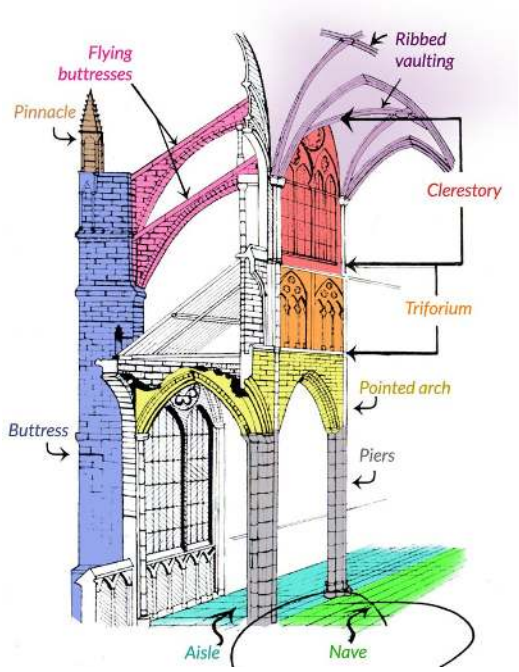
Thus, the Abbey of Saint Denis became the prototype for further building in the royal domain of northern France. Through the rule of the Angevin dynasty, the style was introduced to England and spread throughout France, the Low Countries, Germany, Spain, northern Italy, and Sicily.



Abbey Church of Saint Denis: This is the west facade of the Basilica of Saint Denis, showcasing the distinct features of Romanesque architecture that Suger hoped to alter

The dark Romanesque **nave**, with its thick walls and small window openings, was rebuilt using the latest techniques, in what is now known as Gothic. This new style, which differed from Suger's earlier works as much as they had differed from their Romanesque precursors, reduced the wall area to an absolute minimum. Flying buttresses removed the load of the upper structure away from the walls and into the ground allowing for the walls to be pierced by large windows. The vast window openings were filled with brilliant stained glass and interrupted only by the most slender of **bar tracery**—not only in the **clerestory** but also, perhaps for the first time, in the normally dark **triforium** level. The upper facades of the two much-enlarged transepts were filled with two spectacular rose windows. As with Suger's earlier rebuilding work, the identity of the architect or master mason is unknown.

The abbey is often referred to as the "royal necropolis of France" as it is the site where the kings of France and their families were buried for centuries. All but three of the monarchs of France from the 10th century until 1789 have their remains here. The effigies of many of the kings and queens are on their tombs, but during the French Revolution, those tombs were opened and the bodies were moved to mass graves.



Interior (and some exterior) elements. Image: passport2design.com Original source: nvcc.edu

Sculpture

Surfaces of Gothic churches were decorated with sculpture that was meant to be didactic – it reinforced the lessons of the church for both the literate and illiterate as they entered and left the building. One site that was particularly useful was around and above the portals. In the following examples from Chartres Cathedral in France you see the change that figurative sculpture underwent during the decades and sometimes centuries it took to build a Cathedral.


Chartres Cathedral, door jamb statues, west façade, 12th c. (1130-1160) By Giulia_ on Flickr. Creative commons

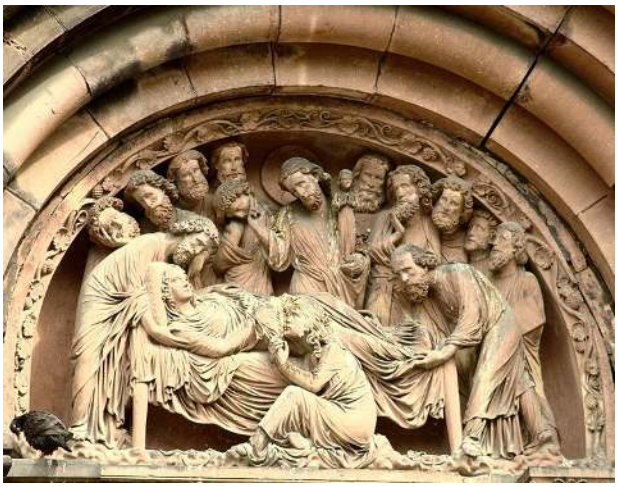


Chartres Cathedral, Saints Theodore, Stephen, Clement, and Lawrence, door jamb, south transept, 13th c. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Photo Ttaylor, 2005

The sculpture from the 12th century is columnar, carved tightly to the column it stands in front of. The figures aren't differentiated substantially and they are weightless. The drapery is linear, as it is in Byzantine images, and it doesn't describe the bodies underneath.

In the 13th c. figures differences begin to emerge. The figures seem to move further from their support and gestures are specific to the figure. While still quite rigid and frontal, the figures of Stephen, Clement, and Lawrence above begin to display more movement. St. Theodore on the left is significantly different from the others. Dressed as a knight, he stands in modest contrapposto and the folds of his tabard follow the swing of his hips. His face evidences a fullness and seems to be more individualized than earlier models. He stands firmly on this two feet and turns away from the surface of the façade to engage the viewers as they enter.

By the Late Gothic period sculpture begins to return to a semblance of naturalism and a suggestion of the Classical figures of ancient Greece and Rome.



The tympanum of the South portal of Notre-Dame de Strasbourg , ca 1230, The Dormition of Virgin Mary, sandstone. CC BY-SA 2.0 Frédéric Chateaux

Strasbourg Cathedral's South portal tympanum has a "Death" or Dormition of the Virgin Mary that exhibits a significant shift from the medieval figurative style of the 12th c. The figures have weight, drapery reveals the bodies underneath and while the space and arrangement of figures in that space are not naturalistic, there is more of an effort to create a scene that suggests an event rather

than an abstract representation of an idea. Mary looks like a reclining Roman matron recalling the figure of Hestia from the Parthenon.

Stained Glass

With the load removed from the walls of Gothic churches by the flying buttresses they were able to be pierced by larger and more numerous openings. Suger's wish for the metaphorical light of Heaven to shine into the church could be fulfilled.

Stained glass artists would create designs and lay lead strips along them between which they would fit glass colored with metallic salts. Stories from the Bible and images of Kings and Queens were included in the subjects for windows in Gothic cathedrals.

Secular Architecture



House of Jacques Coeur, Bourges, France, 1443-51

Gothic motifs also were applied to non-religious architecture. Jacques Coeur was a wealthy 15th c. merchant who became Charles VII's master of the mint. At the height of his success he had the largest fortune ever amassed in France and a fleet of trading ships. Not unexpectedly, he also acquired many enemies and when in February 1450 Agnès Sorel, the King's mistress, suddenly died, Coeur's enemies convinced the King that Coeur had had her poisoned. More charges of financial crimes were heaped on and Coeur was ultimately sentenced to prison, a huge fine, and the confiscation of all his property.2 Ultimately, he escaped prison and ended in Rome where he was received as a hero and made captain of a fleet of military ships. Sadly, Coeur himself came down with an illness and died during the campaign.

The house of Jacques Coeur in Bourges, France, is an excellent example of the Flamboyant Style of Late Gothic architecture. "Flamboyant" means "flamelike" and Refers to the ornamentation on the exterior of the building. Pointed arches in windows and narrow towers with long pointed roofs suggest the style.

Secular Decorative Objects



The Castle of Love and knights jousting, lid of a jewelry casket, Paris, ca. 1330-1350. Ivory and iron, 4 ½" x 9 ¾". Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. CC SA 3.0, Gnu Free Documentation License

The concept of courtly love began in areas of present-day France in the 11th century. Originally a literary genre to entertain nobility, the idea spread throughout Europe and continues today in stories of knights and their ladies. In practice, not always so

dedicatedly platonic – that is, love never consummated but always on a higher moral plane – that idea was none-the-less the model and conceit. Linked to brave deeds done for fair ladies, the popular concept was recounted in literature, poetry, and songs of troubadours. It has become popularized in the modern imagination with the court of King Arthur and the romance of Arthur, Lancelot, and Guinevere.

In this jewelry casket (box), the lid and four sides are carved from ivory with scenes depicting the idea of courtly love and scenes from famous lovers of history. The lid pictures a Castle with knights jousting for the favor of the ladies who watch from the battlements above. On the left clever cupid provides flowers for soldiers to hurl upward with their trebuchet.



The box may have been a gift related to courtship or marriage. Remaining scenes picture Aristotle and Phyllis, Tristan and Iseult, and the stories of the Round Table's Gawain, Galahad, and Lancelot

The Unicorn Tapestries

Unlike the Bayeux Tapestries, the Unicorn Tapestries are true tapestries, woven on a loom for the wealthy La Viste family of France. Created between 1484 and 1500, these panels were a series of six Flemish tapestries using the medieval meme of the Unicorn and the Virgin to also describe the senses. Sometimes the Hunt for the Unicorn is taken to be a Christian overlay of a medieval subject with the Unicorn standing for the Passion of Christ. The multitude of flowers that surround the figures is known as the "mille fleurs" style. The rampant lion bears the sigil of the La Viste family and may represent the son included in the chaste quest for the Virgin.



The Lady and the Unicorn, tapestry, wool, metallic threads, silk; c. 1484-1500. App. 377 x 466 cm each. PD US http://www.tchevalier.com/unicorn/ta...ies/taste.html

Italian Gothic Painting

Italian Gothic painting developed a distinctively western character and flourished from the second half of the 13th century onward.

Key Points

- The transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic style of painting happened quite slowly in Italy because Italy was strongly influenced by Byzantine art, especially in painting.
- The initial changes to the Byzantine-inspired Romanesque style were quite small, marked merely by an increase in Gothic ornamental detailing rather than a dramatic difference in the style of figures and compositions.

- Cimabue of Florence and Duccio of Siena were trained in the Byzantine style but were the first great Italian painters to break away from the Italo- Byzantine art form. They were pioneers in the move towards naturalism and depicted figures with more lifelike proportions, expressions, and shading.
- Giotto's style represented a clear break with the Byzantine tradition, making use of foreshortening, chiaroscuro techniques, and depicting highly expressive figures.
- During the 14th century, Tuscan painting was predominantly accomplished in the International Gothic style, characterized by a formalized sweetness and grace, elegance, and richness of detail, and an idealized quality.

Key Terms

- **Romanesque**: Refers to the art of Europe from approximately 1000 AD to the rise of the Gothic style in the 13th century or later, depending on region.
- **chiaroscuro**: An artistic technique popularized during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.
- **Foreshortening**: A technique for creating the appearance that the object of a drawing is extending into space by shortening the lines with which that object is drawn.

The transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic style of painting happened quite slowly in Italy, several decades after it had first taken hold in France. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, the influx of Byzantine paintings and mosaics increased greatly. This was partly the reason that Italy was strongly influenced by Byzantine art, especially in painting.

The initial changes to the Byzantine-inspired Romanesque style were quite small, marked merely by an increase in Gothic ornamental detailing rather than a dramatic difference in the style of figures and compositions. Italian Gothic painting began to flourish in its own right around the second half of the 13th century with the contributions of Cimabue of Florence (ca. 1240–c a. 1302) and Duccio of Siena (ca. 1255–60–ca. 1318–19), and developed an even more strongly realistic character under Giotto (1266–1337).

Cimabue and Duccio were trained in the Byzantine style, but they were the first great Italian painters to start breaking away from the Italo-Byzantine art form. In a period when scenes and forms were still relatively flat and stylized, Cimabue was a pioneer in the move towards naturalism in Italian painting. His figures were depicted with more lifelike proportions and shading, as evident in the Crucifixion scene for the church of Santa Croce in Florence (1287-88), which demonstrates delicately shaded draperies and the chiaroscuro technique. His *Maestàdi Santa Trinita*, a Madonna and Child painting commissioned by the church of Santa Trinita in Florence between 1290 and 1300, makes use of perspective in portraying Mary's three-dimensional throne, and depicts the figures with sweeter and more natural expressions than typical in the somber Romanesque style.

Much like Cimabue, Duccio of Siena painted in the Byzantine style but made his own personal contributions in the Gothic style in the linearity, the rich but delicate detail, and the warm and refined colors of his work. He was also one of the first Italian painters to place figures in architectural settings. Over time, he achieved greater naturalism and softness in his work and made use of foreshortening and chiaroscuro techniques. His characters are surprisingly expressive and human, interacting tenderly with each other.



Maestà del Duomo di Siena (Tempera and Gold on Wood): The Maestà of the Siena Cathedral is a painted altarpiece composed of many individual paintings. It was commissioned in 1308 by the city of Siena and is widely regarded as Duccio's masterpiece

Both Cimabue and Duccio were probably influenced by Giotto in their later years. Giotto was renowned for his distinctively western style, basing his compositions not on a Byzantine tradition but, rather, on his observation of life. His figures were solidly

three-dimensional, had discernible anatomy, and were clothed with garments that appear to have weight and structure. His greatest contribution to Italian Gothic art was his intense depiction of a range of emotions, which his contemporaries began to emulate enthusiastically. While painting in the Gothic style, he is considered the herald of the Renaissance.

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4.5: Early Renaissance

The Italian Renaissance

The art of the Italian Renaissance was a cultural shift from the styles of the Middle Ages and Byzantia; the concepts of the Renaissance remained influential throughout Europe and other parts of the world for centuries.

Key Points

- The Renaissance, or "rebirth" of learning, is thought to have begun in the mercantile city of Florence and the Florentine school of painting became the dominant style during the period. Renaissance artworks often depicted more secular subject matter, or pagan themes than previous artistic movements.
- Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Rafael are among the best known painters of the High Renaissance.
- The High Renaissance was followed by the Mannerist movement, known for elongated figures, irrational spaces, and complex iconography.

Key Terms

- **Buonfresco**: A type of wall painting in which color pigments are mixed with water and applied to wet plaster. As the plaster and pigments dry, they fuse together and the painting becomes a part of the wall itself.
- **Fresco secco**: as in buon fresco except the paint is applied to a dry wall and is usually not as long lasting and intense.
- **Mannerism**: A style of art developed at the end of the High Renaissance, characterized by the deliberate distortion and exaggeration of perspective, especially the elongation of figures.

The Renaissance began during the 15th century and remained the dominate style in Italy, and in much of Europe, until the end of the 16th century. The term "renaissance" was only developed during the 19th century in order to describe this period of time and its accompanying artistic style and to differentiate it from what had gone before – the so-called "Dark Ages." However, people who were living during the Renaissance did, in fact, see themselves as different from their medieval predecessors. Through a variety of texts that survive, we know that people living during the Renaissance saw the earlier centuries as a time when much of the scholarship and artistic ability had been lost. For the Renaissance elite theirs would be a time when the brilliance of the Ancients in art and architecture would be recovered and built upon.

Florence and the Renaissance

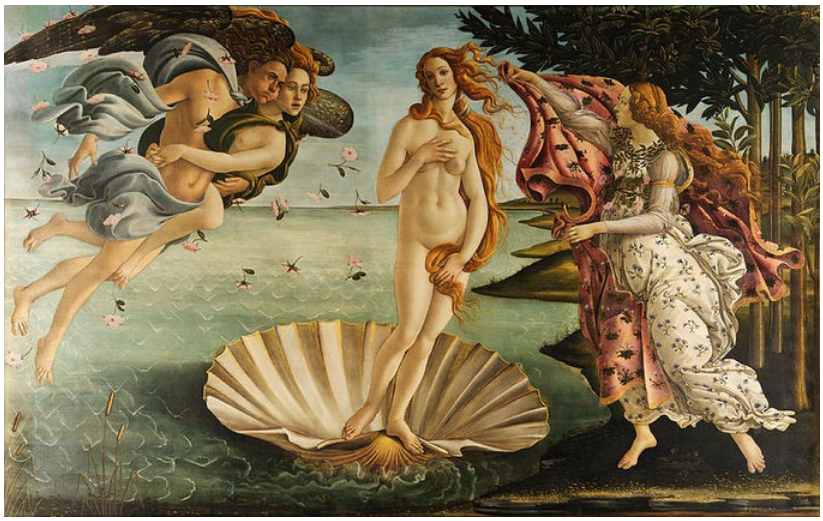
When you picture an object from the Renaissance, you are probably picturing something done in the style that was developed in Florence and which became the dominate style of art during this period. Italy at this time was divided into a number of different city states. Each one had its own government, culture, economy, and artistic style. There were a number of subtle differences in art and architecture that arose in various parts of Italy during the Renaissance, and other geographical areas like Northern Europe also developed stylistic and content specialties. Siena, which was a political ally of France, for example, retained a Gothic element to its art for much of the Renaissance.

Certain conditions aided the development of the Renaissance style in Florence during this time period. In the 15th century, Florence became a major mercantile center. The production of cloth drove their economy and a wealthy and influential merchant class emerged. Humanism, which had developed during the 14th century, remained an important intellectual movement that impacted art production as well.

Early Renaissance

During the Early Renaissance, artists began to reject the Byzantine style of religious painting and strove to create realism in their depiction of the human form and space. This aim toward realism began with Cimabue and Giotto, and can be seen in its early Renaissance form in the art of artists such as Andrea Mantegna and Paolo Uccello. These artists created works that employed one point perspective and displayed their skill with perspective for their educated, art knowledgeable viewers.

During the Early Renaissance we also see important developments in subject matter in addition to style. While religion continued to be an important element in the daily lives of people of the period and remained a driving factor behind artistic production, we also see a new avenue open to panting—"mythological" subject matter. Many scholars point to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* as the very first panel painting of a Classical scene. While the tradition itself likely arose from cassone (marriage chest) painting, which typically featured scenes from Greek and Roman stories and romantic texts, the development of panel painting with these subjects would open a creative new world for artistic patronage, production, and themes.



Birth of Venus: Botticelli's Birth of Venus was among the most important works of the early Renaissance

Humanism and the Early Renaissance

Humanism was an intellectual movement embraced by scholars, writers, and civic leaders in 14th century Italy.

Key Points

- Humanists reacted against the utilitarian approach to education, seeking to create a citizenry who were able to speak and write with eloquence and thus able to engage the civic life of their communities.
- The movement was largely founded on the ideals of Italian scholar and poet Francesco Petrarca, which were often centered around humanity's potential for achievement.
- While Humanism initially began as a predominantly literary movement, its influence quickly pervaded the general culture of the time, reintroducing classical Greek and Roman art forms and leading to the Renaissance.
- Donatello became renowned as the greatest sculptor of the Early Renaissance, known especially for his Humanist, and unusually erotic, statue of David.
- While medieval society viewed artists as anonymous servants and craftspeople, Renaissance artists were trained intellectuals whose names were known and valued, and their art reflected this newfound point of view.
- In humanist painting, the treatment of the elements of perspective and depiction of light became of particular concern.

Key Terms

- **High Renaissance**: The period in art history denoting the apogee of the visual arts in the Italian Renaissance. The High Renaissance period is traditionally thought to have begun in the 1490s—with Leonardo's fresco of The Last Supper in Milan and the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence— and to have ended in 1527, with the Sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V.

Overview

Humanism, also known as Renaissance Humanism, was an intellectual movement embraced by scholars, writers, and civic leaders in 14th- and early-15th-century Italy. The movement developed in response to the medieval scholastic conventions in education at the time, which emphasized practical, pre-professional, and scientific studies engaged in solely for job preparation, and typically by men alone. Humanists reacted against this utilitarian approach, seeking to create a citizenry who were able to speak and write with eloquence and thus able to engage the civic life of their communities. This was to be accomplished through the study of the "*studiahumanitatis*," known today as the humanities: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy. Humanism introduced a program to revive the cultural—and particularly the literary—legacy and moral philosophy of classical antiquity. The movement was largely founded on the ideals of Italian scholar and poet Francesco Petrarca, which were often centered on humanity's potential for achievement.

Humanists considered the ancient world to be the pinnacle of human achievement, and thought its accomplishments should serve as the model for contemporary Europe. There were important centers of Humanism in Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino.

Humanism was an optimistic philosophy that saw man as a rational and sentient being, with the ability to decide and think for himself. It saw man as inherently good by nature, which was in tension with the Christian view of man as the original sinner needing redemption. It provoked fresh insight into the nature of reality, questioning beyond God and spirituality, and provided knowledge about human history beyond that which was provided in Christian doctrine.

Humanist Art

Renaissance Humanists saw no conflict between their study of the Ancients and Christianity. The lack of perceived conflict allowed Early Renaissance artists to combine classical forms, classical themes, and Christian theology freely. Early Renaissance sculpture is a great vehicle to explore the emerging Renaissance style. The leading artists of this medium were Donatello, Filippo Brunelleschi, and Lorenzo Ghiberti. Donatello became renowned as the greatest sculptor of the Early Renaissance, known especially for his classical, and unusually erotic, statue of David, which became one of the icons of the Florentine republic.



Donatello's David: Donatello's David is regarded as an iconic Humanist work of art. PD-US

Humanism affected the artistic community and how artists were perceived. Patronage of the arts became an important activity, and commissions included secular subject matter as well as religious. Important patrons, such as Cosimo de' Medici, emerged and contributed largely to the expanding artistic production of the time.

In painting, the treatment of the elements of perspective and light became of particular concern. Paolo Uccello, for example, who is best known for "The Battle of San Romano," was obsessed by his interest in perspective and would stay up all night in his study trying to grasp the exact vanishing point. He used perspective in order to create a feeling of depth in his paintings. In addition, the use of oil paint had its beginnings in the early part of the 16th century, and its use continued to be explored extensively throughout the High Renaissance.



"The Battle of San Romano" by Paolo Uccello: Italian Humanist paintings were largely concerned with the depiction of perspective and light. Note the use of foreshortening in the fallen horses. PD-US

Origins

Some of the first Humanists were great collectors of antique manuscripts, including Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Coluccio Salutati, and Poggio Bracciolini. Of the three, Petrarch was dubbed the "Father of Humanism" because of his devotion to Greek and Roman scrolls. Many worked for the organized church and were in holy orders (like Petrarch), while others were lawyers and chancellors of Italian cities (such as Petrarch's disciple Salutati, the Chancellor of Florence) and thus had access to book-copying workshops.

In Italy, the Humanist educational program won rapid acceptance and, by the mid- 15th century, many of the upper classes had received Humanist educations, possibly in addition to traditional scholastic ones. Some of the highest officials of the church were Humanists with the resources to amass important libraries. Such was Cardinal Basilios Bessarion, a convert to the Latin church from Greek Orthodoxy, who was considered for the papacy and was one of the most learned scholars of his time.

Following the Crusader sacking of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the migration of Byzantine Greek scholars and émigrés, who had greater familiarity with ancient languages and works, furthered the revival of Greek and Roman literature and science.

Early Renaissance Sculpture in Florence

Renaissance sculpture originated in Florence in the 15th century and was deeply influenced by classical sculpture.

Key Points

- Renaissance sculpture proper is often thought to have begun with the famous competition for the doors of the Florence baptistery in 1403, which was won by Lorenzo Ghiberti.
- Ghiberti designed a set of doors for the competition, housed in the northern entrance, and another more splendid pair for the eastern entrance, named the Gates of Paradise. Both of these gates depict biblical scenes.
- Ghiberti set up a large workshop in which many famous Florentine sculptors and artists were trained. He revived the lost wax casting of bronze, a technique that had been used by the ancients and had subsequently been lost.
- Donatello created his bronze David for Cosimo de' Medici. Conceived independently of any architectural surroundings, it was the first known free- standing nude statue produced since antiquity.
- The period was marked by a great increase in patronage of sculpture by the state for public art and by wealthy patrons for their homes. Public sculpture became a crucial element in the appearance of historic city centers. Additionally, portrait sculpture, particularly busts, became hugely popular in Florence.

Key Terms

- **allegory**: The representation of abstract principles by characters or figures.
- **lost wax**: A method of casting a sculpture in which a model of the sculpture is made from wax: the model is used to make a mold; when the mold has set, the wax is made to melt and is poured away, leaving the mold ready to be used to cast the sculpture.

- **baptistery**: A designated space that may stand within a church as a separate room or even as a separate building associated with a church, where a baptismal font is located, and consequently, where the sacrament of Christian baptism is performed. Typically during the Renaissance, baptisteries were separate buildings as people would be baptized before entering a church or Cathedral.

Commonly known as “the cradle of the Renaissance,” 15th century Florence was among the largest and richest cities in Europe and its wealthiest residents were enthusiastic patrons of the arts, including sculpture. Departing from the International Gothic style that had previously dominated in Italy, and drawing from the styles of classical antiquity, Renaissance sculpture originated in Florence and consciously followed the models of the ancients.

Lorenzo Ghiberti

Renaissance sculpture proper is often thought to begin with the famous competition for the doors of the Florence baptistery in 1403, from which the trial models submitted by the winner, Lorenzo Ghiberti, and the runner up, Filippo Brunelleschi, still survive. Ghiberti’s bronze doors consist of 28 panels depicting scenes from the life of Christ, the four evangelists, and the Church Fathers Saints Ambrose, Jeromy, Gregory, and Augustine. They took 21 years to complete and still stand at the northern entrance of the baptistery, although they are eclipsed by the splendor of his second pair of gates for the eastern entrance, which Michelangelo dubbed “the Gates of Paradise.” These new doors were commissioned in 1425 and built over a 27-year period. They consist of 10 rectangular panels depicting scenes from the Old Testament and employ a clever use of the recently discovered principles of perspective to add depth to the composition. The “Gates of Paradise” are surrounded by a richly decorated gilt framework of fruit and foliage, statuettes of prophets, and busts of the sculptor and his father.



Portrait of Ghiberti from the Gates of Paradise doors of the Florence Baptistery. CC BY-SA 3.0 Picture by myself, GFDL



Gates of Paradise, Florence Baptistry: Ghiberti's gates depicted scenes from the Old Testament at the eastern entrance of the Baptistry. PD-US

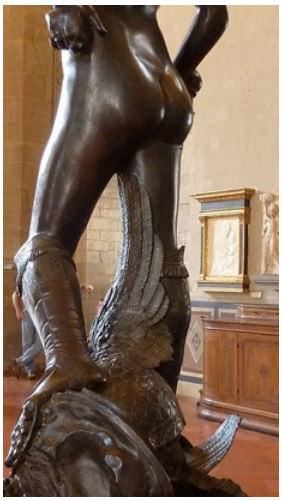
In order to carry out these huge commissions, Ghiberti set up a large workshop in which many famous Florentine sculptors and artists trained in later years, including Donatello, Michelozzo, and Paolo Uccello. He revived the lost wax casting of bronze, a technique which had been used by the ancients and subsequently lost. This made his workshop particularly famous and was a great draw for aspiring artists.

Donatello

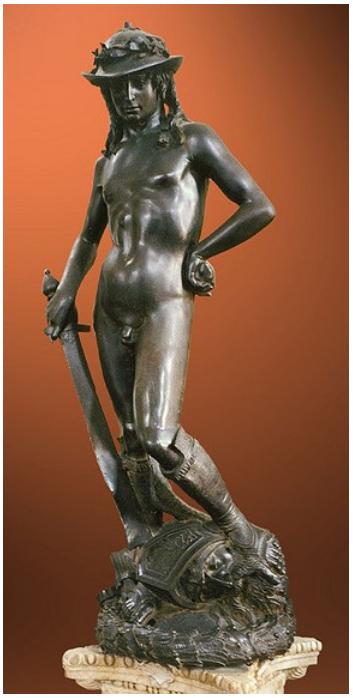
Another deeply influential sculptor from Florence was Donatello (1386—1466), who is best known for his work in bas-relief, low or shallow relief, that he used as a medium for the incorporation of significant 15th century sculptural developments in perspectival illusion. Donatello received his early artistic training in a goldsmith's workshop and then trained briefly in Ghiberti's studio before undertaking a trip to Rome with Filippo Brunelleschi where he undertook the study and excavation of Roman architecture and sculpture. Roman art became the single most important influence on Donatello's work. His foremost sponsor in Florence was Cosimo de'Medici, the city's greatest patron of art.

Donatello created his bronze *David* for Cosimo's court in the Palazzo Medici. Conceived entirely in the round and independent of any architectural surroundings, it was the first known free-standing nude statue produced since antiquity and suggested an allegory of civic virtues overcoming brutality and ignorance. This sculpture represented a particularly important development in Renaissance sculpture: the production of sculpture independent of architecture, unlike the preceding International Gothic style where sculpture rarely existed except as decoration on a building.

Donatello stresses the youth of David by showing the unformed musculature of the arms and body. He still wears his shepherd's hat and boots and holds Goliath's sword in his hand and armor beneath his feet. A feather from the giant's helm reaches suggestively up the inside of David's leg (detail). Academic Michael Rocke has written that this may have been an allusion to the acceptance of physical relationships between older Florentine men and younger boys.1 It may then be another way of signaling David's youth.



David by Donatello: Donatello's genius made him an important figure in the early Italian Renaissance period. Sculpted between 1430–32, his bronze David is an example of his mature work. It is currently located in the Bargello Palace and Museum. Full figure: CC BY-SA 2.0 Patrick A. Rodgers; Detail: CC BY-SA 3.0



Donatello's other important projects in and near Florence include the marble pulpit of the facade of the Prato cathedral, the carved *Cantoria* or choir at the Florence Duomo, which was influenced by ancient sarcophagi and Byzantine ivory chests, the Annunciation scene for the Cavalcanti altar in the church of Santa Croce, and a bust of *Young Man with a Cameo*, the first example of a lay bust portrait since the classical era.

Patronage of Sculpture

The period was marked by a great increase in patronage of sculpture by the state for public art and by wealthy patrons for their homes. Public sculpture became a crucial element in the appearance of historic city centers, and portrait sculpture, particularly busts, were hugely popular in Florence following Donatello's innovations. These 15th century advances soon spread throughout Italy and later through the rest of Europe.

Early Renaissance Painting

Renaissance painting was developed in 15th century Florence when artists began to reject the flatness of Gothic painting and strive toward greater naturalism.

Key Points

- Florentine painting received a new lease on life in the early 15th century, when the use of linear perspective was formalized by the architect Filippo Brunelleschi and adopted by painters as an artistic technique.
- Other important techniques developed in Florence during the first half of the 15th century include the use of **realistic proportions, foreshortening, sfumato, andchiaroscuro.**
- The artist most widely credited with first popularizing these techniques in 15th century Florence is Masaccio (1401–1428), the first great painter of the Quattrocento period of the Italian Renaissance.
- Masaccio was deeply influenced both by Giotto's earlier innovations in solidity of form and naturalism and Brunelleschi's formalized use of perspective in architecture and sculpture, and moved away from the International Gothic style to a more realistic mode.
- Masaccio is best known for his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, in which he employed techniques of linear perspective, such as the vanishing point for the first time, and had a profound influence on other artists despite the brevity of his career.

Key Terms

- **vanishing point**: The point in a perspective drawing at which parallel lines receding from an observer seem to converge.
- **quattrocento**: Renaissance Italian period during the 1400s.
- **sfumato**: "smoky" – the blurring of sharp outlines by subtle and gradual blending to give the illusion of three-dimensionality.
- **chiaroscuro**: the contrast between light and dark to convey a sense of depth or volume in a two-dimensional form.
- **foreshortening**: the artistic effect of shortening or compressing the view of an object that is at an angle to the picture plan to make it look as if it recedes away from the viewer.

Fifteenth century Florence was the birthplace of Renaissance painting, which rejected the flatness and stylized nature of Gothic art in order to focus on naturalistic representations of the human body and landscapes. While Giotto is often referred to as the herald of the Renaissance, there was a break in artistic developments in Italy after his death, due largely to the Black Death. However, Florentine painting was revitalized the early 15th century, when the use of perspective was formalized by the architect Filippo Brunelleschi and adopted by painters as an artistic technique. The development of perspective was part of a wider trend towards realism in the arts.

Many other important techniques commonly associated with Renaissance painting developed in Florence during the first half of the 15th century, including the use of realistic proportions, foreshortening, sfumato, and chiaroscuro**.**

The artist most widely credited with first pioneering these techniques in 15th century Florence is Masaccio (1401–1428), the first great painter of the Quattrocento period of the Italian Renaissance. Born Tommaso di Ser Viovanni di Mone Cassai, his nickname Masaccio is a shortened version of Tommaso, and suggests "clumsy" or "messy" Tom. Masaccio was deeply influenced by both Giotto's earlier innovations in solidity of form and naturalism and Brunelleschi's formalized use of perspective in architecture and sculpture. Masaccio is best known for his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, in which he employed techniques of linear perspective such as the vanishing point for the first time, and had a profound influence on other artists despite the brevity of his career.

Masaccio was friends with Brunelleschi and the sculptor Donatello, and collaborated frequently with the older and already renowned artist Masolino da Panicale (1383/4–1436) who traveled with him to Rome in 1423. From this point onwards, he eschewed the Byzantine and Gothic styles altogether, adopting traces of influence from ancient Greek and Roman art instead. These are evident in the cycle of frescoes he executed alongside Masolino for the Brancacci Chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence. The two artists started working on the chapel in 1425, but their work was completed by Filippo Lippi in the 1480s.

The frescoes in their entirety represent the story of human sin and redemption from the fall of Adam and Eve to the works of St. Peter. Giotto's influence is evident in Masaccio's frescoes, particularly in the weight and solidity of his figures and the vividness of their expressions. Unlike Giotto, Masaccio utilized linear and atmospheric perspective, and made even greater use of directional light and the chiaroscuro technique, enabling him to create even more convincingly lifelike paintings than his predecessor. His style and techniques became profoundly influential after his death and were imitated by his successors.



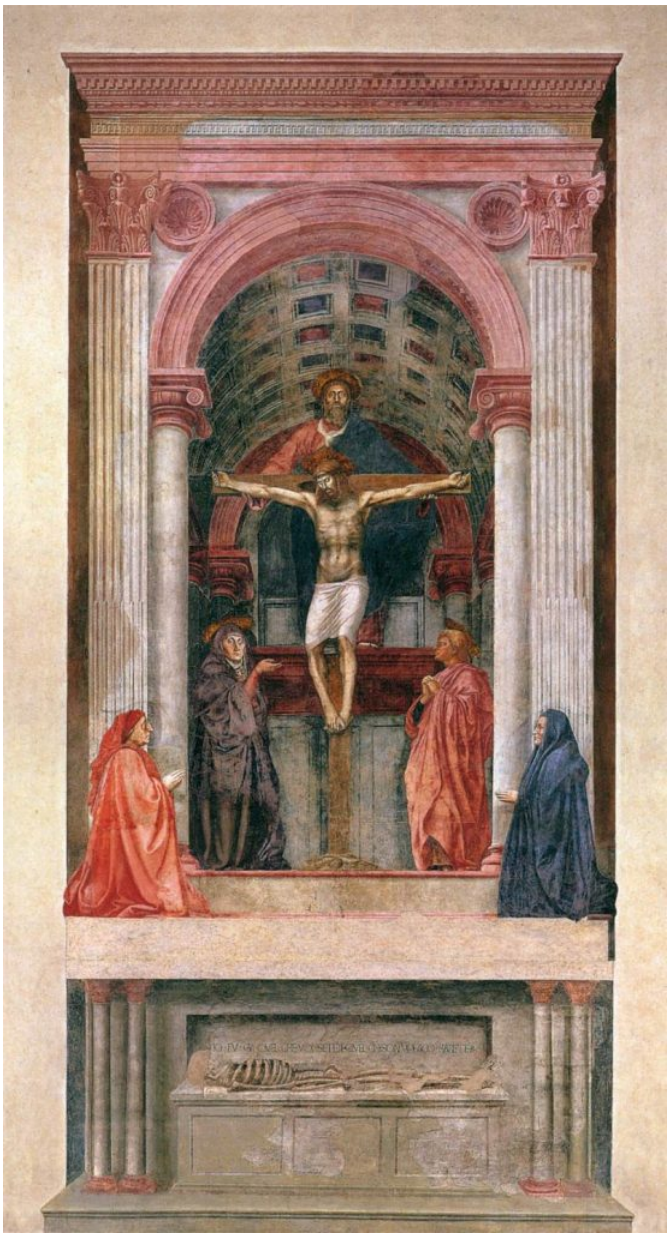
The Tribute Money, fresco in the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, 1425.: The Tribute Money is one of Masaccio's most famous frescoes from the Brancacci Chapel. Jesus and his apostles are depicted as neo-classical archetypes. The shadows of the figures fall away from the chapel window, as if the figures are lit by it; this is an added stroke of verisimilitude and shows Masaccio's innovative genius. Note the tax collector's contemporary (what Masaccio's contemporaries would have worn) costume compared to the Biblical clothing of Christ and his Disciples

The Tribute Money is an example of "**continuous narrative**" in which the entire story that transpires over time is shown in episodes in the same image.

The tax collector (in contemporary 15th c. Italian costume) confronts Jesus and the Disciples for the taxes on the temple which is seen on the right in the background. The Disciples are agitated because no one has any money, but Jesus turns to Peter and tells him to go to the water and catch a fish. On the left we see Peter in his blue tunic with his orange over-garment cast aside catching the fish inside of which will be the coins for the tax collector. On the far right we see Peter paying said collector.

In this continuous narrative (the entire story is told in one image) Masaccio shows his mastery of the new art of perspective in the temple architecture – follow the orthogonals and see where they all meet. On the left he uses some atmospheric perspective in the blue/gray color of the mountains and suggests depth of field with the diminishing size of the trees along the shore.

One other innovation – at least from most medieval imagery – can be seen in the shadows of the figures which suggest gravity and anchor them to the earth. All of these devices would have appeared new and astoundingly realistic to a viewer of 1425. The idea of the Renaissance "window on the world" that is thrown wide and give you a real encounter with the most significant figures in your religion suggests the power of this new visual movement.



Masaccio, The Trinity with the Virgin, St. John the Evangelist, and Donors, 1425, fresco, 21’9” x 9’4”, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. PD US

In his buon fresco *Trinity*, Masaccio shows a Classical barrel-vaulted space with a coffered ceiling viewed through a Roman arch with Corinthian capitals. There we see the Holy Trinity – God, the Holy Spirit (the white dove under God’s face), and Jesus with the Virgin and St. John on either side. Outside the sacred space are two more figures – the donors who have not been identified by art historians. The fresco continues below the level of the donors with a grisaille painting of a sarcophagus on the lid of which is a skeleton and an inscription that reads “As you are I once was; as I am so shall ye be.” This vanitas figure reminds viewers of the purpose of the image they see above them. Masaccio’s use of linear perspective in the coffered ceiling tells us that we are situated at about eye-level with the base the donors kneel on. This creation of a space that seemingly extends beyond our own and into which we could step if we could read it was a popular and influential composition for Renaissance fresco painting.

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4.6: High Renaissance

The High Renaissance was centered in Rome, and lasted from about 1490 to 1527, with the end of the period marked by the Sack of Rome. Stylistically, painters during this period were influenced by classical art, and their works were harmonious. The restrained beauty of a High Renaissance painting is created when all of the parts and details of the work support the cohesive whole. While earlier Renaissance artists would stress the perspective of a work, or the technical aspects of a painting, High Renaissance artists were willing to sacrifice technical principles in order to create a more beautiful, harmonious whole. The factors that contributed to the development of High Renaissance painting were twofold. Traditionally, Italian artists had painted in tempera paint. During the High Renaissance, artists began to use oil paints, which are easier to manipulate and allow the artist to create softer forms. Additionally, the number and diversity of patrons increased, which allowed for greater development in art.

The High Renaissance represents the culmination of the goals of the Early Renaissance, namely the realistic representation of figures in space rendered with credible motion and in an appropriately decorous style. The most well known artists from this phase are Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, and Michelangelo. Their paintings and frescoes are among the most widely known works of art in the world. Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, Raphael's *The School of Athens* and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Ceiling paintings are the masterpieces of this period and embody the elements of the High Renaissance.



Marriage (Betrothal) of the Virgin, by Raphael: The painting depicts a marriage ceremony between Mary and Joseph. PD-US

Painting in the High Renaissance

The 16th century (1500's) is considered to be the high point in the development of Renaissance art. We look mainly at three figures from this period: Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. This is the moment when artists begin to be recognized for their skill and sought after accordingly. The term "genius" is used for these figures. Giorgio Vasari, in possibly the first art history text, *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, allies the talents of artists like Michelangelo with the Divine – literally, touched by God.

Leonardo Da Vinci

Leonardo was the oldest of the three. Born in the Tuscan town of Vinci – Italian artists are often called after their place of origin – he was apprenticed at 14 to the Florentine artist Verrochio. This was one of the most successful studiolos in Florence with the

Medicis as patrons among others. Perugino and Botticelli were also associated with Verrocchio's studio.2 Leonardo painted very few actual paintings in his lifetime. He made money inventing weapons, waterworks and other things for wealthy condotierri and others as his many notebooks attest. His paintings were, however, of such a unique quality that they are revered today.

His *Madonna of the Rocks*, from 1491 – 99, and 1506 – 08, shows his skill with glazes of oil paint and manipulation of light to create the **sfumato**, or smoky softness, of the edges of things.



Leonardo da Vinci and workshop, Virgin of the Rocks, c. 1491-99, 1506-08, oil on poplar wood, 74.6 x 47.2", National Gallery, London. PD-US



Leonardo da Vinci, Madonna and Child with Saint Anne, c. 1503-06, oil on wood, 5’61/8” x 3’8”, Louvre. By C2RMF (digitizaed) / user:Dcoetzee (retouched) – original file: C2RMF: Galerie de tableaux en très haute définition: image page, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/inde...curid=15474941

The Madonna and Child with St. Anne uses the compositional device of the triangle to arrange the figures of a grown woman on another’s lap in a typically Renaissance rational, geometric arrangement.

The Last Supper

Da Vinci’s most celebrated painting of the 1490s is *The Last Supper*, which was painted for the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan. The painting depicts the last meal shared by Jesus and the 12 Apostles where he announces that one of them will betray him. When finished, the painting was acclaimed as a masterpiece of design. This work demonstrates something that da Vinci did very well: taking a very traditional subject matter, such as the Last Supper, and completely re-inventing it.

Prior to this moment in art history, every representation of the Last Supper followed the same visual tradition: Jesus and the Apostles seated at a table. Judas is placed on the opposite side of the table of everyone else and is effortlessly identified by the viewer. When da Vinci painted The Last Supper he placed Judas on the same side of the table as Christ and the Apostles, who are shown reacting to Jesus as he announces that one of them will betray him. They are depicted as alarmed, upset, and trying to determine who will commit the act. The viewer also has to determine which figure is Judas, who will betray Christ. By depicting the scene in this manner, da Vinci has infused psychology into the work.

Unfortunately, this masterpiece of the Renaissance began to deteriorate immediately after da Vinci finished painting, due largely to the painting technique that he had chosen. Instead of using the technique of fresco, da Vinci had used tempera over a ground that was mainly gesso in an attempt to bring the subtle effects of oil paint to fresco. His new technique was not successful, and resulted in a surface that was subject to mold and flaking.



The Last Supper: Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper, although much deteriorated, demonstrates the painter’s mastery of the human form in figurative composition. PD-US

Where do the orthogonals lead in the one-point linear perspective in this painting?

Mona Lisa

Among the works created by da Vinci in the 16th century is the small portrait known as the *Mona Lisa*, or *La Gioconda*, wife of Francesco del Giocondo who commissioned the painting (but never got it). In the present era it is arguably the most famous painting in the world. Its fame rests, in particular, on the elusive smile on the woman's face—its mysterious quality brought about perhaps by the fact that the artist has subtly shadowed the corners of the mouth and eyes so that the exact nature of the smile cannot be determined.

The shadowy quality for which the work is renowned came to be called sfumato, the application of subtle layers or "glazes" of translucent paint so that there is no visible transition between colors, tones, and often objects. Other characteristics found in this work are the unadorned dress, in which the eyes and hands have no competition from other details; the dramatic landscape background, in which the world seems to be in a state of flux; the subdued coloring; and the extremely smooth nature of the painterly technique, employing oils, but applied much like tempera and blended on the surface so that the brushstrokes are indistinguishable. And again, da Vinci is innovating upon a type of painting here. Portraits were very common in the Renaissance. However, portraits of women were always in profile, which was seen as proper and modest. Here, da Vinci present a portrait of a woman who not only faces the viewer but follows them with her eyes.



Mona Lisa: In the Mona Lisa, da Vinci incorporates his sfumato technique to create a shadowy quality. PD-US

Sculpture in the High Renaissance

Sculpture in the High Renaissance demonstrates the influence of classical antiquity and ideal naturalism.

During the Renaissance, an artist was not just a painter, or an architect, or a sculptor. They were typically all three. As a result, we see the same prominent names producing sculpture and the great Renaissance paintings. Additionally, the themes and goals of High Renaissance sculpture are very much the same as High Renaissance painting. Sculptors during the High Renaissance were deliberately quoting classical precedents and they aimed for ideal naturalism in their works. Michelangelo (1475–1564) is the prime example of a sculptor during the Renaissance; his works best demonstrate the goals and ideals of the High Renaissance sculptor.

Michelangelo

Bacchus

The *Bacchus* is Michelangelo's first recorded commission in Rome. The work is made of marble, it is life sized, and it is carved in the round. The sculpture is of the god of wine, who is holding a cup and appears drunk. The references to classical antiquity are clear in the subject matter, and the body of the god is based on the Apollo Belvedere, which Michelangelo would have seen while in Rome. Not only is the subject matter influenced by antiquity, but so are the artistic influences.



Apollo Belvedere, ca. 120-140 CE; copy of bronze original of ca. 350-325 BCE, marble, Vatican CC BY- SA Livioandronico2013



Bacchus by Michelangelo, 1496–97: Bacchus is Michelangelo's first recorded commission in Rome. The statue clearly demonstrates the classical influence that became so important to sculptors during the High Renaissance. PD-US

Pieta

While the *Pieta* is not based on classical antiquity in subject matter, the forms display the restrained beauty and ideal naturalism that was influenced by classical sculpture. Commissioned by a French Cardinal for his tomb in Old St. Peter's, it is the work that made Michelangelo's reputation. The subject matter of the Virgin cradling Christ after the crucifixion was uncommon in the Italian Renaissance, indicating that it was chosen by the patron.



Pieta by Michelangelo, 1498–9: This work by Michelangelo demonstrates the classical beauty and idealism that characterizes sculptures of the High Renaissance. PD-US

David

When the *David* was completed, it was intended to be sit on the roofline of the Florentine Cathedral. But Florentines during that time recognized it as so special and beautiful that they actually had a meeting about where to place the sculpture. Members of the group that met included the artists Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli. What about this work made it stand out so spectacularly to Michelangelo's peers? The work demonstrates classical influence. The work is nude, in emulation of Greek and Roman sculptures, and the *David* stands in a contrapposto pose. He shows restrained beauty and ideal naturalism. Additionally, the work demonstrates an **interest in psychology**, which was new to the High Renaissance, as Michelangelo depicts David concentrating in the moments before he takes down the giant. The subject matter was also very special to Florence as David was traditionally a civic symbol. The work was ultimately placed in the Palazzo Vecchio and remains the prime example of High Renaissance sculpture.





David by Michelangelo, c.1504: This work by Michelangelo remains the prime example of High Renaissance sculpture. Detail CC BY-SA 3.0 Jorg Bittner Unna

Michelangelo believed sculpture to be the purest, highest form of art. Nevertheless, he is just as well-known for the fresco paintings he did for a number of popes. In 1508 Pope Julius II asked Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Ceiling in the Vatican. He offered him the chance to do all the sculpture on his, Julius', tomb in return. Reluctantly, Michelangelo agreed and created one of the most iconic set of images in the Western canon.

The program is drawn from the Old Testament, but as in much of Christian imagery it prefigures the New. Prophets and Sibyls line the ceiling foretelling the coming of the Christian Messiah. Stories, like that of Jonah and the Whale (dead for 3 days then alive again) prefigure the Resurrection. Down the center Michelangelo has created individual frames with the stories from Genesis – God creating Adam is possibly the best-known. Michelangelo creates heroic Classical male bodies that suggest the sculpture he would rather have been making. Dividing each frame and perched on plinths are male youths called "ignudi" whose purpose is not clear. For a basic introduction to the Sistine Ceiling from the Khan Academy see:



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Raphael

Raphael Sanza was an Italian Renaissance painter and architect whose work is admired for its clarity of form and ease of composition.

Key Points

- Together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael forms the traditional trinity of great masters of the High Renaissance. He was enormously productive, running an unusually large workshop, and despite his death at 30, he had a large body of work.
- Some of Raphael's most striking artistic influences come from the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci; because of this inspiration, Raphael gave his figures more dynamic and complex positions in his earlier compositions.
- Raphael's "Stanze" masterpieces are very large and complex compositions that have been regarded among the supreme works of the High Renaissance. They give a highly idealized depiction of the forms represented, and the compositions, though very carefully conceived in drawings, achieve *sprezzatura*, the art of performing a task so gracefully it looks effortless.

Key Terms

- **sprezzatura**: The art of performing a difficult task so gracefully that it looks effortless.
- **loggia**: A roofed, open gallery.
- **contrapposto**: The position of a figure whose hips and legs are twisted away from the direction of the head and shoulders.

Overview

Raphael (1483–1520) was an Italian painter and architect of the High Renaissance. His work is admired for its clarity of form and ease of composition and for its visual achievement of the Neoplatonic ideal of human grandeur. Together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael forms the traditional trinity of great masters of that period. He was enormously productive, running an unusually large workshop; despite his death at 30, a large body of his work remains among the most famous of High Renaissance art.

Influences

Some of Raphael's most striking artistic influences come from the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci. In response to da Vinci's work, in some of Raphael's earlier compositions he gave his figures more dynamic and complex positions. For example, Raphael's *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (1507) borrows from the contrapposto pose of da Vinci's *Leda and the Swans*. Note the white wing of the swan as it folds around Leda's body.



Leonardo da Vinci, Leda and the Swan, c. 1510-15, oil on panel, 44.1 x 33.9". Galleria Borghese PD Web Gallery of Art: Image, Info about artwork



Saint Catherine of Alexandria: Saint Catherine of Alexandria (1507) borrows from the contrapposto pose of da Vinci's Leda. PD-US

While Raphael was also aware of Michelangelo's works, he deviates from his style. In his *Deposition of Christ*, Raphael draws on classical sarcophagi to spread the figures across the front of the picture space in a complex and not wholly successful arrangement.



The Deposition by Raphael, 1507: This painting depicts the body of Christ being carried and a woman fainting. PD-US

The Stanze Rooms and the Loggia

In 1511, Raphael began work on the famous Stanze paintings, which made a stunning impact on Roman art, and are generally regarded as his greatest masterpieces. The Stanza della Segnatura contains *The School of Athens*, *Poetry*, *Disputa*, and *Law*. *The School of Athens*, depicting Plato and Aristotle, is one of his best known works. These very large and complex compositions have been regarded ever since as among the supreme works of the High Renaissance, and the "classic art" of the post-antique West.

They give a highly idealized depiction of the forms represented, and the compositions—though very carefully conceived in drawings— achieve *sprezzatura*, a term invented by Raphael's friend Castiglione, who defined it as "a certain nonchalance that conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and effortless."



Raphael, School of Athens, 1511, Stanze della Segnatura, Rome. PD-US

View of the Stanze della Segnatura, frescoes painted by Raphael

In the later phase of Raphael's career, he designed and painted the Loggia at the Vatican, a long thin gallery that was open to a courtyard on one side and decorated with Roman style grottos, or cave-like garden ornaments. He also produced a number of significant altarpieces, including *The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia* and the *Sistine Madonna*. His last work, on which he was working until his death, was a large *Transfiguration* which, together with *Il Spasimo(Christ Falling on the Way to Calvary)*, shows the direction his art was taking in his final years, becoming more proto-Baroque than Mannerist.

The Master's studio

Raphael ran a workshop of over 50 pupils and assistants, many of whom later became significant artists in their own right. This was arguably the largest workshop team assembled under any single old master painter, and much higher than the norm. They included established masters from other parts of Italy, probably working with their own teams as sub-contractors, as well as pupils and journeymen.

Draftsman

Raphael was one of the finest draftsmen in the history of Western art, and used drawings extensively to plan his compositions. According to a near-contemporary, when beginning to plan a composition, he would lay out a large number of his stock drawings on the floor, and begin to draw "rapidly," borrowing figures from here and there. Over 40 sketches survive for the *Disputa* in the Stanze, and there may well have been many more originally (over 400 sheets survived altogether).

As evidenced in his sketches for the *Madonna and Child*, Raphael used different drawings to refine his poses and compositions, apparently to a greater extent than most other painters. Most of Raphael's drawings are rather precise—even initial sketches with naked outline figures are carefully drawn, and later drawings often have a high degree of finish, with shading and sometimes highlights in white. They lack the freedom and energy of some of da Vinci's and Michelangelo's sketches, but are almost always very satisfying aesthetically.



Raphael Sketch: This drawing shows Raphael's efforts in developing the composition for the Madonna and Child

Renaissance Architecture in Florence

Renaissance architecture first developed in Florence in the 15th century and represented a conscious revival of classical styles.

Key Points

- The Renaissance style of architecture emerged in Florence not as a slow evolution from preceding styles, but rather as a conscious development put into motion by architects seeking to revive the golden age of classical antiquity.
- The Renaissance style eschewed the complex proportional systems and irregular profiles of Gothic structures, and placed emphasis on symmetry, proportion, geometry, and regularity of parts.
- 15th century architecture in Florence featured the use of classical elements such as orderly arrangements of columns, pilasters, lintels, semicircular arches, and hemispherical domes.
- Filippo Brunelleschi was the first to develop a true Renaissance architecture.
- While the enormous brick dome that covers the central space of the Florence Cathedral used Gothic technology, it was the first dome erected since classical Rome and became a ubiquitous feature in Renaissance churches.
- The buildings of the early Renaissance in Florence expressed a new sense of light, clarity, and spaciousness that reflected the enlightenment and clarity of mind glorified by the philosophy of Humanism.

Key Terms

- **quattrocento**: Term that denotes the 1400s, which may also be referred to as the 15th century Renaissance Italian period.
- **entablature**: The part of a classical temple above the capitals of the columns; includes the architrave, frieze, and cornice but not the roof.
- **pilaster**: A rectangular column that projects partially from the wall to which it is attached; it gives the appearance of a support, but is only for decoration.

The Quattrocento, or the 15th century in Florence, was marked by the development of the Renaissance style of architecture, which represented a conscious revival and development of ancient Greek and Roman architectural elements. The rules of Renaissance architecture were first formulated and put into practice in 15th century Florence, whose buildings subsequently served as an inspiration to architects throughout Italy and Western Europe.

The Renaissance style of architecture emerged in Florence not as a slow evolution from preceding styles, but rather as a conscious development put into motion by architects seeking to revive a golden age. These architects were sponsored by wealthy patrons including the powerful Medici family and the Silk Guild, and approached their craft from an organized and scholarly perspective that coincided with a general revival of classical learning. The Renaissance style deliberately eschewed the complex proportional systems and irregular profiles of Gothic structures. Instead, Renaissance architects placed emphasis on symmetry, proportion, geometry, and regularity of parts as demonstrated in classical Roman architecture. They also made considerable use of classical antique features such as orderly arrangements of columns, pilasters, lintels, semicircular arches, and hemispherical domes.

The person generally credited with originating the Renaissance style of architecture is Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), whose first major commission—the enormous brick dome that covers the central space of the Florence Cathedral—was also perhaps architecturally the most significant. Known as the *Duomo*, the dome was engineered by Brunelleschi to cover a spanning in the already existing Cathedral. The dome retains the Gothic pointed arch and the Gothic ribs in its design. The dome is structurally influenced by the great domes of Ancient Rome such as the Pantheon, and it is often described as the first building of the Renaissance. The dome is made of red brick and was ingeniously constructed without supports, using a deep understanding of the laws of physics and mathematics. It remains the largest masonry dome in the world and was such an unprecedented success at its time that the dome became an indispensable element in church and even secular architecture thereafter. Khan Academy gives a good, brief overview of what it took for Brunelleschi to create the dome on the Florence Cathedral:



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Duomo of Florence: The Florence Cathedral is the first example of a true dome in Renaissance architecture

Another key figure in the development of Renaissance architecture in Florence was Leon Battista Alberti (1402—1472), an important Humanist theoretician and designer, whose book on architecture *De re aedificatoria* was the first architectural treatise of the Renaissance. Alberti designed two of Florence's best known 15th century buildings: the Palazzo Rucellai and the facade of the church of Santa Maria Novella. The Palazzo Rucellai, a palatial townhouse built 1446–51, typified the newly developing features of Renaissance architecture, including a classical ordering of columns over three levels and the use of pilasters and entablatures in proportional relationship to each other.



Palazzo Rucellai, Florence: Designed by Leon Battista Alberti between 1446–1451

The buildings of the early Renaissance in Florence expressed a new sense of light, clarity, and spaciousness that reflected the enlightenment and clarity of mind glorified by the philosophy of Humanism.

The Venetian Painters of the High Renaissance

Giorgione, Titian, and Veronese were the preeminent Venetian painters of the High Renaissance.

Key Points

- The Venetian High Renaissance artists Giorgione, Titian, and Veronese employed novel techniques of color, scale, and composition, which established them as acclaimed artists north of Rome.
- In particular, these three painters followed the Venetian School ‘s preference of color (colorito) over disegno.
- Giorgio Barbarelli da Castlefranco, known as Giorgione (c. 1477–1510), is an artist who had considerable impact on the Venetian High Renaissance. Giorgione was the first to paint with oil on canvas.
- Tiziano Vecelli, or Titian (1490–1576), was arguably the most important member of the Venetian school, as well as one of the most versatile. His use of color would have a profound influence not only on painters of the Italian Renaissance, but on future generations in Western art.
- Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) was one of the primary Renaissance painters in Venice, known for his paintings such as *The Wedding at Cana* and T*he Feast in the House ofLevi*.

Key Terms

- **disegno**: Drawing or design, linear style.
- **colorito**: color and painterly brushwork.
- **Venetian School**: The distinctive, thriving, and influential art scene in Venice, Italy, starting from the late 15th century.

Giorgione, Titian, and Veronese were the preeminent painters of the Venetian High Renaissance. All three similarly employed novel techniques of color and composition, which established them as acclaimed artists north of Rome. In particular, Giorgione, Titian, and Veronese follows the Venetian School’s preference of color over disegno.

Giorgione

Giorgio Barbarelli da Castlefranco, known as Giorgione (c. 1477–1510), is an artist who had considerable impact on the Venetian High Renaissance. Unfortunately, art historians do not know much about Giorgione, partly because of his early death at around age 30, and partly because artists in Venice were not as individualistic as artists in Florence. While only six paintings are accredited to him, they demonstrate his importance in the history of art as well as his innovations in painting.

Giorgione was the first to paint with oil on canvas. Previously, people who used oils were painting on panel, not canvas. His works do not contain much under-drawing, demonstrating how he did not adhere to Florentine disegno, and his subject matters remain elusive and mysterious. One of his works that demonstrates all three of these elements is *The Tempest* (c. 1505–1510). This work is oil on canvas, x-rays show there is very little under drawing, and the subject matter remains one of the most debated issues in art history.



The Tempest, c, 1505–1510, Giorgione.: This work by Giorgione encapsulates all of the innovations he brought to painting during the Venetian High Renaissance and remains one of the most debated paintings of all time for its elusive subject matter. PD-US

Titian

Tiziano Vecelli, or Titian (1490–1576), was arguably the most important member of the 16th century Venetian school, as well as one of the most versatile; he was equally adept with portraits, landscape backgrounds, and mythological and religious subjects. His painting methods, particularly in the application and use of color, would have a profound influence not only on painters of the Italian Renaissance, but on future generations of Western art. Over the course of his long life Titian's artistic manner changed drastically, but he retained a lifelong interest in color. Although his mature works may not contain the vivid, luminous tints of his early pieces, their loose brushwork and subtlety of polychromatic modulations were without precedent.

In 1516, Titian completed his well-known masterpiece, the *Assumption of the Virgin*, or the *Assunta*, for the high altar of the church of the Frari. This extraordinary piece of colorism, executed on a grand scale rarely before seen in Italy, created a sensation. The pictorial structure of the *Assumption*—uniting in the same composition two or three scenes superimposed on different levels, earth and heaven, the temporal and the infinite.



Assunta, Titian: It took Titian two years (1516–1518) to complete his Assunta. The painting's dynamic three-tier composition and color scheme established him as the preeminent painter north of Rome. PD-US

Veronese

Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) was one of the primary Renaissance painters in Venice, well known for paintings such as *The Wedding at Cana* and *The Feast in the House of Levi.* Veronese is known as a supreme colorist, and for his illusionistic decorations in both fresco and oil. His most famous works are elaborate narrative cycles, executed in the dramatic and colorful style, full of majestic architectural settings and glittering pageantry.

His large paintings of biblical feasts executed for the refectories of monasteries in Venice and Verona are especially notable. For example, in *The Wedding at Cana*, which was painted in 1562–1563 in collaboration with Palladio, Veronese arranged the architecture to run mostly parallel to the picture plane, accentuating the processional character of the composition. The artist's decorative genius was to recognize that dramatic perspective effects would have been tiresome in a living room or chapel, and that the narrative of the picture could best be absorbed as a colorful diversion.

The Feast in the House of Levi was originally meant as a Last Supper. The Counter- Reformation church found it not to display the proper decorum and called Veronese before the Inquisition. Rather than repaint his masterpiece, Veronese changed the name to a story that put Christ in the colorful company of ordinary people. Christ would say when questioned about why he would want to rub shoulders with such rabble that he wasn't needed by the already converted. The Inquisition couldn't argue with that.



Paolo Veronese, Feast in the House of Levi, 2nd third of 16th c., oil on canvas, 218.5 x 503.9”, Accademia of Venice. PD The Yorck Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei. DVD-ROM, 2002. ISBN 3936122202. Distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH

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4.7: Northern Renaissance and Mannerism

Before 1450, Renaissance humanism had little influence outside Italy; after 1450, these ideas began to spread throughout Europe.

Key Points

- Humanism influenced the Renaissance periods in Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, and Poland. There were also other national and localized movements, each with different characteristics and strengths.
- Although Renaissance humanism and the large number of surviving classical artworks and monuments in Italy encouraged many Italian painters to explore Greco-Roman themes, Northern Renaissance painters developed other subject matters, such as landscape and genre painting.

Key Terms

- **Northern Renaissance:** The Northern Renaissance describes the Renaissance as it occurred in northern Europe.
- **Triptych**: painting with 3 parts; usually an altarpiece with wings that fold in on the main image.

The Northern Renaissance describes the Renaissance in northern Europe. Before 1450, Renaissance humanism had little influence outside Italy; however, after 1450 these ideas began to spread across Europe. The pictorial ideas of the Italian Renaissance such as linear perspective took about 75 years to reach the North. This influenced the Renaissance periods in Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, and Poland. There were also other national and localized movements. Each of these regional expressions of the Renaissance evolved with different characteristics and strengths. In some areas, the Northern Renaissance was distinct from the Italian Renaissance in its centralization of political power. While Italy and Germany were dominated by independent city-states, parts of central and Western Europe began emerging as nation-states. The Northern Renaissance was also closely linked to the Protestant Reformation, and the long series of internal and external conflicts between various Protestant groups and the Roman Catholic Church had lasting effects.

As in Italy, the decline of feudalism opened the way for the cultural, social, and economic changes associated with the Renaissance in northern Europe. Northern painters in the 16th century increasingly looked to Rome for influence, and became known as the Romanists. The High Renaissance art of Michelangelo and Raphael and the stylistic tendencies of Mannerism had a significant impact on their work. Although Renaissance humanism and the large number of surviving classical artworks and monuments in Italy encouraged many Italian painters to explore. Greco-Roman themes, Northern Renaissance painters developed other subject matter, such as landscape and genre painting.



Danae by Jan Mabuse: One of the most well-known Romanists was Jan Mabuse. The influence of Michelangelo and Raphael showed in the use of mythology and nudity in this particular piece

As Renaissance art styles moved through northern Europe, they were adapted to local customs. For example, in England and the northern Netherlands, the Reformation nearly ended the tradition of religious painting. In France, the School of Fontainebleau, which was originally founded by Italians such as Rosso Fiorentino, succeeded in establishing a durable national style. Finally, by

the end of the 16th century, artists such as Karel van Mander and Hendrik Goltzius collected in Haarlem in a brief but intense phase of Northern Mannerism that also spread to Flanders.

Impact of the Protestant Reformation

The Reformation was a religious movement in the 16th century that resulted in the theological divide between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Key Points

- Art that portrayed religious figures or scenes followed Protestant theology by depicting people and stories accurately and clearly and emphasized salvation through divine grace, rather than through personal deeds, or by intervention of church bureaucracy.
- Reformation art embraced Protestant values, although the amount of religious art produced in Protestant countries was hugely reduced. Instead, many artists in Protestant countries diversified into secular forms of art like history painting, landscapes, portraiture, and still life.
- The Protestant Reformation induced a wave of iconoclasm, or the destruction of religious imagery, among the more radical evangelists.
- The Northern style was characterized by the inclusion of decorative objects and detail.

- **Protestant Reformation**: The 16th century schism within Western Christianity initiated by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other early Protestants; characterized by the objection to the doctrines, rituals, and ecclesiastical structure of the Roman Catholic Church and led to the creation of Protestant churches, which were outside of the control of the Vatican.
- **iconoclasm**: The belief in, participation in, or sanction of destroying religious icons and other symbols or monuments, usually with religious or political motives.

The Protestant Reformation and Art

The Protestant Reformation was a religious movement that occurred in Western Europe during the 16th century that resulted in the theological divide between Roman Catholics and Protestants. It began with the nailing of his 95 Theses to the church door in 1517 by Martin Luther which set out his argument with many of the practices of the Catholic Church like the selling of indulgences. This movement created a North-South split in Europe, where generally Northern countries became Protestant, while Southern countries remained Catholic. Protestant theology centered on the individual relationship between the worshiper and the divine, and accordingly, the Reformation's artistic movement focused on the individual's personal relationship with God. This was reflected in a number of common people and day-to-day scenes depicted in art.

The Reformation ushered in a new artistic tradition that highlighted the Protestant belief system and diverged drastically from southern European humanist art produced during the High Renaissance. Reformation art embraced Protestant values, although the amount of religious art produced in Protestant countries was hugely reduced (largely because a huge patron for the arts—the Catholic Church— was no longer active in these countries). Instead, many artists in Protestant countries diversified into secular forms of art like history painting, landscapes, portraiture, and still life.

Art that portrayed religious figures or scenes followed Protestant theology by depicting people and stories accurately and clearly and emphasized salvation through divine grace, rather than through personal deeds, or by intervention of church bureaucracy. This is the direct influence of one major criticism of the Catholic Church during the Reformation—that painters created biblical scenes that strayed from their true story, were hard to identify, and were embellished with painterly effects instead of focusing on the theological message. In terms of subject matter, iconic images of Christ and scenes from the Passion became less frequent, as did portrayals of the saints and clergy. Instead, narrative scenes from the Bible and moralistic depictions of modern life became prevalent.

The Protestant Reformation also capitalized on the popularity of printmaking in northern Europe. Printmaking allowed images to be mass produced and widely available to the public at low cost. The Protestant church was therefore able to bring their theology to the people through portable, inexpensive visual media. This allowed for the widespread availability of visually persuasive imagery. With the great development of the engraving and printmaking market in Antwerp in the 16th century, the public was provided with accessible and affordable images. Many artists provided drawings to book and print publishers.

Iconoclasm and Resistance to Idolatry

All forms of Protestantism showed a degree of hostility to religious images, especially sculpture and large paintings, considering them forms of idol worship. After the early years of the Reformation, artists in Protestant areas painted far fewer religious subjects for public display, partly because religious art had long been associated with the Catholic Church. Although, there was a conscious effort to develop a Protestant iconography of Bible images in book illustrations and prints. During the early Reformation, some artists made paintings for churches that depicted the leaders of the Reformation in ways very similar to Catholic saints. Later, Protestant taste turned away from the display of religious scenes in churches, although some continued to be displayed in homes.

There was also a reaction against images from classical mythology, the other manifestation of the High Renaissance at the time. This brought about a style that was more directly related to accurately portraying the present times. For example, Bruegel's *Wedding Feast* portrays a Flemish-peasant wedding dinner in a barn. It makes no reference to any religious, historical, or classical events, and merely gives insight into the everyday life of the Flemish peasant.



Bruegel's Peasant Wedding: Bruegael's Peasant Wedding is a painting that captures the Protestant Reformation artistic tradition: focusing on scenes from modern life rather than religious or classical themes. PD-Art

The Protestant Reformation induced a wave of iconoclasm, or the destruction of religious imagery, among the more radical evangelists. Protestant leaders, especially Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin, actively eliminated imagery from their churches and regarded the great majority of religious images as idolatrous—even plain crosses. On the other hand, Martin Luther encouraged the display of a restricted range of religious imagery in churches which gave rise to iconoclasm across the Protestant countries. For the most part, however, Reformation iconoclasm resulted in a disappearance of religious figurative art, compared with the number of secular pieces that emerged.



Iconoclasm: Catholic Altar Piece: Altar piece in St. Martin's Cathedral, Utrecht, attacked in the Protestant iconoclasm in 1572. This retable became visible again after restoration in 1919 removed the false wall placed in front of it

Antwerp: A Center of the Northern Renaissance

Antwerp, located in Belgium, was a center for art in the Netherlands and northern Europe for much of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Key Points

- The Antwerp School for painting flourished during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Antwerp School comprised many generations of artists and is known for portraiture, animal paintings, still lifes, and prints.
- Antwerp Mannerism bore no relation to Renaissance Mannerism, but the name suggests a reaction to the "classic" style of the earlier Flemish painters. Although attempts have been made to identify individual artists, most paintings remain attributed to anonymous masters.
- Antwerp was an internationally significant publishing center, with prodigious production of old master prints and book illustrations. Furthermore, Antwerp animaliers, or animal painters, such as Frans Snyders, Jan Fyt, and Paul de Vos, dominated animal painting in Europe.

Key Terms

- **Antwerp School**: The Antwerp School is a term for the artists active in Antwerp, first during the 16th century when the city was the economic center of the Low Countries, and then during the 17th century when it became the artistic stronghold of the Flemish Baroque under Peter Paul Rubens.
- **Antwerp**: A province of Flanders, Belgium.

Antwerp, located in present-day Belgium, was a center for art in the Netherlands and northern Europe for much of the 16th and 17th centuries. The so-called Antwerp School for painting flourished during the 16th century when the city was the economic center of the Low Countries, and again during the 17th century when it became the artistic stronghold of the Flemish Baroque. The Antwerp School comprised many generations of artists and is known for portraiture, animal paintings, still lifes, and prints.

Antwerp became the main trading and commercial center of the Low Countries around 1500, and the boost in the economy attracted many artists to the cities to join craft guilds. For example, many 16th century painters, artists, and craftsmen joined the Guild of Saint Luke, which educated apprentices and guaranteed quality. The first school of artists to emerge in the city were the Antwerp Mannerists, a group of anonymous late Gothic painters active in the city from about 1500 to 1520.

Antwerp Mannerism bore no direct relation to Renaissance or Italian Mannerism, but the name suggests a style that was a reaction to the “classic” style of the earlier Flemish painters. Although attempts have been made to identify individual artists, most paintings remain attributed to anonymous masters. Characteristic of Antwerp Mannerism are paintings that combine early Netherlandish and Northern Renaissance styles, and incorporate both Flemish and Italian traditions into the same compositions. Practitioners of the style frequently painted subjects such as the Adoration of the Magi and the Nativity, both of which are generally represented as night scenes, crowded with figures and dramatically illuminated. The Adoration scenes were especially popular with the Antwerp Mannerists, who delighted in the patterns of the elaborate clothes worn by the Magi and the ornamentation of the architectural ruins in which the scene was set. That level of detail in patterning is characteristic of the North at this moment.



The Adoration of the Kings by Jan Gossaert: This painting captures the Antwerp Mannerist tradition of using religious themes, particularly the Adoration of the Magi, for inspiration

The iconoclastic riots (“Beeldenstorm” in Dutch) of 1566 that preceded the Dutch Revolt resulted in the destruction of many works of religious art, after which time the churches and monasteries had to be refurnished and redecorated. Artists such as Otto van Veen and members of the Francken family, working in a late Mannerist style, provided new religious decoration. These also marked the beginning of economic decline in the city, as the Scheldt river was blockaded by the Dutch Republic in 1585 and trade restricted.

The city experienced an artistic renewal in the 17th century. The large workshops of Peter Paul Rubens and Jacob Jordaens, along with the influence of Anthony van Dyck, made Antwerp the center of the Flemish Baroque. The city was an internationally significant publishing center, with prodigious production of old master prints and book illustrations. Furthermore, Antwerp animaliers or animal painters, such as Frans Snyders, Jan Fyt, and Paul de Vos, dominated animal painting in Europe for at least the first half of the century. But as the economy continued to decline, and the Habsburg nobility and the Church reduced their patronage, many artists trained in Antwerp left for the Netherlands, England, France, or elsewhere. By the end of the 17th century, Antwerp was no longer a major artistic center.



Hunting Trophies: Jan Fyt, a member of the Antwerp School, was well known for the use of animal motifs in his paintings

Mannerism

High Renaissance painting evolved into Mannerism in Florence. Mannerist artists, who consciously rebelled against the principles of High Renaissance, tended to represent elongated figures in illogical spaces. Modern scholarship has recognized the capacity of Mannerist art to convey strong, often religious, emotion where the High Renaissance failed to do so. Some of the main artists of this period are Pontormo, Bronzino, Rosso Fiorentino, Parmigianino and Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano.

Mannerist artists began to reject the harmony and ideal proportions of the Renaissance in favor of irrational settings, artificial colors, unclear subject matters, and elongated forms.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the Mannerist style, how it differs from the Renaissance, and reasons why it emerged.

Key Points

- Mannerism came after the High Renaissance and before the Baroque.
- The artists who came a generation after Raphael and Michelangelo had a dilemma. They could not surpass the great works that had already been created by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. This is when we start to see Mannerism emerge.
- Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557) represents the shift from the Renaissance to the Mannerist style.
- Mannerist painting encompasses a variety of approaches influenced by, and reacting to, the harmonious ideals and restrained naturalism associated with High Renaissance artists. Mannerism is notable for its intellectual sophistication as well as its artificial (as opposed to naturalistic) qualities.
- Mannerism developed in both Florence and Rome, from around 1520 until about 1580. The early Mannerist painters are notable for elongated forms, precariously balanced poses, a collapsed perspective, irrational settings, and theatrical lighting.

Key Terms

- **Mannerism**: Style of art in Europe from c. 1520–1600. Mannerism came after the High Renaissance and before the Baroque. Not every artist painting during this period is considered a Mannerist artist.
- **Sack of Rome:** A military event carried out on May 6, 1527 by the mutinous troops of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor in Rome.

Style

What makes a work of art Mannerist? First we must understand the ideals and goals of the Renaissance. During the Renaissance artists were engaging with classical antiquity in a new way. In addition, they developed theories on perspective, and in all ways strived to create works of art that were perfect, harmonious, and showed ideal depictions of the natural world. Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo are considered the artists who reached the greatest achievements in art during the Renaissance.

The Renaissance stressed harmony and beauty and no one could create more beautiful works than the great three artists listed above. The artists who came a generation after had a dilemma; they could not surpass the great works that had already been created by da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. This is when we start to see Mannerism emerge. Younger artists trying to do something new and different began to reject harmony and ideal proportions in favor of irrational settings, artificial colors, unclear subject matters, and elongated forms.

Mannerism developed in both Florence and Rome. The early Mannerist painters in Florence—especially Jacopo da Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino, both students of Andrea del Sarto—are notable for using elongated forms, precariously balanced poses, a collapsed perspective, irrational settings, and theatrical lighting. Parmigianino (a student of Correggio) and Giulio Romano (Raphael's head assistant) were moving in similarly stylized aesthetic directions in Rome. These artists had matured under the influence of the High Renaissance, and their style has been characterized as a reaction or exaggerated extension of it.

Jacopo da Pontormo

Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557) represents the shift from the Renaissance to the Mannerist style. Take for example his *Deposition from the Cross*, an altarpiece that was painted for a chapel in the Church of Santa Felicita, Florence. The figures of Mary and Jesus appear to be a direct reference to Michelangelo's *Pieta*. Although the work is called a "*Deposition,*" there is no cross. Scholars also refer to this work as the "Entombment" but there is no tomb. This lack of clarity on subject matter is a hallmark of Mannerist painting. In addition, the setting is irrational, almost as if it is not in this world, and the colors are far from naturalistic. This work could not have been produced by a Renaissance artist. The Mannerist movement stresses different goals and this work of art by Pontormo demonstrates this new, and different style.



Pontormo, Deposition from the Cross, 1525-1528, Church of Santa Felicita, Florence: This work of art by Pontormo demonstrates the hallmarks of the Mannerist style: unclear subject matter, irrational setting, and artificial colors. PD-Art



Madonna with the Long Neck: In Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck (1534–40), Mannerism makes itself known by elongated proportions, highly stylized poses, and lack of clear perspective. PD-Art

In other words, instead of studying nature directly, younger artists began studying Hellenistic sculptures and paintings of masters past. Therefore, this style is often identified as "anti-classical," yet at the time it was considered a natural progression from the High Renaissance. The earliest experimental phase of Mannerism, known for its "anti-classical" forms, lasted until about 1540 or 1550. This period has been described as both a natural extension of the art of Andrea del Sarto, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as well as a decline of those same artists' classicizing achievements.

In past analyses, it has been noted that Mannerism arose in the early 16th century alongside a number of other social, scientific, religious and political movements such as the Copernican model, the Sack of Rome, and the Protestant Reformation 's increasing challenge to the power of the Catholic Church. Because of this, the style's elongated forms and distorted forms were once interpreted as a reaction to the idealized compositions prevalent in High Renaissance art.

This explanation for the radical stylistic shift in 1520 has fallen out of scholarly favor, though the early Mannerists are still set in stark contrast to High Renaissance conventions; the immediacy and balance achieved by Raphael's School of Athens no longer seemed interesting to young artists. Indeed, Michelangelo himself displayed tendencies towards Mannerism, notably in his vestibule to the Laurentian Library, in the figures on his Medici tombs, and above all in the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel.



Christ, Mary, and Saints (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)

The Counter-Reformation Movement

While the Protestants largely removed public art from religion and moved towards a more "secular" style of art, embracing the concept of glorifying God through depictions of nature, the Counter-Reformation Catholic Church promoted art with "sacred" or religious content. In other words, art was to be strictly religious, created for the purpose of glorifying God and Catholic traditions.

To that end, *The Last Judgment*, a fresco on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo (1534–41), came under attack for its exaggerated classical imagery and the large quantity of nudes, some of which were interpreted at the time as being in compromising poses. Commissioned by Pope Clement VII and finished 4 years later for Pope Paul III, *The Last Judgment* was an object of dispute between critics within the Catholic Counter-Reformation and those who appreciated the genius of the artist and the Mannerist style of the painting. The critics accused Michelangelo of being insensitive to proper decorum, and of flaunting personal style over appropriate depictions of content. The fresco was also completed at a time when prints could be made of the work and distributed throughout Northern Europe, where it was feared it could fuel criticisms against the Catholic Church. While Michelangelo had been celebrated during the Renaissance for his classical influence and depictions of monumental nudes in a variety of poses, he was now being criticized for the nudity, as well as the exaggerated musculature of figures and the dramatic, swirling composition that suggested Mannerism. The Sistine ceiling of some 22 years earlier had, in fact, included the young male figures without clear purpose or clothing which were called "ignudi." In 1534, however, clerics like the Pope's Master of Ceremonies, Biagio da Cesena, was a constant irritant to Michelangelo over the issue of nudity. This demonstrates how the historical situation had altered and just how threatened the Catholic Church felt at this time in history.

The artist took his revenge on his critics by painting da Cesena into the fresco in the lower right as the King of Hell (not the Devil) with a large snake swallowing his genitalia.



The Last Judgement: The Last Judgment fresco in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo (1534–41) came under persistent attack in the Counter-Reformation for nudity (later painted over for several centuries), not showing Christ seated or bearded, and including the pagan figure of Charon. PD-Art

On the other hand, in Paolo Veronese's painting *The Last Supper* (subsequently renamed *The Feast in the House of Levi*), one can see what the Council regarded as inappropriate. Veronese was summoned before the Inquisition on the basis that his composition was indecorous for the refectory of a monastery. The painting shows a fantasy version of a Venetian patrician feast, with, in the words of the Inquisition: "buffoons, drunken Germans, dwarfs and other such scurrilities" as well as extravagant costumes and settings. Veronese was told that he must change his painting within a three-month period; instead he simply changed the title to *The Feast in the House of Levi.*



Last Supper/House of Levi: Paolo Veronese was accused of being indecorous for the refectory of a monastery in his Last Supper (The Feast in the House of Levi). PD-Art

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4.8: Baroque Painting

Italian Painting in the Baroque Period

Baroque painting emerged in the 16th century (1500's) and became extremely popular in the 17th century; the Roman High Baroque lasted from 1623 to 1667.

Key Points

- Baroque painting is the painting associated with the Baroque cultural movement, which began in Italy in the 17th century.
- In its most typical manifestations, Baroque painting is characterized by great drama, rich, deep color, and intense light and dark shadows.
- Caravaggio was an important figure in early Baroque painting during the 16th and 17th centuries and inspired many followers, known as Caravaggisti.
- In the later 17th century, artists such as Giordano increasingly produced monumental ceiling frescoes.

Key Terms

- **tenebrism**: A style of painting popularized by Caravaggio and his followers using very pronounced and dramatic light contrast (chiaroscuro), with darkness a dominating feature of the image.
- **fresco**: In painting, the technique of applying water-based pigment to wet or fresh lime mortar or plaster.

Relevant Italian Painters of the Time

Caravaggio

Caravaggio (1571–1610), born and trained in Milan, stands as one of the most original and influential contributors to late 16th century and early 17th century European painting. He was known for painting figures, even those of classical or religious themes, in contemporary clothing, or as ordinary men and women using models from the low-class establishments he frequented. His inclusion of the seedier side of life was in marked contrast to the trends of the time. He used tenebrism and stark contrasts between partially lit figures and dark backgrounds to dramatic effect.

Some of Caravaggio's most famous paintings include *The Calling of St. Mathew*, *St. Thomas*, *The Conversion of St. Paul*, *The Entombment*, and *The Crowning of the Christ*. His use of light and shadow was emulated by the Caravaggisti, the followers of Caravaggio, such as Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639), Artemisia Gentileschi (1592–1652/3), Garrit von Honthorst and Georges de la Tour.



Caravaggio, The Calling of St. Matthew, c.1599-1600, oil on canvas, 133.9 x 126.8”. Contarelli Chapel, Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome. PD-US The Calling of Saint Matthew shows Caravaggio’s use of tenebrism. Which of the figures Jesus is calling out as St. Matthew is sometimes debated



Caravaggio, Entombment of Christ, 1604, oil on canvas, 9’9 1/8” x 6’7 ¾”. Vatican, Rome. Tenebrism, or the dramatic use of extreme light and dark, is especially notable in this image

Artemisia Gentileschi

Successful women painters are still relatively rare during the Baroque period, although not unheard of. Artemisia is an exception; her father, Orazio Gentileschi, was quite well-known in Rome and beyond. He died painting in the court of Charles I in London. It was Orazio who was his daughter's teacher and who encouraged her career. She became known for an infamous incident in which a temporary tutor filling in for her father while he was painting in another city raped her. Lacking any practical recourse, Orazio and Artemisia took her rapist to court and won (not before Artemisia was put to the thumbscrew to get her to retract her accusation. She would not). She went on to paint all over Italy and also in England establishing herself as one of the best-known and successful painters of the period. Feminist art historians began to recover Artemisia's contribution in the 1970s. Her work, like her father's, is often notable for its Caravaggistic tenebrism.



Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Beheading Holofernes, c. 1620. Oil on canvas, 146.5 x 108 c. Uffizi

Spanish Painting in the Baroque Period

The Spanish Golden Age is a period of flourishing in arts, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty.

Key Points

- The Spanish Golden Age began in 1492, with the end of the Reconquista and the sea voyages of Christopher Columbus to the New World. Politically, it ended no later than 1659, with the Treaty of the Pyrenees ratified between France and Habsburg, Spain.
- The Italian holdings and relationships made by Queen Isabella's husband and later Spain's sole monarch, Ferdinand of Aragon, launched a steady traffic of intellectuals across the Mediterranean between Valencia, Seville, and Florence.
- Spanish art contained a strong mark of mysticism and religion that was encouraged by the Counter-Reformation and the patronage of Spain's strongly Catholic monarchs and aristocracy. The Habsburgs, both in Spain and Austria, were great patrons of art in their countries.
- Diego Velázquez and Francisco de Zurbarán are often considered by scholars as the influential founders of a uniquely Spanish style of painting during the Baroque era.

Key Terms

- **Counter-Reformation**: The period of Catholic revival beginning with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648); sometimes considered a response to the Protestant Reformation.
- **Habsburg**: A Swabian noble family named after it, which became the ruling (hereditary) dynasty of Austria, at times other countries (mainly in Iberia and the former Burgundian territories), and supplied successive (elected) emperors of the Holy Roman Empire.

Overview: The Spanish Golden Age

The Spanish Golden Age is a period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the Baroque era and the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. It began no earlier than 1492 with the end of the *Reconquista* (Reconquest), the sea voyages of Christopher Columbus to the New World, and the publication of Antonio de Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (Grammar of the Castilian Language). Politically, it ended no later than 1659 with the Treaty of the Pyrenees, ratified between France and Habsburg, Spain.

Spain in the time of the Italian Renaissance had seen few great artists come to its shores. The Italian holdings and relationships made by Ferdinand of Aragon, Queen Isabella's husband and later Spain's sole monarch, launched a steady traffic of intellectuals across the Mediterranean between Valencia, Seville, and Florence. Luis de Morales, one of the leading exponents of Spanish Mannerist painting, retained a distinctly Spanish style in his work reminiscent of medieval art. Spanish art, particularly that of Morales, contained a strong mark of mysticism and religion that was encouraged by the Counter-Reformation and the patronage of Spain's strongly Catholic monarchs and aristocracy.

Artists of the Golden Age of Spain

The Habsburgs, both in Spain and Austria, were great patrons of art in their countries. Diego Velázquez and Francisco de Zurbarán are often considered by scholars as the influential founders of a uniquely Spanish style of painting during the Baroque era.

Diego Velázquez

Diego Velázquez is widely regarded as one of Spain's most important and influential artists. He was an individualistic artist of the contemporary Baroque period and most well-known as a portrait artist. In addition to numerous renditions of scenes of historical and cultural significance, he painted scores of portraits of the Spanish royal family, other notable European figures, and commoners, culminating in the production of his masterpiece *Las Meninas* (1656). Velázquez was a court painter for King Philip IV and found increasingly high demand for his portraits from statesmen, aristocrats, and clergymen across Europe. His portraits of the King, his chief minister, the Count-duke of Olivares, and the Pope himself demonstrated a belief in artistic realism and a style comparable to many of the Dutch masters.



Philip IV in Brown and Silver, 1632: Velázquez is perhaps most well-known for his many famous portraits, including this one of King Philip IV. PDUS described at URL: http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/pa...own-and-silver

Velazquez's most famous painting, however, is the celebrated *Las Meninas* (1656), in which the artist includes himself as one of the subjects. *Las Meninas* (Spanish for "The Ladies in Waiting") is a painting with complex and enigmatic composition that raises questions about reality and illusion, creating an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. Because of these complexities, *Las Meninas* has been one of the most widely analyzed works in Western painting.

The painting shows a large room in the Royal Alcazar of Madrid during the reign of King Philip IV and presents several figures, most identifiable from the Spanish court, captured in a particular moment as if in a snapshot. Some look out of the canvas towards the viewer, while others interact among themselves. The young Infanta Margaret Theresa is surrounded by her entourage of maids of honor, chaperone, bodyguard, two other figures, and a dog. Just behind them, Velázquez portrays himself working at a large canvas. Velázquez looks outwards, beyond the pictorial space to where a viewer of the painting would stand. In the background there is a mirror that reflects the upper bodies of the king and queen. They appear to be placed outside the picture space in a position similar to that of the viewer, although some scholars have speculated that their image is a reflection from the painting Velázquez is shown working on.



Las Meninas, 1656 (English: The Ladies in Waiting): In his most celebrated painting, Velázquez's self-portrait is included on the left. PD-US

Religion in the Art of the Spanish Golden Age: Francisco de Zurbarán

The religious element in Spanish art, in many circles, grew in importance with the Counter-Reformation. The austere, ascetic, and severe work of Francisco de Zurbarán exemplified this thread in Spanish art, along with the work of composer Tomás Luis de Victoria. Philip IV actively patronized artists who agreed with his views on the Counter-Reformation and religion. The mysticism of Zurbarán's work—influenced by Saint Theresa of Avila—became a hallmark of Spanish art in later generations.



Francisco de Zurbarán, The Birth of the Virgin, demonstrates the religious themes, particularly the devotion to the Virgin Mary, that pervaded Counter-Reformation Spanish artwork. PD-US

Influenced by Caravaggio and the Italian masters, Zurbarán devoted himself to an artistic expression of religion and faith. He is known primarily for his religious paintings depicting monks, nuns, and martyrs, as well as for his still-lifes. Zurbarán gained the nickname *Spanish Caravaggio*, owing to the forceful, realistic use of chiaroscuro in which he excelled.



Saint Francis in Meditation, c. 1631–1640, National Gallery: Zurbarán's painting of Saint Francis of Assisi is notable for its use of tenebrism, or high contrast between light and dark

His paintings of St. Francis of Assisi, the immaculate conception, and the crucifixion of Christ reflected a third facet of Spanish culture in the 17th century, against the backdrop of religious war across Europe. Zurbarán broke from Velázquez's sharp realist interpretation of art and looked, to some extent, to the emotive content of the painter El Greco and the earlier Mannerist painters for inspiration and technique, though Zurbarán respected and maintained the lighting and physical nuance of Velázquez.

French Painting in the Baroque Period

17th century painting in France was influenced by Italian Baroque sensibilities as well as the Classical tastes of the powerful monarchy.

Key Points

- King Louis XIV established the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, which propagated a style of art with distinctly Classical affectation. Important painters of 17th century France include Simon Vouet, Charles Le Brun, Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, and Georges de la Tour.
- Simon Vouet is known for introducing Baroque style painting to France. Charles Le Brun was a student of Vouet and the most important painter in the court of King Louis XIV. He was responsible for creating the French Academy and for the interior decoration at the Palace of Versailles.
- Nicolas Poussin is known for his Classical style paintings that favor clarity, logic, order, and clean lines over color. Claude Lorrain is known particularly for his work in landscape paintings.
- Georges de la Tour was a French Baroque painter known for painting religious chiaroscuro scenes.

Key Terms

- **chiaroscuro**: An artistic technique popularized during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.
- **altarpiece**: A work of art suspended above and behind a table used for religious purposes; (altar) in a church.

Overview: The Baroque Era in France

17th century painting in France was influenced by Italian Baroque sensibilities as well as the Classical tastes of the powerful monarchy. These two strong influences resulted in a style that was unique to France and culminated in the art produced for King Louis XIV. The reign of Louis XIV saw a shift from Mannerist and Baroque styles popular in the early part of the century, during the reign of Louis XIII, toward a more prescribed Classical style. Louis XIV established royal control over artisanal production in France, prohibiting the purchase of luxury goods from abroad. He also established the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, which maintained a hierarchy of genres in painting and a distinctly Classical flavor.

Influential French Painters

Important painters of 17th century France include Simon Vouet, Charles Le Brun, Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, and Georges de la Tour. 17th century painting in France was divided: on one hand there was influence from the Italian Baroque style as seen in the work of de la Tour; on the other was a distinctive turn towards a rigid, Classical style that was favored by the monarchy, and exemplified by the works of Le Brun, Poussin, and Lorrain. The convergence of these two styles gave 17th century painting an aesthetic tone that was wholly unique to France.

Simon Vouet and Charles Le Brun

Simon Vouet is known for introducing Baroque style painting to France. He studied in Italy and learned the techniques of the Italian masters, which he imbued with his own sensibilities. He was made "premier peintre du Roi" by Louis XIII, who commissioned numerous works from him. Charles Le Brun was Vouet's most influential pupil and was to become an important painter in the court of King Louis XIV. Le Brun worked primarily for Louis XIV, and his most important works reside at the Palace of Versailles. Mostly producing battle pieces and altarpieces, Le Brun's paintings exemplify a synthesis of Baroque and Classical styles.



Charles Le Brun, The Conquest of Franche-Comté: Charles Le Brun worked primarily for King Louis XIV, and his most important works reside at the Palace of Versailles. Mostly producing battle pieces and altarpieces, Le Brun's paintings exemplify a synthesis of Baroque and Classical styles

Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain

Nicolas Poussin is known for his Classical style paintings created in 17th century France. His work features clarity, logic, order, and clean lines over color, serving as a counterpoint to Baroque style painting. He spent most of his life working in Rome and became a favorite painter of King Louis XIV. Claude Lorrain is known particularly for his work in landscape paintings. He earned the patronage of Pope Urban VIII, after which his fame grew rapidly. Lorrain and Poussin were friends and were known to have traveled the Italian countryside together.



Nicolas Poussin, Echo and Narcissus: Nicolas Poussin is known for his Classical style paintings created in 17th century France. His work features clarity, logic, order, and clean lines over color

Georges de la Tour

Georges de la Tour was a French Baroque painter known for painting religious chiaroscuro scenes lit by candlelight. His work shows a great deal of influence from Caravaggio, characterized by the painted effects of light and dark, but is unique in that he applies this technique to genre subjects.



Georges De La Tour, Magdalene with the Smoking Flame, c. 1640-45, oil on canvas, 61.4 x 48”. Louvre, PD-US

Flemish Painting in the Baroque Period

The style of painting produced in Flanders during the 17th century is known as Flemish Baroque.

Key Points

- Flemish Baroque painting is notable for the fact that it was separated into the different thematic categories of history, portraiture, genre, landscape, and still life.
- Peter Paul Rubens was the preeminent painter of the Flemish Baroque style; he was the dominant artist of history painting and drew influence from Italian painting.
- The paintings of Adriaen Brouwer exemplified the genre painting of 17th century Flanders . They depicted scenes of the everyday life of peasants and were notable for their expressive facial studies.
- The **vanitas**, a type of still life painting that is meant to illustrate the meaninglessness of earthly life and the transience of all earthly pursuits, became very popular in 17th century Flemish painting.

Key Terms

- **monumental**: Large, grand, and imposing.
- **Vanitas**: a type of painting with iconography that symbolizes the fleeting quality of life, fame, riches, and happiness on earth.

Overview: Flemish Baroque

The style of painting produced in Flanders during the 17th century is known as Flemish Baroque. This style was produced between about 1585, when the Dutch Republic split from the Habsburg Spain regions of the south, until about 1700, when the Habsburg rule ended after the death of King Charles II. Antwerp—the home of Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony Van Dyck—figured prominently as a point of artistic production during this time, as did Brussels and Ghent to a lesser extent. Peter Paul Rubens, the preeminent painter of the Flemish Baroque style, had a strong influence on the artistic aesthetic of the 17th century.

Categories of Flemish Painting

Flemish Baroque painting is notable for the fact that it was separated into different thematic categories, and artists of the time tended to specialize in one of these areas. These genres included history, portraiture, genre, landscape, and still life paintings. A similar hierarchy of genres will become formalized as part of the French Academy in the 17th century.

History Painting

History painting, considered the most noble genre during the 17th century, was comprised of depictions of historical, biblical, mythological, and allegorical scenes. Peter Paul Rubens was the dominant painter in this category, though his student Anthony Van Dyck also became prominent. More than in any other category, Flemish history painters continued to draw influence from Italian painting. Rubens spent nine years in Italy studying the work of the masters, and he introduced the monumental hunting scene to painting. This is exemplified in his work *Wolf and Fox Hunt*, which depicts a noble battle on a large scale and was inspired by his study of classical antiquity.



Peter Paul Rubens, The Raising of the Cross, 1610-11, oil on wood, 182 x 134", Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp. The altarpiece was completed after Rubens had returned from visiting Italy and clearly shows the influence of Italian masters like Michelangelo. PD-US

Portrait Paintings

Portrait paintings were, for the most part, monumental or life sized, though the group and family portrait came into prominence during the 17th century. Although he was not a portrait painter, Rubens completed some early works in this category. He also exerted influence through his student, Anthony Van Dyck, who became the court painter for Charles I of England and an influence on subsequent portraiture in England.

The English preferred to import artists rather than promote home-grown ones. English painting will not come into its own until the landscape painters of the next century.



Anthony van Dyck, Charles I at the Hunt, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 104..7 x 81,4", Louvre. Note the low angle from which we view the King. Charles I was sensitive about his short stature. PD-US

Genre Painting

Genre paintings depict scenes from everyday life and were very common in 17th century Flanders. These paintings feature figures with no specific identity, commonly engaged in activities associated with "the peasant life." Many genre artists follow the tradition of Peter Brueghel the Elder in their depiction of the lower classes. The paintings of Adriaen Brouwer, which often show peasants fighting and drinking, serve as an example of Flemish genre painting. Brouwer is known for painting his subjects in interior, rather than exterior, scenes. He was also known for his expressive facial studies, characteristic of a genre called "tronies" (faces) and exemplified in works such as *The Smokers.*



Adriaen Brouwer, The Smokers, c. 1636, oil on panel, 18.2 x 14.4" MET. This genre painting includes a self-portrait – the figure in the middle that turns to face the viewer. Other portraits are those of Jan Cossiers, Jan Lievens, Joos van Craesbeeck and Jan Davidsz de Heem. This type of group portrait doubled as a representation of one of the five senses (in this case the sense of taste)

Landscapes

Landscape painting was another major category in the 17th century. The style developed from earlier 16th century Flemish landscape paintings, which were not particularly realistic and employed the semi-aerial, or Cosmic, view typical of Peter Brueghel the Elder. Architectural interior painting also became popular around this time, depicting the realistic interiors of existing churches and cathedrals.

Still Lifes

Floral still life painting was widespread in 17th century Flanders, popularized by Brueghel the Elder around 1600. His sons, Jan Brueghel the Younger and Ambrosius Brueghel, were also known flower specialists of the time. Other subjects or subcategories of still life painting included the banquet still life, the animal still life, and garland scenes. Still life paintings often had an underlying moralistic message concerning the brevity of life, a trait exemplified by the “vanitas.” A vanitas is a symbolic still life painting that is meant to illustrate the meaninglessness of earthly life and the transience of all earthly pursuits. Vanitas paintings were very popular in 17th century Flemish and Dutch work, and they often include iconographic symbols such as skulls, flowers, rotting fruit, clocks, watches, smoke, and hourglasses, all of which are meant to convey the ephemeral (short and fleeting) nature of life on earth.



Vanitas Painting: An example of a vanitas from the 17th century by Franciscus Gysbrechts. PD-US

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4.9: Baroque Architecture

The highly theatrical Baroque architectural style dominated Italy in the 1600s.

Learning Objectives

Define the characteristics and examples of Roman Baroque architecture

Key Points

- Baroque architecture was linked to the Counter-Reformation, celebrating the wealth of the Catholic Church. It was characterized by new explorations of form, light and shadow, and dramatic intensity.
- Bernini was the master of Baroque architecture in Rome; St. Peter's Square was one of his greatest achievements.
- Carlo Fontana became Rome's leading Baroque architect following Bernini's death in 1680.
- Other influential Baroque architects in Italy included Carlo Maderno, Pietro da Cortano, and Francesco Borromini.

Key Terms

- **Counter-Reformation**: The period of Catholic revival beginning with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648); considered a response to the Protestant Reformation.
- **Baroque**: A period in western art from c. 1600 to the middle of the 18th century, characterized by drama, rich color, and extreme contrast between light and shadow.

The Baroque Period in Italy

The Baroque period of architecture began in the late 16th century in Rome, Italy. It took the Roman vocabulary of Renaissance architecture and used it in a new rhetorical and theatrical fashion, often to express the triumph of the Catholic Church and the absolutist state. It was characterized by new explorations of naturalism, form, light and shadow, and dramatic intensity.

Whereas the Renaissance drew on the wealth and power of the Italian courts and was a blend of secular and religious forces, the Baroque was – initially at least – directly linked to the Catholic Counter-Reformation, a reform movement in response to the Protestant Reformation. Baroque architecture and its embellishments were on one hand more expressive of the emotions, and on the other, a visible statement of the wealth and power of the Catholic Church.

Architectural Accomplishments

A number of ecclesiastical buildings of the Baroque period in Rome had plans based on the Italian paradigm of the basilica with a crossed dome and nave (cruciform plan), but the treatment of the architecture was very different than earlier examples. One of the first Roman structures to break with the previous conventions was the church of Santa Susanna, designed by Carlo Maderno. The dynamic rhythm of columns and pilasters, central massing, and the protrusion and condensed central decoration add complexity to the structure. There is an incipient playfulness with the rules of classic design, but it still maintains a level of rigor. Look for movement toward the viewer in Baroque architecture in the façade and ornamentation.



Facade of Santa Susanna by Carlo Maderno: The design elements of this church signaled a departure from the prevailing style of architecture at the time

Pietro de Cortona

The same concerns with plasticity, massing, dramatic effects, and shadow and light are evident in the architectural work of Pietro da Cortona, illustrated by his design of Santi Luca e Martina (construction began in 1635) with what was probably the first curved Baroque church façade in Rome. These concerns are even more evident in his reworking of Santa Maria della Pace (1656– 8). The façade of the building, with its half-domed portico shadowed with chiaroscuro, and concave side wings, closely resembles a theatrical stage set and projects forward so that it substantially fills the tiny trapezoidal piazza. The conceit of the theater is one of the recurring motifs to look for in Baroque architecture.



Santa Maria Della Pace: Pietro da Cortona restored the edifice of Santa Maria Della Pace, adding a Baroque façade

Gian Lorenzo Bernini

Other Roman ensembles of the Baroque and late Baroque period are likewise suffused with urban theatricality and provide points of focus within the surrounding cityscape. Probably the most well-known example of such an approach is Saint Peter's Square, which has been praised as a masterstroke of Baroque theatre. The piazza, designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, is formed principally by two colonnades of free-standing columns centered on an Egyptian obelisk. The oval colonnades extend the façade of St. Peter's and enclose the piazza in the embrace of Mother Church. Bernini's own favorite architectural achievement was his oval church of Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, decorated with polychome marbles and an ornate gold dome. His secular architecture included the Palazzo Barberini (based on plans by Maderno) and the Palazzo Chigi-Odescalchi (1664), both in Rome.

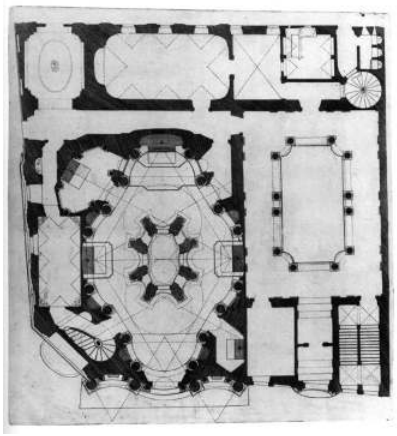


St. Peter’s Square by Gian Lorenzo Bernini: St. Peter’s Square is an iconic example of Baroque theatricality

Francesco Borromini

Bernini’s rival, the architect Francesco Borromini, produced designs that deviated dramatically from the regular compositions of the ancient world and Renaissance. His building plans were based on complex geometric figures, his architectural forms were unusual and inventive, and he employed multi-layered symbolism in his architectural designs. His iconic masterpiece is the diminutive church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, distinguished by a complicated plan that is partly oval and partly a cross, giving it complex convex-concave wall rhythms. The oval is to Baroque what the rational circle was to the Renaissance. Both Bernini and Borromini make expressive use of the oval in their designs.





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Carlo Fontana

Following the death of Bernini in 1680, Carlo Fontana emerged as the most influential architect working in Rome during the Baroque period. His early style is exemplified by the slightly concave façade of San Marcello al Corso. Fontana's academic approach, though lacking the dazzling inventiveness of his Roman predecessors, exerted substantial influence on Baroque architecture both through his prolific writings and through the number of architects he trained, who would disseminate the Baroque idioms throughout 18th-century Europe.

Spanish Architecture in the Baroque Period

A particular strand of Baroque architecture evolved in Spain and its provinces and former colonies in the late 17th century.

Learning Objectives

- Identify characteristics of Spanish Baroque architecture, its most famous examples, and how it differs from the art of Northern Europe in the 17th century.

Key Points

- In contrast to the art of Northern Europe, the Spanish art of the Baroque period appealed more to the emotions rather than seeking to please the intellect.
- Some of the most notable examples of Spanish architecture from the Baroque period include the façades of the University of Valladolid (1719) and the western façade of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (1750).

Key Terms

- **Herrerian**: A style of architecture developed in Spain during the last third of the 16th century under the reign of Philip II (1556–1598) and continued in force in the 17th century, transformed then by the Baroque current of the time.
- **Moorish**: Of or pertaining to a style of Spanish architecture from the time of the Moors, characterized by the horseshoe arch and ornate, geometric decoration.
- **Baroque**: A period in western art from c. 1600 to the middle of the 18th century, characterized by drama, rich color, and dramatic contrast between light and shadow.
- **Obelisk**: A tall, square, tapered stone monolith topped with a pyramidal point, frequently used as a monument.

The Development of Baroque in Spain

Spanish Baroque is a strand of Baroque architecture that evolved in Spain and its provinces and former colonies, notably Spanish America and Belgium, in the late 17th century. As Italian Baroque influences spread across the Pyrenees Mountains, they gradually superseded in popularity the restrained classical approach of Juan de Herrera, which had been in vogue since the late 16th century.

For example, by 1667, the facades of Granada Cathedral (by Alonso Cano) and Jaén Cathedral (by Eufrasio López de Rojas) suggest the artists' fluency in interpreting traditional motifs of Spanish cathedral architecture in the Baroque aesthetic idiom. In Madrid, a vernacular Baroque with its roots in Herrerian and in traditional brick construction was developed in the Plaza Mayor and in the Royal Palace of El Buen Retiro, which was destroyed during the French invasion by Napoleon's troops. Its gardens still remain as El Retiro park. This sober brick Baroque of the 17th century is still well represented in the streets of the capital in palaces and squares.



Plaza Mayor: Three sides of the Plaza Mayor, well known for its Spanish Baroque architecture



Caravaca de la Cruz.: The Churrigueresque column, or estipite, was a central element of ornamental decoration in the Spanish Baroque, as shown here in the Estipite in the Church of Caravaca de la Cruz. It is characterized by the inverted cone, or obelisk

Notable Examples

One examples of the most eye-catching creations of Spanish Baroque is the energetic western façade of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Fernando de Casas y Novoa, 1750). In this example, as in many others, the Churrigueresque design involves a play of sculptural and decorative elements with little relation to structure and function. The focus of the florid ornamentation is an elaborately sculpted surround to a main doorway. If one removed the intricate maze of broken pediments, undulating cornices, stucco shells, inverted tapers, and garlands from the rather plain wall it is set against, the building's form would not be affected in the slightest.



Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain.: The facade of the Santiago de Compostela reflects the Churrigueresque facade; the lavish details of the facade have little structural use

The Royal Palace of Madrid (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Palace_of_Madrid) deserves special mention. It was constructed in a sober Baroque international style, often mistaken for neoclassical, by the king Philip V.

English Architecture in the Baroque Period

English architecture during the 17th century can be characterized by its use of Palladian, Jacobean, and English Baroque styles.

Learning Objectives

- Define the architecture of 17th century England.

Key Points

- Inigo Jones is known for introducing Palladian architecture to England, a highly symmetrical style based on the principles of formal Classical temple architecture of the ancient Greeks and Romans.
- Popular during the early 17th century, the Jacobean style can be classified by its adoption of decadent and detailed Renaissance motifs such as columns and pilasters, round arch arcades, and flat roofs with openwork parapets, as seen in Hatfield House.
- The architect Sir Christopher Wren was responsible for the genesis of the English Baroque style; after the Great Fire of London in 1666, he rebuilt many of the city's churches, such as St. Paul's Cathedral.
- English Baroque architecture can be characterized by heavy structures adorned with elaborate decoration; compared to the contemporary Baroque of the European continent, however, it tends to be relatively plain, with more Classical subtleties.

Key Terms

- **arcade**: A row of arches.
- **parapet**: Part of a perimeter that extends above the roof.
- **pilaster**: A rectangular column that projects partially from the wall to which it is attached; it gives the appearance of a support but is only for decoration.

English Architecture in the 17th Century

The architecture in England during the 17th century saw a continuation of the use of Classical forms, which eventually gave way to a uniform style, derived chiefly from Italy and exemplified predominantly in the work of Inigo Jones. Jacobean architecture was prominent in the first quarter of the 17th century, and English Baroque architecture, a distinctly English take on the Italian Baroque style, became prevalent during the later part of the 17th century following the Great Fire of London.

Inigo Jones and Palladian Architecture

Palladian architecture is highly symmetrical and based on the principles of formal Classical temple architecture of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It was a style seen during the 17th century in England and became truly prominent in the 18th century. Inigo Jones, one of the first significant English architects, is known for introducing the Italian Renaissance style to England. He is responsible for the Queen's House at Greenwich (1635) and the Banqueting House in the Palace of Whitehall (1622), which he designed based on the work of Palladio, an influential Italian Classical-style architect; its ceiling was painted by Peter Paul Rubens.



The Queen's House at Greenwich: The Queen's House at Greenwich was built by Inigo Jones, one of the first significant English architects known for introducing the Italian Renaissance style to England

Jacobean Architecture

The second phase of Renaissance architecture in England is termed the Jacobean style. This style was popular during the first quarter of the 17th century during the reign of King James I. Chronologically following the Elizabethan style, the Jacobean style can be classified by its adoption of decadent and detailed Renaissance motifs such as columns and pilasters, round arch arcades, and flat roofs with openwork parapets. These classical motifs were, however, not strictly applied (as they were by Inigo Jones) but used rather freely and synthesized with elements of Elizabethan style architecture. Architectural examples of the style include Hatfield House, Knole House, and Holland House by John Thorpe.



Hatfield House: South facing view of Hatfield House, an example of English Jacobean architecture, showcasing the decadent and detailed Renaissance motifs

English Baroque

The later 17th century saw Baroque architecture come to prominence in a style that is termed English Baroque. It was the architect Christopher Wren, one of the most acclaimed English architects in history, who was responsible for the genesis of the English Baroque style. When the Great Fire of London in 1666 forced much of the city to be rebuilt, Wren was hired to replace many of the churches. His most ambitious construction, St. Paul's Cathedral, was a magnificent piece of architecture and is the only English cathedral in the Classical tradition.



St. Paul's Cathedral: Built by Christopher Wren, St. Paul's Cathedral is the only English cathedral in the Classical tradition

Characteristics

Popular from 1666 to about 1715, English Baroque architecture is characterized by heavy structures adorned with elaborate decoration; compared to the contemporary Baroque of the European continent, however, it tends to be relatively plain, with more Classical subtleties. Baroque country houses, such as Chatsworth House by William Talman and Castle Howard by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, began to appear in the 1690s. The most significant architects after Wren were Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor, who built Castle Howard (1699) and Blenheim Palace (1705).



Chatsworth House, England: English Baroque architecture, as seen in Chatsworth House, can be characterized by heavy structures adorned with elaborate decoration; however, it tends to be relatively plain, with more Classical subtleties, compared to the Baroque architecture of the continent that was being built at the same time

French Architecture in the Baroque Period: Versailles

The Palace of Versailles was built during King Louis XIV's reign and contains 700 rooms, extensive gardens, and lavish decoration.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the most impressive features of Versailles and those artistically responsible.

Key Points

- The Palace of Versailles was executed in the French Baroque style, characterized by its large curved forms, twisted columns, high domes, and complicated shapes.
- The architect for the palace was Louis Le Vau, the interior decorator was Charles Le Brun, and the landscape designer was Andre Le Notre.
- Interior design from this period is known as Louis XIV style. Originated by Le Brun, it is characterized by richly woven red and gold fabrics or brocades, heavy gilded plaster molding, large sculpted side boards, and heavy marbling.
- The gardens at Versailles cover nearly 2,000 acres of land and were executed in the French formal garden style, or *jardina lafrancaise*.
- Notable features of the palace include the Hall of Mirrors and the Grande Canal.

Key Terms

- **parterre**: A garden with paths between flowerbeds.
- **brocade**: A thick, heavy fabric into which raised patterns have been woven.
- **molding**: A plane or curved narrow surface, either sunk or projecting, used for decoration by means of the lights and shades upon its surface and to conceal joints, especially between unlike materials.

Overview: Versailles

The Palace of Versailles is an opulent palace built by Louis XIV that contains 700 rooms, extensive gardens, and lavish decoration. Initially, a small hunting lodge built by his father, Louis XIV transformed Versailles with four intensive building campaigns over his reign. The formal aesthetic of the palace was meant to glorify France and show the power and greatness of the self-proclaimed Sun King, Louis XIV. The architect for the palace was Louis Le Vau, the interior decorator was Charles Le Brun, and the landscape designer was Andre Le Notre. These three artists had worked together previously on the private Chateau Vaux le Vicomte for the king's minister of finance before he was imprisoned. In 1682, Versailles was transformed into the official residence of the king, and such notable features of the palace as the Hall of Mirrors and the Grande Canal were built.

The Architecture: Louis Le Vau

The Palace of Versailles was executed in the French Baroque style by architect Louis Le Vau, a French Classical architect who worked for King Louis XIV. French Baroque architectural style is characterized by its large curved forms, twisted columns, high domes, and complicated shapes. In comparison to the Baroque architecture of the rest of Europe, it is commonly thought to be more restrained and characterized by its mixture of lavish details on symmetrical and orderly buildings.

The Interior Design: Charles Le Brun

Charles Le Brun was the interior decorator for the Palace of Versailles, as well as first painter to the king. Louis XIV declared Le Brun the "greatest painter of all time," and Le Brun worked on such notable features of the palace as the Halls of War and Peace, the Ambassadors' Staircase, and the Great Hall of Mirrors. Interior design from this period is known as Louis XIV style, originated by Le Brun, and was characterized by richly woven red and gold fabrics or brocades, heavy gilded plaster molding, large sculpted side boards, and heavy marbling.



Louis XIV style: This elaborate bench showcases the style of Louis XIV at Versailles, which is characterized by richly woven red and gold fabrics or brocades, heavy gilded plaster molding, large sculpted side boards, and heavy marbling

The Hall of Mirrors is the central gallery of the Palace of Versailles and is one of the most famous rooms in the world. The main feature of this room is a series of 17 mirrored arches that reflect 17 arcaded windows overlooking the gardens. Each arch contains 21 mirrors. The arches are fixed between marble pilasters upon which bronze symbols of France are embedded.



The Hall of Mirrors: The main feature of the Hall of Mirrors is a series of 17 mirrored arches that reflect 17 arcaded windows overlooking the gardens. Each arch contains 21 mirrors

The Gardens: Andre Le Notre

The landscape design at the Palace of Versailles is one of the most extravagant in history. Headed by Andre Le Notre, the gardens at Versailles cover nearly 2,000 acres of land and were executed in the French formal garden style, or *jardina la francaise*. This style is characterized by its meticulously manicured lawns, parterres of flowers, numerous fountains, and sculptures.

A common feature of sculpture and decoration at Versailles is the use of classical mythology as allegory. The Bassin de Latone (Basin of the Pool) was designed by Le Notre and sculpted by Gaspard and Balthazar Marsy between 1668–1670. (https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichie...atone_2016.jpg)

This fountain depicts scenes from Ovid's Metamorphoses, chosen as allegories to revolts during the king's reign. The Bassin d'Apollon is another fountain that depicts the sun god driving his chariot to light the sky. The Grotte de Thetys is a freestanding structure with an interior decorated in elaborate shell-work to represent the myth of Apollo.



Gardens at Versailles: Plan for the extravagant gardens at the Palace of Versailles

The Grande Canal is a notable feature of the gardens, with an impressive length of 1,500 x 62 meters. King Louis XIV ordered the construction of “little Venice ” on the Grand Canal, which housed yachts, gondolas, and gondoliers received from Venice. It also served a functional purpose by gathering the water that drained from the fountains and redistributing it to the gardens by horse-powered pump.

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4.10: Golden Age of Dutch Painting

Rembrandt, Hals, Leyster

Hendrick ter Brugghen, Gerrit van Honthorst, Frans Hals, and Judith Leyster were important genre painters of the Dutch Republic. Rembrandt painted history paintings, portraits, genre paintings, landscape and is probably the most well-known of all painters of the Dutch Golden Age.

Key Points

- Ter Brugghen and Honthorst were both artists from the Dutch city of Utrecht who worked in the Caravaggisti tradition, emulating Caravaggio's dramatic use of light and shadow. Both artists were directly inspired by their travels to Italy.
- Tavern scenes and other depictions of lively entertainment were common subjects for genre painters of this period.
- Frans Hals, another well-known Dutch painter, is remembered primarily for his portraiture and his pioneering use of loose brushwork.
- Judith Leyster is one of the few recognized female artists of the Dutch Golden Age and is known for depicting female subjects in domestic interior scenes.
- Leyster's work is extremely similar to Hals, leading some historians to speculate that she may have been his apprentice.
- Rembrandt is known for his capturing of the "inner" person; he painted self-portraits throughout his life leaving a record of his development and interior life.

Key Terms

- **chiaroscuro**: An artistic technique developed during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.
- **Caravaggisti**: Stylistic followers of the 16th century Italian Baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.
- **Mannerism**: A style of art developed at the end of the High Renaissance, characterized by the deliberate distortion and exaggeration of perspective, especially the elongation of figures.

The Dutch Golden Age

The Dutch Golden Age was a period in the history of Holland generally spanning the 17th century, during and after the later part of the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) for Dutch independence. Although Dutch painting of the Golden Age comes in the general European period of Baroque painting and often shows many of its characteristics, most lacks the idealization and love of splendor typical of much Baroque work, including that of neighboring Flanders . Most work in Holland during this era, including that for which the period is best known, reflects the traditions of detailed realism inherited from Early Netherlandish painting.

A distinctive feature of the period is the proliferation of distinct genres of paintings, with the majority of artists producing the bulk of their work within one of these. The full development of this specialization is seen from the late 1620s, and the period from then until the French invasion of 1672 is the core of Golden Age painting. The Utrecht Caravaggisti Hendrick ter Brugghen and Gerrit van Honthorst, as well as Frans Hals and Judith Leyster, were genre painters of the Dutch Republic. Their work generally depicted taverns and other scenes of entertainment (Merry Company paintings) hat catered to the tastes and interests of a growing segment of the Dutch middle class.

Ter Brugghen's favorite subjects were half-length figures of drinkers or musicians, but he also produced larger-scale religious images and group portraits. He carried with him Caravaggio's influence, and his paintings have a strong dramatic use of light and shadow, as well as emotionally charged subjects. Though he died fairly young at age 41, his work was well received and highly influential in his lifetime.



The Concert by ter Brugghen (1627), 99.1 x 116.8 cm, National Gallery, London: Some of ter Brugghen's favorite subjects were half-length figures of drinkers or musicians, with a strong dramatic use of light and shadow in the style of Caravaggio. Van Honthorst

Gerard van Honthorst (1590—1656) was born in Utrecht and also studied under Abraham Bloemaert. In 1616, Honthorst also traveled to Italy and was deeply influenced by the recent art he encountered there. Honthorst returned to Utrecht in 1620 and went on to build a considerable reputation, both in the Dutch Republic and abroad.

Honthorst briefly became a court painter to Charles I in England in 1628. His popularity in the Netherlands was such that he opened a second studio in The Hague, where he painted portraits of members of the court and taught drawing. Honthorst cultivated the style of Caravaggio and had great skill at chiaroscuro , often painting scenes illuminated by a single candle. Apart from portraiture, he is known for painting tavern scenes with musicians, gamblers, and people eating.



The Matchmaker by Gerard van Honthorst, 1625: This painting demonstrates Honthorst's use of chiaroscuro, a style made popular by Caravaggio

Hals

Frans Hals the Elder (c. 1582—1666) was most notable for his loose painterly brushwork, a lively style he helped introduce into Dutch art. Hals was also instrumental in the evolution of 17th century group portraiture. He is perhaps best known for his portraits, which were primarily of wealthy citizens and prominent merchants like Pieter van den Broecke and Isaac Massa. He also painted large group portraits for local civic guards and the regents of local hospitals. His pictures illustrate the various strata of society: banquets or meetings of officers, guildsmen, local councilmen from mayors to clerks, itinerant players and singers, gentlefolk, fishwives, and tavern heroes. In his group portraits, such as the *TheOfficers of the St Adrian Militia Company*, Hals captures each character in a different manner. Hals was fond of daylight and silvery sheen, in contrast to Rembrandt's use of golden glow effects.



The Officers of the St Adrian Militia Company by Frans Hals, 1633: This is the second painting for the Cluveniers, St. Adrian, or St. Hadrian civic guard of Haarlem, by Frans Hals; today it is considered one of the main attractions of the Frans Hals Museum

Judith Leyster

Judith Jans Leyster (1609—1660) was one of three significant women artists in Dutch Golden Age painting. The other two, Rachel Ruysch and Maria van Oosterwijk, were specialized painters of flower still lifes, while Leyster painted genre works, a few portraits, and a single still life. Leyster largely gave up painting after her marriage, which produced five children. Leyster was particularly innovative in her domestic genre scenes. In them, she creates quiet scenes of women at home, which were not a popular theme in Holland until the 1650s.



Judith Leyster, Carousing Couple, 1620, oil on panel, 26 ¾ x 22 5/8". Louvre. Leyster's subject matter was similar to other genre painters of the period, with the exception that she tended to focus on female subjects

Although well-known during her lifetime and esteemed by her contemporaries, Leyster and her work were largely forgotten after her death. Leyster was rediscovered in 1893 when the Louvre purchased what it thought was a Frans Hals painting, only to find it had, in fact, been painted by Judith Leyster. Some historians have asserted that Hals may have been Leyster's teacher due to the close similarity between their work; for example, Leyster's *The Merry Drinker* from 1629 has a very strong resemblance to *The Jolly Drinker* of 1627—28 by Hals.

These types of paintings, of people engaged in drinking, music, or gambling, were called "Merry Company" paintings and were meant to bring to mind the parable of the Prodigal Son who squandered his inheritance on wine, women, and song.

Rembrandt

Rembrandt is remembered as one of the greatest artists in European history and the most important in the Dutch Golden Age.

Key Points

- Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606—1669) is primarily known for portraits of his contemporaries, self-portraits, landscapes, and illustrations of scenes from the Bible.
- Rembrandt's self-portraits are exceptionally sincere, revealing, and personal, illustrating his development over time.
- Stylistically, Rembrandt's work evolved from smooth to rough over the course of his lifetime.
- The thick, coarse strokes in Rembrandt's work were unconventional at the time and poorly received by many of his contemporaries, though this technique is now viewed as essential to the emotional resonance of his work.
- Though he is remembered as the master of Dutch painting, Rembrandt's success was uneven during his lifetime.

Key Terms

- **variegated**: Streaked, spotted, or otherwise marked with a variety of color; very colorful.
- **Caravaggisti**: Stylistic followers of the 16th century Italian Baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.
- **chiaroscuro**: An artistic technique popularized during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.

Overview: Rembrandt

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606—1669) was a Dutch painter and etcher during the Dutch Golden Age, a period of great wealth and cultural achievement. Though Rembrandt's later years were marked by personal tragedy and financial hardship, his etchings and paintings were popular throughout his lifetime, earning him an excellent reputation as an artist and teacher. In 1626, Rembrandt produced his first etchings, the wide dissemination of which would largely account for his international fame.

Characteristics of Rembrandt's Work

Among the more prominent characteristics of Rembrandt's work is his use of chiaroscuro , the theatrical employment of light and shadow. This technique was most likely derived from the Dutch Caravaggisti, followers of the Italian Baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio who had first used the chiaroscuro technique. Also notable are his dramatic and lively presentation of subjects, devoid of the rigid formality that his contemporaries often displayed, and a visible compassion for the human subject, irrespective of wealth and age.

Throughout his career, Rembrandt took as his primary subjects the themes of portraiture (dependent upon commissions from wealthy patrons for survival), landscape, and narrative painting. For the last, he was especially praised by his contemporaries, who extolled him as a masterly interpreter of biblical stories for his skill in representing emotions and attention to detail. His immediate family often figured prominently in his paintings, many of which had mythical, biblical, or historical themes.



Titus as a Monk by Rembrandt, 1660: Rembrandt's immediate family frequently figured in his paintings. This work features Rembrandt's son Titus as a monk

In later years, biblical themes were still often depicted, but his emphasis shifted from dramatic group scenes to intimate portrait-like figures (such as in *James the Apostle*, 1661). In his last years, Rembrandt painted his most deeply reflective self-portraits (he painted 15 from 1652 to 1669) and several moving images of both men and women (such as *The Jewish Bride*, c. 1666) in love, in life, and before God.

A popular genre, the civic portrait was also one in which Rembrandt made a number of important works. In *The Sortie of Captain Banning Cocq'sCompany of the Civic Guard (The Night Watch)*, he captures an active scene with a militia heading out into the daylight (the darkness of the canvas gave rise to the misnomer of "Night" watch until it was cleaned) unlike the traditional civic portrait composition of figures seated statically around a table. Each of the figures would have paid to be included except the drummer who was hired. Rembrandt added a few figures to enliven the scene and a few were lost when the painting was moved and cut down to fit a new space.



Rembrandt, The Sortie of Captain Banning Cocq's Company of the Civic Guard (The Night Watch), 1642. Oil on canvas, 1′ 11″ x 14′ 4″, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The little girl in white is identified by the Rijksmuseum's website as the company's mascot, but this may still be an obscure identification



Rembrandt, Self-Portrait with Saskia in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, c. 1635-39. Oil on canvas, Drescen. This double portrait, painted shortly after the couple's marriage in 1634 shows the couple in a typical "Merry Company" painting. The religious gloss of the parable made these scenes of carousing palatable to the protestant North

Stylistically, Rembrandt's paintings progressed from the early "smooth" manner, characterized by fine technique in the portrayal of illusionistic form, to the late "rough" treatment of richly variegated paint surfaces, which allowed for an illusionism of form suggested by the tactile quality of the paint itself. Contemporary accounts sometimes remark disapprovingly of the coarseness of Rembrandt's brushwork, and the artist himself was said to have dissuaded visitors from looking too closely at his paintings. The richly varied handling of paint, deeply layered and often apparently haphazard, suggests form and space in both an illusory and highly individual manner.

Self-Portraiture

Rembrandt's self-portraits trace the progress from an uncertain young man, through the dapper and very successful portrait painter of the 1630s, to the troubled but massively powerful portraits of his old age. Together, they give a remarkably clear picture of the man, his appearance, and his psychological make-up, as revealed by his richly weathered face. In his portraits and self- portraits, he angles the sitter's face in such a way that the ridge of the nose nearly always forms the line of demarcation between brightly illuminated and shadowy areas.



Self-portrait, c. 1629: Rembrandt's earliest self-portraits portray his youthfulness and, sometimes, his uncertainty



Self-portrait by Rembrandt, 1659: Rembrandt's numerous self-portraits provide a strong record of his development as an artist and offer insight into his personal psychology. In this painting from about a decade before his death shows a man disappointed by life – all of his children save Titus had died shortly after birth and he died a bankrupt – but with great dignity

Landscape Art and Interior Painting

Landscape and interior genre painting of the Dutch Republic became increasingly sophisticated and realistic in the 17th century.

Key Points

- The " classical phase" of Dutch landscapes began in the 1650s and retained an atmospheric quality; however, they featured contrasting light and color and the frequent presence of a compositional anchor, such as a prominent tree, tower, or ship.
- Paintings featuring animals emerged as a distinctive sub-genre of Dutch landscape painting around this time.
- Interior genre paintings were also extremely popular during the Dutch Republic, featuring lively scenes from everyday life, such as markets, inns, taverns, and street scenes, as well as domestic interiors.
- Jan Vermeer, whose work uniquely captured lighting in interior spaces, is now the most renowned genre painter of the Dutch Republic.

Key Terms

- **atmospheric**: Evoking a particular emotional or aesthetic quality.
- **atmospheric perspective**: A technique in which an illusion of depth is created by painting more distant objects with less clarity and with a lighter tone.
- **genre**: A stylistic category, especially of literature or other artworks.

Background: Dutch and Flemish Painting

Landscape painting was a major genre in the 17th century Dutch Republic that was inspired by Flemish landscapes of the 16th century, particularly from Antwerp. These Flemish works had not been particularly realistic, most having been painted in the studio, partly from imagination, and often still using the semi-aerial view style typical of earlier Netherlandish landscape painting, in the tradition of Joachim Patinir, Herri met de Bles, and Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

Dutch Landscapes

A more realistic style soon developed in the Netherlands, with lower horizons making it possible to emphasize the often impressive cloud formations so typical of the region. Favorite subjects were the dunes along the western sea coast and rivers with their broad adjoining meadows where cattle grazed, often with the silhouette of a city in the distance. Winter landscapes featured frozen canals and creeks. The sea was a favorite subject as well, holding both military and trade significance. Most Dutch painting carried with it a moralistic overtone; interior scenes were meant to bring to mind the bounty God had given the Dutch people and by taking care

of it they were enacting almost a kind of religious worship. The land, much of which was reclaimed from the sea, also suggested the power and goodness of God.

The Classical Phase

From the 1650s, the "classical phase" began, retaining the atmospheric quality but with more expressive compositions and stronger contrasts of light and color. Compositions are often anchored by a single "heroic tree," windmill, tower, or ship in marine works. The leading artist of this phase was Jacob van Ruisdael (1628–1682), who produced a great quantity and variety of work, including Nordic landscapes of dark and dramatic mountain pine forests with rushing torrents and waterfalls.



Windmill at Wijk bij Duurstede: Jacob van Ruisdael (1628–1682) was one of the most prominent artists of the classical phase of Dutch landscapes



Jacob van Ruisdael, View of Ootmarsum, c. 1660-65, oil on canvas, 23 ¼ x 28 7/8". Note the two objects that break the horizon line – a church steeple and a windmill, both symbols of the importance of god and the industry of the Dutch people

Dutch Interior Genre Painting

Apart from landscape painting, the development and enormous popularity of genre painting is the most distinctive feature of Dutch painting during this period. These genre paintings represented scenes or events from everyday life, such as markets, domestic interiors, parties, inn scenes, and street scenes.

Genre painting developed from the realism and detailed background activity of Early Netherlandish painting, which Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder were among the first to turn into their principal subjects. The style reflected the increasing prosperity of Dutch society, and settings grew steadily more comfortable, opulent, and carefully depicted as the century progressed.

Adriaen Brouwer is acknowledged as the Flemish master of peasant tavern scenes. Before Brouwer, peasants were typically depicted outdoors; he usually shows them in a plain and dim interior. Other artists whose common subjects were intimate interior scenes included Nicolaes Maes, Gerard ter Borch, and Pieter de Hooch. Jan Vermeer specialized in domestic interior scenes of middle class life; though he was long a very obscure figure, he is now the most highly regarded genre painter of Dutch history.



The Milkmaid by Vermeer, 1658: Vermeer is a confirmed master of Dutch genre painting known for his interior scenes of middle class life

Johannes Vermeer used complex layers of paint to achieve the pearly light that envelopes his subjects. His forced perspective is sometimes attributed to the use of a camera obscura, but it is the quality of the light in his paintings that creates the quietness and timeless atmosphere he achieves.

Still Life Painting

Still life painting flourished during the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic.

Key Points

- Still lifes presented opportunities for painters to demonstrate their abilities in working with difficult textures and complex forms.
- The *vanitas* theme, a moral message frequently found in still life painting, alluded to the fleeting nature of life.
- Still lifes were frequently drawn by copying flowers in books, as the Dutch were leaders in scientific and botanical drawings and illustrations.

Key Terms

- **vanitas**: A type of still life painting, symbolic of mortality and characteristic of Dutch painting in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Overview: Dutch Still Life Painting

Early still lifes were relatively brightly lit, with bouquets of flowers arranged in a simple way. From the mid-15th century, arrangements that could fairly be called Baroque, usually against a dark background, became more popular. Painters from Leiden, The Hague, and Amsterdam particularly excelled in the genre . In addition to still life paintings, the Dutch led the world in botanical and other scientific drawings, prints, and book illustrations at this time.

The secular nature of Dutch Baroque painting made it arguably more available to be practiced by women painters than subjects requiring human anatomy or grand themes, both of which were considered to be inappropriate for women for much of art history. Judith Leyster, Maria van Oosterwijk, Maria Sybille Merian, and notably Rachel Ruysch are some of the most well-known artists of the period. Merian was German-born, but spent much of her life and died in Amsterdam. She traveled widely and published books of drawings and painting of the animals, insects, and plants in Dutch Suriname and South America. Considered to be one of the first and most important entemologists, her scientific work at the time was largely ignored. Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750) was noted for her still life of flowers, a popular subject at the time, but her work is considered to be the greatest of the late Baroque period in Amsterdam.



Still-Life with Flowers by Rachel Ruysch, n.d. PD-US

Themes of Still Lifes

Still lifes offered a great opportunity to display skill in painting textures and surfaces in great detail, and with highly realistic light effects. Food of all textures, colors, and shapes—silver cutlery, intricate patterns, and subtle folds in table cloths and flowers—all challenged painters.

Flower paintings were a popular sub-genre of still life and were favored by prominent women artists, such as Maria van Oosterwyck and Rachel Ruysch. Dead game, as well as birds painted live but studied from death, were another sub-genre, as were dead fish, a staple of the Dutch diet. Abraham van Beijeren painted this subject frequently.

Virtually all still lifes had a moralistic message, usually concerning the brevity of life. This is known as the ***vanitas*** theme. The vanitas theme was included in explicit symbols, such as a skull, or less obvious symbols such as a half-peeled lemon (representing life: sweet in appearance but bitter to taste). Flowers wilt and food decays, and silver is of no use to the soul. Nevertheless, the force of this message seems less powerful in the more elaborate pieces of the second half of the century.



Banquet Still Life, by Abraham Van Bereyen, 1660: This work is an example of an ostentatious still life

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: THE HISTORY OF ART—ROCOCO TO ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

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5.1: The Rococo and Neoclassicism

Rococo

Rococo in French Decoration

Rococo salons are known for their elaborate detail, serpentine design work, asymmetry, and predisposition to lighter, pastel, or gold-based color palettes.

Key Points

- After the reign of Louis XIV, the wealthy and aristocratic moved back to Paris from Versailles and began decorating their homes in the new Rococo style that was associated with King Louis XV.
- The notion of the salon is an Enlightenment era ideal that transformed the salon, or living room, into the central space for aristocracy to entertain guests and engage in intellectual conversation.
- Rococo interiors are highly unified in nature, and represent the coming together of a number of decorative arts.
- As with other Rococo art forms, the color palette is lighter, the lines are curvaceous ('S' curve), and the decoration is excessive.
- Furniture rose to new heights in the period and emphasized lighthearted frivolity.
- Furniture, friezes, sculpture, metalwork, wall, and ceiling decoration are woven together stylistically in the Rococo salon.

Key Terms

- **asymmetry**: Lacking a common measure between two objects or quantities; incommensurability.
- **serpentine**: Sinuous; curving in alternate directions.
- **mahogany**: Any of various tropical American evergreen trees, of the genus Swietenia, having a valuable hard red-brown wood.
- **palette**: The range of colors in a given work or body of work.

In 18th century Europe, the Rococo style became prevalent in interior design, painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts. A reaction to the rigidity of Baroque style, the frivolous and playful Rococo first manifested itself with interior design and decorative work. In French, the word salon simply means living room or parlor, and Rococo salons refer to central rooms that are designed in the Rococo style. In addition, the notion of the 'salon' is an Enlightenment era ideal that transformed the living room into the central space for aristocracy to entertain guests and engage in intellectual conversation. The idea that one's architectural surroundings should encourage a way of life, or reflect one's values, was the philosophy of the time.

The Rococo interior reached its height in the total art work of the salon. Rococo salons are characterized by their elaborate detail, intricate patterns, serpentine design work, asymmetry, and a predisposition to lighter, pastel, and gold-based color palettes.



Bureau Danton de l'Hôtel de Bourvallais: This example of a Rococo salon exemplifies the serpentine design work and heavy use of gold that were both typical of the Rococo style

As another means of reflecting status, furniture rose to new heights during the Rococo period, emphasizing the lighthearted frivolity that was prized by the style. Furniture design became physically lighter and upholstered for the first time; comfort became an important issue as well as furniture that was free-standing allowing for it to be easily moved around for gatherings. Furniture in

the Rococo period moved away from the wall in order to accentuate the lighthearted and versatile atmosphere that was desired by the aristocracy. Mahogany became the most widely used medium due to its strength, and mirrors also became increasingly popular.

Rococo salons often employed the use of asymmetry in design, which was termed *contraste*. Interior ornament included the use of sculpted forms on ceilings and walls, often somewhat abstract or employing leafy or shell-like textures. Two excellent examples of French Rococo are the Salon de Monsieur le Prince in the Petit Château at Chantilly, decorated by Jean Aubert; and the salons in the Hotel Soubise, Paris, by Germain Boffrand. Both of these salons exhibit typical Rococo style with walls, ceilings, and moulding decorated with delicate interlacings of curves based on the fundamental shapes of the 'S,' as well as with shell forms and other natural shapes.



Salon de la Princesse: A Rococo interior from the Hotel de Soubise, Paris that demonstrates highly elaborate ceiling work

In France, the style began to decline by the 1750s. Criticized for its triviality and excess in ornament, Rococo style had already become more austere by the 1760s, as Neoclassicism began to take over as the dominant style in France and the rest of Europe.

The Rococo style became popular all over Europe, but was particularly evident in rooms from Germany and Austria. Here François Cuvilliés the Elder has designed a pastel-colored room with gilded moldings that seem to crawl up the wall and onto the ceiling. Note the mirrors that multiply and excentuate the accumulation of detail.



François Cuvilliés the Elder, Mirror Room, Amalienburg, 1734-39. Nymphenburg Park, Munich

Rococo in Painting and Sculpture

Rococo style in painting echoes the qualities evident in other manifestations of the style including serpentine lines, heavy use of ornament as well as themes revolving around playfulness, love, and nature.

Key Points

- Rococo style developed first in the decorative arts and interior design, and its influence later spread to architecture, sculpture, theater design, painting, and music.
- Rococo style is characterized by elaborate ornamentation, asymmetrical values, pastel color palette, and curved or serpentine lines.

- Rococo art works often depict themes of love, classical myths, youth, and playfulness.
- Antoine Watteau is considered to be the first great Rococo painter who influenced later Rococo masters such as Boucher and Fragonard.
- Rococo sculpture makes use of very delicate porcelain instead of marble or another heavy medium.

Key Terms

- **Rococo**: A style of baroque architecture and decorative art, from 18th century France, having elaborate ornamentation.
- **pastel**: Any of several subdued tints of colors, usually associated with pink, peach, yellow, green, blue, and lavender.
- **serpentine**: Sinuous; curving in alternate directions.

Rococo Painting

Painting during the Rococo period has many of the same qualities as other Rococo art forms such as heavy use of ornament, curved lines and the use of a gold and pastel-based palette. Additionally, forms are often asymmetrical and the themes are playful, even witty, rather than political, as in the case of Baroque art. Themes relating to myths of love as well as portraits and idyllic landscapes typify Rococo painting.

Antoine Watteau

Antoine Watteau is considered to be the first great Rococo painter. His influence is visible in the work of later Rococo painters such as Francois Boucher and Honore Fragonard. Watteau is known for his soft application of paint, dreamy atmosphere, and depiction of classical themes that often revolve around youth and love, exemplified in the painting *Pilgrimage to Cythera*.



Pilgrimage to Cythera by Antoine Watteau: Watteau's signature soft application of paint, dreamy atmosphere, and depiction of classical themes that often revolve around youth and love is evident in his work Pilgrimage to Cythera. Unlike later Rococo painters, however, some art historians see in Watteau a seriousness that shows an awareness of the poignancy of love's fleeting quality. The superficiality of sexual love and the celebration of its ephemeral quality is evident in the work of painters like Boucher and Fragonard

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

Fragonard was the last of the three Rococo painters to have the patronage of the court. He painted this work, *The Pursuit*, as part of a series of four paintings intended to decorate the private salon of Madame du Barry, Louis XV's mistress. By the time Fragonard had completed the commission the superficiality and sly sexual innuendo of the Rococo style had gone out of favor and du Barry hired another artist to decorate the rooms. Sexual iconography was part of the purpose of the kind of work popular during the height of the Rococo period. Venuses and Cupids were prominent, especially as garden ornaments at scenes of secret trysts. A fountain would suggest the female sex and flowing water, seminal fluid. Baskets, hats, rakes, and other seemingly commonplace items would have been understood as symbols of body parts and sexual acts. The 'hidden' quality of these signs – or at least the idea that only the wealthy, noble elite were in on the joke – was characteristic of the superficiality of the entire movement.



Jean-Honoré Fragonard, The Pursuit, from The Progress of Love, 1771-73, oil on canvas, 1790-91

The period that followed the Rococo was inspired by both events in the world and a desire for more content and serious purpose in both life and art. The political moment in France was one that would see the most serious and bloody consequences of a mismanagement of public affairs and would be reflected in the increasingly political and moral-laden art of that period.

Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism refers to movements in the arts that draw inspiration from the “classical” art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

Key Points

- The height of Neoclassicism coincided with the 18th century Enlightenment era, and continued into the early 19th century.
- The rediscovery and archeological uncovering of Roman artifacts at **Pompeii and Herculanaeum** would spur a desire for all things Greco-Roman in the rest of Europe.
- With the increasing popularity of the Grand Tour, it became fashionable to collect antiquities as souvenirs, which spread the Neoclassical style through Europe and America.
- Neoclassicism spanned all of the arts including painting, sculpture, the decorative arts, theatre, literature, music, and architecture.
- Generally speaking, Neoclassicism is defined stylistically by its use of straight lines, minimal use of color, simplicity of form and, of course, an adherence to classical values and techniques.
- Rococo, with its emphasis on asymmetry, bright colors, and ornamentation is typically considered to be the direct opposite of the Neoclassical style.

Key Terms

- **Grand Tour**: The traditional tour of Europe undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men of means. The custom flourished from about 1660 until the advent of large-scale rail transit in the 1840s.
- **Enlightenment**: A concept in spirituality, philosophy, and psychology related to achieving clarity of perception, reason, and knowledge.
- **Rococo**: A style of baroque architecture and decorative art, from 18th century France, having elaborate ornamentation.

The classical revival, also known as Neoclassicism, refers to movements in the arts that draw inspiration from the "classical" art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. The rediscovery and archeological uncovering of Roman artifacts at Pompeii and Herculanaeum would spur a desire for all things Greco-Roman in the rest of Europe. The height of Neoclassicism coincided with the 18th century Enlightenment era, and continued into the early 19th century. The dominant styles during the 18th century were Baroque and Rococo. The latter, with its emphasis on asymmetry, bright colors, and ornamentation is typically considered to be the direct opposite of the Neoclassical style, which is based on order, symmetry, and simplicity. With the increasing popularity of the Grand Tour, it became fashionable to collect antiquities as souvenirs. This tradition of collecting laid the foundations for many great art collections and spread the classical revival throughout Europe and America.

Neoclassicism grew to encompass all of the arts, including painting, sculpture, the decorative arts, theatre, literature, music, and architecture. The style can generally be identified by its use of straight lines, minimal use of color, simplicity of form and, of course, its adherence to classical values and techniques.

In music, the period saw the rise of classical music and in painting, the works of Jaques-Louis David became synonymous with the classical revival. However, Neoclassicism was felt most strongly in architecture, sculpture, and the decorative arts, where classical models in the same medium were fairly numerous and accessible. Sculpture in particular had a great wealth of ancient models from which to learn, however, most were Roman copies of Greek originals.

Neoclassical architecture was modeled after the classical style and, as with other art forms, was in many ways a reaction against the exuberant Rococo style. The architecture of the Italian architect Andrea Palladio became very popular in the mid 18th century. Additionally, archaeological ruins found in Pompeii and Herculaneum informed many of the stylistic values of Neoclassical interior design based on the ancient Roman rediscoveries.



Villa Godi Valmarana, Lonedo di Lugo, Veneto, Italy: Villa Godi was one of the first works by Palladio. Its austere facade, arched doorways and minimal symmetry reflect his adherence to classical stylistic values

Neoclassical Paintings

Neoclassical painting, produced by men and women, drew its inspiration from the classical art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

Key Points

- Neoclassical subject matter draws from the history and general culture of ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. It is often described as a reaction to the lighthearted and "frivolous" subject matter of the Rococo.
- Neoclassical painting is characterized by the use of straight lines, a smooth paint surface, the depiction of light, a minimal use of color, and the clear, crisp definition of forms.
- The works of Jacques-Louis David are usually hailed as the epitome of Neoclassical painting.
- David attracted over 300 students to his studio, including Jean-Auguste- Dominique Ingres, Marie-Guillemine Benoist, and Angélique Mongez, the last of whom tried to extend the Neoclassical tradition beyond her teacher's death. Élizabeth Vigée Le Brun became the Queen's court painter.

Key Terms

- **Enlightenment**: A philosophical movement in 17th and 18th century Europe. Also known as the Age of Reason, this was an era that emphasized rationalism.

Background and Characteristics

The French Neoclassical style would greatly contribute to the monumentalism of the French Revolution, with the emphasis of both lying in virtue and patriotism.

Neoclassical painting is characterized by the use of straight lines, a smooth paint surface hiding brush work, the depiction of light, a minimal use of color, and the clear, crisp definition of forms. Its subject matter usually relates to either Greco- Roman history or other cultural attributes, such as allegory and virtue. The softness of paint application and light-hearted and “frivolous” subject matter that characterize Rococo painting is recognized as the opposite of the Neoclassical style. The works of Jacques-Louis David are widely considered to be the epitome of Neoclassical painting. Many painters combined aspects of Romanticism with a vaguely Neoclassical style before David’s success, but these works did not strike any chords with audiences. Typically, the subject matter of Neoclassical painting consisted of the depiction of events from history, mythological scenes, and the architecture and ruins of ancient Rome.

The School of David

Neoclassical painting gained new momentum with the great success of David’s *Oath of the Horatii* at the Paris Salon of 1785. The painting had been commissioned by Louis XVI in an effort to remind the increasingly restive French populace of their civic duty to their country. Sadly for Louis, it had the opposite effect. David had twice been to Italy and was steeped in the historical painting style of the old masters. He created this work in a style that was the perfect combination of idealized structure and dramatic effect. The painting created an uproar, and David was proclaimed to have perfectly defined the Neoclassical taste in his painting style. He thereby became the quintessential painter of the movement. In *The Oath of the Horatii*, the perspective is perpendicular to the picture plane. It is defined by a dark arcade behind several classical heroic figures. There is an element of theatre, or staging, that evokes the grandeur of opera. David became the leading French painter and enjoyed a great deal of government patronage. Over the course of his long career, he attracted over 300 students to his studio.

David would become increasingly politicized and with the outbreak of revolution in 1789 he became the chronicler of those events as well as the creator of the many parades and pageants that were intended to keep the French people enthusiastic for the revolution, even as it got bloodier. David would be a protégé of the Jacobeans led by Robespierre. When Robespierre himself fell victim to the mania of the Reign of Terror, as the last days of the revolution before Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and their family would all be sent to their deaths, David was arrested and imprisoned. Perhaps with the intervention of his estranged wife, David lived to paint the next ruler to take charge in France after the Revolution – Napoleon Bonaparte.



Jacques-Louis David. The Oath of the Horatii (1784): Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris



David, The Death of Marat, 1793. oil on canvas, 5’5” x 4’2 ½”, Brussels

Marat was one of the facilitators of the Reign of Terrors. He suffered from a skin disease that required him to spend much time in a bath; Charlotte Corday, a country girl horrified by the bloody events taking place in Paris, came to the city, gained entry to Marat’s rooms and stabbed him to death. She was promptly arrested and guillotined, but David paints Marat moments after his execution as a martyr of the Revolution.

While tradition and the rules governing the Académie Française barred women from studying from the nude model (a necessity for executing an effective Neoclassical painting), David believed that women were capable of producing successful art of the style and welcomed many as his students. Among the most successful were Marie-Guillemine Benoist, who eventually won commissions from the Bonaparte family, and Angélique Mongez, who won patrons from as far away as Russia.



Élizabeth Vigée Le Brun, Marie-Antoinette de Lorraine-Habsbourg, Queen of France, and her children, 1787, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 106.7”, Versailles. PD-US RQE3s9ANo6GnTg at Google Cultural Institute

Neoclassical Sculpture

A reaction against the “frivolity” of the Rococo, Neoclassical sculpture depicts serious subjects influenced by the ancient Greek and Roman past.

Learning Objectives

- Explain what motifs are common to Neoclassical sculpture.

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Neoclassicism emerged in the second half of the 18th century, following the excavations of the ruins of Pompeii, which sparked renewed interest in the Graeco-Roman world.
- Neoclassical sculpture is defined by its symmetry, life-sized to monumental scale, and its serious subject matter.
- The subjects of Neoclassical sculpture ranged from mythological figures to heroes of the past to major contemporary personages.
- Neoclassical sculpture could capture its subject as either idealized or in a more veristic manner.

Key Terms

- **verism**: An ancient Roman technique, in which the subject is depicted with heightened realism, including advanced age.

As with painting, Neoclassicism made its way into sculpture in the second half of the 18th century. In addition to the ideals of the Enlightenment, the excavations of the ruins at Pompeii began to spark a renewed interest in classical culture. Whereas Rococo sculpture consisted of small-scale asymmetrical objects focusing on themes of love and gaiety, neoclassical sculpture assumed life-size to monumental scale and focused on themes of heroism, patriotism, and virtue.

Neoclassical sculptors benefited from an abundance of ancient models, albeit Roman copies of Greek bronzes in most cases. The leading Neoclassical sculptors enjoyed much acclaim during their lifetimes. One of them was Jean-Antoine Houdon, whose work was mainly portraits, very often as busts, which do not sacrifice a strong impression of the sitter's personality to idealism. His style became more classical as his long career continued, and represents a rather smooth progression from Rococo charm to classical dignity. Unlike some Neoclassical sculptors he did not insist on his sitters wearing Roman dress, or being unclothed. He portrayed most of the great figures of the Enlightenment, and traveled to America to produce a statue of George Washington, as well as busts of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and other luminaries of the new republic. His portrait bust of Washington depicts the first President of the United States as a stern, yet competent leader, with the influence of Roman verism evident in his wrinkled forehead, receding hairline, and double chin.



Bust of George Washington by Jean-Antoine Houdon (c. 1786) National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC

French Neoclassicism continued to be a major force in academic art through the 19th century and beyond—a constant antithesis to Romanticism or Gothic revivals.

American Art

The last quarter of the 18th century was one of Revolution. The American, French and Industrial Revolutions all became historical milestones and were represented in art at the time. Some might argue that the French Revolution was brought on, in part, by the financial help Louis XVI gave to the American revolutionaries in their war for independence against France's hereditary enemy, England. In any event, the heroes of that war became often reproduced in both painting and sculpture in both Europe and America.

The 18th century saw many American artists, frustrated by their lack of access to education and examples of great art in museums and collections, decamp to Europe – often England – where they made every effort to learn to paint in the academic style. One of the most important of the early American artists was John Singleton Copley. Copley was from Boston and received what art education he had from his stepfather, a successful London mezzotint engraver who had emigrated to the colonies. Copley absorbed the lessons he could, but his work at this period maintained the specific linearity which Barbara Novak has pointed out as a hallmark of American painters who were trying to copy the only models they had – the prints sent over from England.



John Singleton Copley, Paul Revere, 1768-70, oil on canvas, 35-281/2". Boston. PD-US

In this portrait of a fellow-Bostonian who was to become a hero of the Revolution you see the well-observed but frozen-in-time look of the Americans. Copley would go to England and study with Benjamin West and Joshua Reynolds, but some suggest that his purely American work is, in fact, superior.

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5.2: 18th and 19th Century Art

18th Century American Painting

American art of the 18th century might be considered to have suffered from an inferiority complex. The colonial population in the decades before the American Revolution of 1776 – and much during and after the war – thought of itself as English. America sent raw material to England and received goods manufactured at the new factories that stood at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in return. For many of about-to-be newly minted Americans, English goods were a mark of status and underscored their ties to the Crown. Benjamin Franklin wrote about his wife's purchase of a china bowl and plate spoon for his breakfast as a rhetorical statement of her husband's importance.[1] This reliance on English goods as examples of "civilized" behavior would impact the early American artists as well.

American artists of the 18th century would have had little exposure to the kind of painting that was available to the public in England and Europe at large. There were no museums in America until 1773, and the early institutions were more in the nature of ethnographic or natural history museums than they were like the Louvre.[2] In 1784, C.W. Peale opened the Philadelphia Museum which was largely a collection of natural history curiosities, but initially it did have a display of forty-four portraits that depicted "worthy personages" of America's Revolutionary era making it perhaps the first art museum in America. Peale's son, Rembrandt, was himself a painter of seventy-nine portraits of George Washington.

More importantly, there was no tradition of the great art academies that had existed in Europe since the 16th century. The Academy and Company for the Arts of Drawing in Florence was begun by Cosimo de' Medici in 1563. It should be noted that while a number of women artists created careers of note throughout art history it wasn't until late in the 19th century that they were admitted to most art academies. One of the foremost reasons was the belief that it was inappropriate for women to take part in life drawing classes with an unclothed model. While some wealthy colonialists had undoubtedly brought paintings with them from Europe, these were not available for public consumption. American artists were essentially self-taught and tended to be itinerant, or traveling, artists relegated to certain parts of the country doing all kinds of work for hire from commissioned portraits to signs over tavern doors. These early American artists were called "limners"and most are not known by name.

Art historians have made an effort to identify some of these artists, however. The so-called Beardsley Limner whose portraits of Doctor Hezekiah Beardsley and his wife, Elizabeth, were executed around 1785-90 is one of the more celebrated. Some have attributed the work to a Connecticut pastel artist, Elizabeth Bushnell Perkins (active 1771-1831), but others don't find the style convincing. In any event, the portraits of the doctor and his wife are typical of the early American limner style.



The Beardsley Limner, Dr. Hezekiah Beardsley, ca. 1788-90. Oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 43 5/16", Yale University Art Gallery. Photo: Yale University Art Gallery, PD

Persons of enough means to commission a portrait would have been concerned about what those paintings said about them. Dr. Beardsley is shown in sober clothing but of good quality with a silver buckle at his knee. He is literate as evidenced by the book on the table in front of him – Gibbon's *Declineand Fall of the Roman* Empire – and the pen and inkwell with which he makes notes. Out the window behind him we are shown an expanse of land which may belong to the doctor, or may simply be there to suggest his presence in the wider world.

Elizabeth Beardsley is also shown in clothing that suggests wealth. Her gown appears to be shiny like satin or silk, and her scarf and mobcap is of transparently fine cloth. She wears a cameo on a ribbon and has in her hand an open book and two pink flowers. The dog at her side is probably there to suggest fidelity as images of dogs have done in iconography for centuries; the fruit implies fecundity or possibly wealth – the ability to purchase imported fruit. Out her window, however, we have a different scene from that of her husband. There is a bush with the pink flowers from which the two she holds would seem to have come, there is a garden path but it ends at a high wooden fence. Unlike Doctor Beardsley's access to the world at large, his wife's world ends at her garden gate.



The Beardsley Limner, Elizabeth Davis Beardsley, ca. 1788 – 90. Oil on canvas, 45 5/16 x 43 3/16", Yale University Art Gallery, Photo: Yale University Art Gallery, PD

Elizabeth Beardsley is also claiming credit for literacy. In her lap is a copy of Reverend James Hervey's *Meditations and Contemplations* in which he suggested that "Ye flowery Nations, Ye must all decay," possibly referenced by the pink flower she holds. [3] Together the texts suggest that the Beardsleys were intellectuals with a critical eye to the fortunes of the new American nation.

Both figures are typical of the limner style of painting. They are stiff and painted with limited modeling giving them the flatness of a medieval icon. Both figures inhabit a limited, but relatively believable, space and there is a flatness to the perspective outside the windows. The fabric of Elizabeth Beardsley's dress is indicated by the horizontal areas of linear shadow giving the indication of shine without the actual illusion of it. E. H. Gombrich has described the practice of "making" and "matching" in *Art and Illusion*.[4] He suggests that artists learn from copying the techniques of other artists; they begin with an idea of whatever is in front of them and then proceed to match the original schemata to create a more perfect illusion. Without the benefit of learning the matching techniques American limners were stuck at the conceptual, or making, stage. While art theory may have moved on from Gombrich's ideas, it is an effective way to describe the result of many early American artists' production.

One resource available to early American painters might have been the prints that came to American with the ships from England. Reproductions in engraving or etching from artists like Anthony van Dyck would have shown artists the linear equivalent of creating a painterly shine on fabric and it is that kind of making we see in Elizabeth Beardsley's dress.

John Singleton Copley

Barbara Novak has called John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) the first painter to create a truly American vision.[5] As Novak presents the artist's early career, he effectively marries American conceptual materialism with a desire to paint like the Europeans.

Copley was born into an Irish-Anglo immigrant family, probably in Boston. His father died when he was young and his mother remarried the artist-engraver Peter Pelham. It seems that Copley learned engraving and some painting from his stepfather, although he was largely self-taught. He must have had the example of prints from England and the continent since he was aware from an early age of the inadequacies of both American art and patronage. In November of 1766 he wrote to ex-pat artist Benjamin West, "In this Country as You rightly observe there is no examples of Art, except what is to [be] met with in a few prints indifferently exicuted, from which it is not possable to learn much." Note that many early Americans wrote equally badly.

Still, Copley managed to give the American gentry what it wanted, and that was – often – the appearance of English nobility.



Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lady Caroline Russell, ca. 1759-1762. PD



John Singleton Copley, Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers, ca. 1763. PD

His portrait of Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers, wife of a well-to-do Quaker in Massachusetts, shows the method of copying – or matching – from a print of another painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds' subject would have been attractive to American colonialists concerned with status; Lady Caroline Russell was the wife of George Spencer, 4th Duke of Marlborough and would be an ancestor of both Princess Diana (Spencer) and Winston Churchill. In addition, Sir Joshua Reynolds was himself a founder and the first president of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

You can see the American artist copying not just the composition of the Reynolds, but the costume (although he changes the color but if he's working from a print he would not have known the original), and even the spaniel. If you compare the two carefully you will see that Copley's shadowing, the *chiaroscuro* in the modeling of the figure, the highlights on the dress all are carefully done but harder-edged than the original. Too "liney" as West would say about another Copley painting sent to England and shown in one of the Royal Academy's exhibitions.

Novak has suggested that during his colonial phase Copley was concerned with the conceptual objectness of things and treated the images of people the same way.[6] It was this concreteness without the nuance of illusion that gave his portraits a frozen quality, even as his ability to capture likeness and to generate an increasing naturalism in surfaces progressed. However, Novak notes that in portraits of persons he knew better and which he painted in a more informal manner, like the portrait of Paul Revere from ca. 1768—70, there is more of a suggestion of personality behind the image – a "living portrait".[7]



John Singleton Copley, Portrait of Paul Revere, 1768. Oil on canvas, 35 x 28 ½", Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. PD

Copley managed to make his way to England in 1774. He traveled on to Italy and France, observing the examples of European history painting that he had so long desired to see. In England, West and Reynolds provided the young American with entry into the artistic circles of London and an introduction to the techniques of the Grand Style of European art.

One of Copley's more successful paintings after his European education was a commission he undertook for English businessman Brooke Watson in 1778. The painting recounts an event in the then cabin-boy Watson's narrow escape from the jaws of a shark in Havana, Cuba. He did lose a leg to the shark and Copley gives a suggestion of pink in the water where the right leg is submerged. This painting incorporates both the action and Gothic horror of the moment with the survival of his American recreation of waves with hard edges and a shark apparently known only from written accounts (and presumably from Watson's remembered eye-witness account!). Arguably, something was lost as Copley became more adept in the European Grand Style of painting, although his example is instructive in the differences between the early American artists and their European counterparts.



John Singleton Copley, Watson and the Shark, oil on canvas, 1778. Copley, then living in London, painted three versions. Metropolitan Museum of Art CC0

There are many other American artists who made the pilgrimage to Europe, and many brought what they learned back to America with them. Gilbert Stuart, the painter of the George Washington that we all have on our dollar bills, was one such. Others, like West, remained in England for their entire careers. The inability of American painters to make the genre of history painting their own was partially accounted for by the fact that America didn't have – or at least didn't *feel* it shared innately and authentically – the literal history that classical European history painting embodied. It wasn't until the 19th century that American artists would find their own version of history in America itself.

19th Century American Painting

In 1791, Chateaubriand – who had left France disgusted with the French Revolution – traveled through the newly made country of America writing about what he saw. He wrote, “Nothing is old in America except the trees,” and in that statement captured what American artists of the 19th century would understand as the American answer to European history painting – landscape.[8] Throughout the early part of the century American painters would concentrate on capturing the American landscape in all its variety. One artist who embodies the new aesthetic of America, as Copley did in the previous century, was Thomas Cole. Cole himself was born in England, but he came to America with his family in 1818 at the age of 17. He lived first in Ohio, then Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1825 moved to Catskill, New York, where he was a founder of the Hudson River School (a style of painting or subject matter, not an actual institution). Cole worked as an engraver and was originally a portraitist, but by the time of his removal to New York he was concentrating on landscape. As a mature artist he would paint allegorical works which incorporated landscape with ideas not unlike those of the European history painters. But it was his influence on landscape artists like Asher B. Durand and Frederic Edwin Church that would be most significant in art history. Like earlier European artists, notably Poussin and Claude, Cole would sketch from nature in the outdoors but finish his canvases in the studio. In 1842, Cole sent back to Europe with the intention of making the Grand Tour to study the Old Masters. He also made paintings of the European landscape on that trip.

The Oxbow

Most professional men in the early 19th c. in America belonged to the Freemasons, a sort of private club for privileged white men – George Washington was Grand Master of his lodge. David Bjelajac has noted that Cole’s Freemasonry played a part in the imagery he incorporates in the Oxbow.[9] Completed as a commission for his patron, Luman Reed, and intended for the annual exhibition in 1836 at the National Academy of Design. Cole thought of it as “a view” and easier to execute than the multiple figured canvases of his *Course of Empire* series. The Oxbow, or *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm*, was a popular tourist site in New England and so one that many people would know. Cole used a larger canvas that he had in his studio than a landscape view might normally have been made on. At 51 1/2 x 76” it approached the size of a history painting. But this was no simple landscape; Cole used the actual scene on the Connecticut River as an opportunity to include a number of larger ideas. The painting is dived diagonally by the green hillside and the dark clouds in the sky. The land on the right side of the divide is seen in the distance as a tame, cultivated space with orderly fields and husbanded trees surrounding the river. The oxbow of the title takes its name from the actual feature of the river as it loops back on itself and suggests the yoke on a team of oxen. The left side of the scene is wild nature with a blasted tree in the foreground that leads our eye upward to the storm clouds that seem to be moving to the left. Cole has created a literal description of the mindset of Americans at this moment for whom the taming of the wild land was a God-given duty and one that would find political expression in Manifest Destiny. The term was a controversial one that would be used to justify American imperialist expansion into the western territories of Native Americans. Bjelajac has noted the faint areas on the distant hill that seem to be the Hebrew letters for either “NOAH” (right side up) or “SHADDAI” (or Almighty when read upside down, as if from above). (Bjelajac, 70). In any event, this gloss of Christian religiosity imposed on the landscape would have been understood and appreciated by the American viewers of the 19th c.



Thomas Cole, View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm – The Oxbow, 1836. Oil on canvas, 51.4 x 75.9”, Metropolitan Museum of Art. PD-US

Frederick Edwin Church

The son of a wealthy family, Church was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and became one of the most famous American artists of the 19th century. He studied for two years with Thomas Cole, and created monumental composite landscapes that joined scenes and

sketches from various locations into often fantastic views. Church's – and many of Cole's large canvases of his series – were exhibited to take advantage of the public's desire for spectacle. A large exhibition space would be rented and the paintings displayed for the public at large to see for an entrance fee.

As a second-generation Hudson River School artist, Church was painting in the Romantic landscape tradition that would include artists in Europe like Caspar David Friedrich, John Constable, and J.M.W. Turner. Burke's idea of the Sublime – the awe inspired in human beings by the majesty of God's creation – would inspire these detail-rich scenes and would appeal to the Protestant religious leanings of early 19th c. Americans.

Church would travel widely including two trips to South America in 1853 and 1957 where his paintings like *The Heart of the Andes* (1859) would include a multitude of plants and animals, each recognizable and scientifically correct in detail. At a time when the writings of explorer-naturalists like Alexander von Humboldt and later Charles Darwin were capturing the popular imagination, Church's canvases brought crowds of thousands into the gallery where he displayed it as if it were a window looking out onto the Andes with "natural" lighting from overhead. He eventually sold it for $10,000 which was the highest price ever paid for an American painting to date.[10]



Frederick Edwin Church, The Heart of the Andes, 1859. Oil on canvas, 66.1 x 119.2 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art. PD-US

The Luminists

In New England another group of painters was creating a uniquely American style of painting, although it, too, was based in part on a European model. Barbara Novak has described the large, Baroque paintings of Cole, Church, and Bierstadt as "Grand Opera," and the more modestly sized, quiet, glowing canvases of the Luminists as the "still, small voice."[11] Martin Johnson Heade, Fitz Hugh Lane, and John F. Kensett among others found in the watery New England landscape the visual correlative of the era's transcendentalist preoccupation. Many of these artists worked in both the more homely Hudson River style and some Hudson River artists – including, on occasion, Cole and Church – created work in the glowing Luminist tradition, but the Luminist paintings of the New Englanders of the 1860s were working in a style that drew less from the theatrical European history paintings and more from the Baroque Golden Age of Dutch maritime paintings. Like those Dutch paintings which had been created in a modest size scaled to the domestic interiors of the wealthy Netherlandish merchant patrons, the Luminists worked primarily on horizontal canvases with glazes of oil paint that seemed to glow from within (luminists).



Fitz Hugh Lane, Stage Fort across Gloucester Harbor, 1863. Oil on canvas, 38 x 60 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, CC0 1.0

"Standing on the bare ground,– my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God."[12] This quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson seems to describe the intention of the Luminist painters in their works of light

and stillness.[13] The Luminists choice of a horizontal format for their paintings echoed the horizontality of the quiet ocean or lakes that were their usual subject matter. The concept of the Sublime, Burke's idea about the presence of God in the landscape, in these works becomes less awe-inspiring or terrifying, and more spiritually immersive – like gradually sinking into a golden pool of God.



John Frederick Kensett, Lake George, 1870. Oil on canvas, 14 x 24", Art Gallery Ergsart by Ergsap on Flickr. PD

This painting of Lake George, New York, by Kensett is a model of Luminist style in another mood. Here storm clouds reminiscent of Cole's *Oxbow* scud from right to left in the distance. Even with the similarities of rocks and trees framing the left of the painting and a brighter vista in the distance, Kensett's painting still seems frozen in a moment that has little to do with the ambitions of human beings.

Edmonia Lewis

The history of African-American artists during the 19th century paralleled the struggle of all Black Americans at that fraught time. Black people in general in the periods both before and after the Civil War were most often pictured racially stereotyped in both appearance and the activities they were shown engaged in. Despite this, there were a number of African-American artists who attempted to show a more genuine image of Black history and to create work that was equally significant with that of any artist. These artists were ignored by art history for years, but increasingly their voices and eyes are providing a clearer picture of early American art. One inspirational woman who has become part of modern art history and the history of women in general is Edmonia Lewis. Lewis was the child of an Afro-Haitian father and Native American (Mississauga Ojibwe) mother in upstate New York in or about 1844. Lewis was inconsistent in her statements about her early childhood and often chose to amplify her Native American heritage including the name she was apparently given, Wildfire. She was born free, and while her parents died when she was young her half-brother made a fortune in the California goldrush and saw that she received an education. After experiences at some preparatory schools, Lewis attended Oberlin College, one of the first higher-learning institutions in the U.S. to admit women as well as persons of different racial identities. She was subject to a number of apparently discriminatory episodes at Oberlin and left before graduating. She moved to Boston, a Northern town with many important abolitionists in residence, and began work as a sculptor. After facing rejection by several male artists for tutelage, she was taken on for a time by Edward Augustus Brackett, a moderately well-known sculptor. In 1864 she opened her own studio.

Lewis made money doing portrait medallions of famous abolitionists and figures from the Civil War. Despite some success with these and some Native American-themed works Lewis left America for Rome in 1865. She wrote, "I was practically driven to Rome in order to obtain the opportunities for art culture, and to find a social atmosphere where I was not constantly reminded of my color. The land of liberty had no room for a colored sculptor."[14]

There was a large community of ex-patriot women artists in Rome in the 1860s. Henry James referred to them as both "that white marmorean flock" – marmorean signifying marble since many were sculptors – and "that strange sisterhood of American lady sculptors who at one time settled upon the seven hills [of Rome]."[15] While Lewis found some measure of society and freedom from oppression, she still faced the same issues of patriarchy as evidenced by James' text as did the other women artists.

There is great individuality in Lewis' work compared to other Neoclassical or Romantic artists. Her subjects were largely related to either her Native American heritage or that of Blacks in history. Her style, however, has frequently been criticized for the erasure of those racial characteristics that might have made the work more politically insistent.

Her most recognized work is currently in the Smithsonian Institution. In 1876, Lewis created a monumental sculpture of the Egyptian pharaoh Cleopatra for the Centennial Exhibition that was held in Philadelphia. The work was very well-received although after the exhibition closed it failed to sell. From storage it eventually went on to decorate a saloon, and then to mark the grave of a

racehorse named “Cleopatra”. When it was finally donated to the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 1994 it required extensive restoration.

Lewis’ Cleopatra is a substantial figure, head back and eyes closed in death, on an elaborate throne in Egyptian motif. While typically exhibiting the features of a white – or racially neutral – Neoclassical figure, the sculpture exhibits the softly rounded fleshiness of Lewis’ other figures with graceful drapery that leaves one breast revealed, an image which recalls medieval versions of the Virgin Mary breast exposed in healing or charity; Delacroix depicted his Liberty leading the people with breasts exposed, possibly to underscore her function as allegory or to represent freedom being nurtured by France.[16]



Edmonia Lewis, The Death of Cleopatra, carved 1876. Marble, 63 x 31 ¼ x 46”, Smithsonian American Art Museum. CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication





Edmonia Lewis, Forever Free, 1867. Marble, The Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Lewis created this sculptural group to commemorate the ratification of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery in the United States. Little is known about the end of Lewis’ life, but her work commemorates a creative life carved out of the oppressive reality of 19th c. America.

Robert S. Duncanson

Other African-American artists made significant work during the 19th century. Robert S. Duncanson was the child of a white Canadian of Scottish ancestry and a black mother. He was one of the American landscape artists to achieve national recognition. He worked mainly in the 1850's and 60's and modeled his paintings after those of the European master Claude Lorrain which he saw on a brief trip to Europe in 1853. One of his early patrons was the abolitionist Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati who was also a supporter of Hiram Powers, a white sculptor living and working in Florence, Italy, at the same time that Edmonia Lewis was in Rome.

Duncanson's paintings were similar to those of the Hudson River painters Cole, Durand, and Church. Some of the work is imaginative like Cole's *Course of Empire* series, but exhibit less of the drama of the Sublime in favor of a more restrained and almost Classical remove.



Robert S. Duncanson, Pompeii, 1855, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Richard Frates, 1983.95.158 CC



Robert S. Duncanson, Valley Pasture, 1857, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Melvin and H. Alan Frank from the Frank Family Collection, 1983.104.1 CC

Henry Ossawa Tanner

Like Lewis and other African-American artists, Henry Ossawa Tanner moved to Europe to practice his art during the 19th c. Unlike Lewis, Tanner moved to Paris in 1891 and lived and worked there among the Impressionists for the rest of his life. Tanner had been

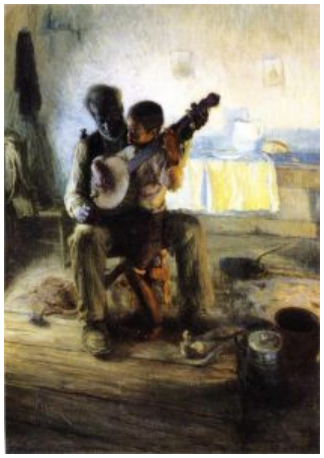
a pupil of Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the only black student in 1879. Tanner has written of the prejudice he experienced at the hands of his fellow students, although he became friends with Eakins and Robert Henri, later founder of the Ashcan School in New York City. *I was extremely timid and to be made to feel that I was not wanted, although in a place where I had every right to be, even months afterwards caused me sometimes weeks of pain. Every time any one of these disagreeable incidents came into my mind, my heart sank, and I was anew tortured by the thought of what I had endured, almost as much as the incident itself.*[17]

In France he became best known for religious subjects and visited the Middle East at one point. His most acclaimed work in the United States was not a religious subject, however, but a domestic interior with an older black man teaching a child to play the banjo. At a moment in America when the most common images of African-Americans were disparaging clichés of minstrelsy and other racist tropes, this sensitive and human scene was created in a muted palette with soft lighting falling on the two figures.

Tanner would be recognized in France with one of its highest honors, the Legion of Honor, for his work over a long career.



Henry Ossawa Tanner, Escape into Egypt, c. 1907. Oil on canvas, Cincinnati Art Museum. Sailko, CC-BY 3.0



Henry Ossawa Tanner, The Banjo Lesson, 1893. Oil on canvas, 49 x 35.5", Hampton University Museum. PD US

1 From *Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin, Written by Himself and Continued by His Grandson and Others*, vol 1, (Philadelphia: McCary & Davis, 1840), pp. 32-35.
2 The Charleston Museum is credited with being the one of the first in America. It contained decorative objects and objects of historical interest, but is not an "art" museum in the true sense of the word. In any event, it didn't open to the public until 1824.
3 https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/49500 accessed 11/3/20.
4 E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, New York: Pantheon, 1960.
5 Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience*, New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
6 Novak, p.24.
7 Ibid, pp. 24-25.
8 Chateaubriand, "Voyage en Amérique," Oeuvres (1836), XII, 18; quoted in Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience*, 2nd ed., Harper & Row, 1979. P. 38
9 Bjelajac, David. "Thomas Cole's *Oxbow* and the American Zion Divided." *American Art*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2006, pp. 60–83. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/504062. Accessed 13 Sept. 2020.
10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederic_Edwin_Church accessed 9/18/20.
11 Barbara Novak, "Grand Opera and the Still, Small Voice", in *Nature and Culture* (1980), p.18.
12*Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson and Robert E. Spiller (Cambridge: Belknap Press/Harvard Univ. Press, 1971, I, 10.)

13 Students interested in the connection between the Transcendentalist writers and the Luminist School might read Gayle Smith's interesting paper on the topic. "Emerson and the Luminist Painters: A Study of Their Styles," Gayle L. Smith, American Quarterly , Summer, 1985, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer, 1985), pp. 193-215 Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2712898 Accessed 9/23/20.
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17 From Tanner's autobiography, *The Story of an Artist's Life*, quoted in Bruce, Marcus C. *Henry Ossawa Tanner.* New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002. Accessed 11/2/20 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Ossawa_Tanner

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5.3: Romanticism

Romanticism, fueled by the French Revolution, was a reaction to the scientific rationalism and classicism of the Age of Enlightenment.

Key Points

- The ideals of the French Revolution created the context from which both Romanticism and the Counter- Enlightenment emerged.
- Romanticism was a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and also a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature.
- Romanticism legitimized the individual imagination as a critical authority, which permitted freedom from classical notions of form in art.
- The Industrial Revolution also influenced Romanticism, which was in part about escaping from modern realities.

Key Terms

- **Romanticism**: 18th century artistic and intellectual movement that stressed emotion, freedom, and individual imagination.
- **Counter-Enlightenment**: A movement that arose primarily in late 18th and early 19th century Germany against the rationalism, universalism, and empiricism commonly associated with the Enlightenment.
- **Avant–garde:** originally a military term referring to the vanguard, or those soldiers out in front.

Overview

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century. In most areas the movement was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 CE to 1840 CE. Romanticism reached beyond the rational and Classicist ideal models to elevate a revived medievalism.

The Influence of the French Revolution

Though influenced by other artistic and intellectual movements, the ideologies and events of the French Revolution created the primary context from which both Romanticism and the Counter-Enlightenment emerged. Upholding the ideals of the Revolution, Romanticism was a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and also a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature. Romanticism elevated the achievements of what it perceived as heroic individualists and artists, whose pioneering examples would elevate society. It also legitimized the individual imagination as a critical authority, which permitted freedom from classical notions of form in art.

Romanticism in Europe had two major strains: Orientalism and the Gothic. Earlier in the 18th century novels like *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole published in 1764, or *The Monk* by Matthew Gregory Lewis, published in 1796, created an audience for entertainments that appealed to the imagination and the senses. Dark visions and portrayals of nightmares were gaining popularity in Germany as evidenced by Goethe's possession and admiration of paintings by Fuseli, which were said to be capable of "giving the viewer a good fright." Notable artists included Joseph Vernet, Caspar Wolf, Philip James de Loutherbourg, and Henry Fuseli who often turned to the supernatural subjects in Shakespeare's plays as material.



Henry Fuseli, The Nightmare. Oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts. PD=US

The Industrial Revolution also had an influence on Romanticism, which was in part an escape from modern realities of population growth, urban sprawl, and industrialism. Indeed, in the second half of the 19th century, "Realism" was offered as a polarized opposite to Romanticism.

Painting in the Romantic Period

Romanticism was a prevalent artistic movement in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Key Points

- "History painting," traditionally referred to technically difficult narrative paintings of multiple subjects, but became more frequently focused on recent historical events.
- Gericault and Delacroix were leaders of French romantic painting, and both produced iconic history paintings.
- Ingres, though firmly committed to Neoclassical values, is seen as expressing the Romantic spirit of the times.
- The Spanish artist Francisco Goya is considered perhaps the greatest painter of the Romantic period, though he did not necessarily self-identify with the movement; his oeuvre reflects the integration of many styles.
- The German variety of Romanticism notably valued wit, humor, and beauty.
- The Gothic and the Gothic Revival in architecture turned to ideas made popular in literature that often featured horror or terror. Architecture used features from the Gothic of the 12^{th} – $15/16^{th}$ c. which seemed to participate in that emotionally dark moment.
- In England, Edmund Burke will write *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757 which suggested that wild nature could elicit emotions of terror in humans.

Key Terms

- **Romanticism**: 18th century artistic and intellectual movement that stressed emotion, freedom, and individual imagination.
- **Neoclassicism**: The name given to Western movements in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theater, music, and architecture that draw inspiration from the "classical" art and culture of Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome.
- **history painting**: A genre in painting defined by its subject matter rather than artistic style. These paintings usually depict a moment in a narrative story, rather than a specific and static subject.

Romanticism

While the arrival of Romanticism in French art was delayed by the hold of Neoclassicism on the academies, it became increasingly popular during the Napoleonic period. Its initial form was the history paintings that acted as propaganda for the new regime. The key generation of French Romantics born between 1795–1805, in the words of Alfred de Vigny, had been "conceived between

battles, attended school to the rolling of drums." The French Revolution (1789–1799) followed by the Napoleonic Wars until 1815, meant that war, and the attending political and social turmoil that went along with them, served as the background for Romanticism.

History Painting

Since the Renaissance, history painting was considered among the highest and most difficult forms of art. History painting is defined by its subject matter rather than artistic style. History paintings usually depict a moment in a narrative story rather than a specific and static subject. In the Romantic period, history painting was extremely popular and increasingly came to refer to the depiction of historical scenes, rather than those from religion or mythology.

French Romanticism

This generation of the French school developed personal Romantic styles while still concentrating on history painting with a political message. Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* of 1821 remains the greatest achievement of the Romantic history painting, which in its day had a powerful anti-government message. The subject was one of contemporary horror depicting shipwrecked men who had reportedly resorted to cannibalism to survive.



The Raft of the Medusa by Jean Louis Theodore Gericault, 1818–21: This painting is regarded as one of the greatest Romantic era paintings

Ingres

Profoundly respectful of the past, Ingres assumed the role of a guardian of academic orthodoxy against the ascendant Romantic style represented by his nemesis Eugène Delacroix. He described himself as a "conservator of good doctrine, and not an innovator." Nevertheless, modern opinion has tended to regard Ingres and the other Neoclassicists of his era as embodying the Romantic spirit of his time, while his expressive distortions of form and space make him an important precursor of modern art.



Achilles Receiving the Envoys of Agamemnon by Ingres, 1801: Ingres, though firmly committed to Neoclassical values, is seen as expressing the Romantic spirit of the times

Delacroix

Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) had great success at the Salon with works like *The Barque of Dante* (1822), *The Massacre at Chios* (1824) and *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827). Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) remains, with *The Medusa*, one of the best known works of French Romantic painting. Both of these works reflected current events and appealed to public sentiment.



Liberty Leading the People, by Delacroix, 1830: Liberty Leading the People is a painting by Eugène Delacroix commemorating the July Revolution of 1830, which toppled King Charles X of France

Goya

Spanish painter Francisco Goya is today generally regarded as the greatest painter of the Romantic period. However, in many ways he remained wedded to the classicism and realism of his training. More than any other artist of the period, Goya exemplified the Romantic expression of the artist's feelings and his personal imaginative world. He also shared with many of the Romantic painters a more free handling of paint, emphasized in the new prominence of the brushstroke and impasto, which tended to be repressed in neoclassicism under a self-effacing finish. Goya's work is renowned for its expressive line, color, and brushwork as well as its distinct subversive commentary. His *Third of May, 1808*, pictured an incident from the French Peninsular War in which civilians were slaughtered at the hands of Napoleon's mercenaries. The terror it invokes is part of the Gothic mindset of the Romantic period, but with real-world subject matter.



Goya, The Third of May, 1808, 1814, oil on canvas, 2.9 × 3.8 yd. PDUS, The Prado in Google Earth: Home – 7th level of zoom, JPEG compression quality: Photoshop 8

The Hudson River School

In the United States, a similar movement, called the Hudson River School, emerged in the 19th century and quickly became one of the most distinctive worldwide purveyors of landscape pieces. American painters in this movement created works of mammoth scale in an attempt to capture the epic size and scope of the landscapes that inspired them. The work of Thomas Cole, the school's generally acknowledged founder, seemed to emanate from a similar philosophical position as that of European landscape artists. Both championed, from a position of secular faith, the spiritual benefits that could be gained from contemplating nature. Some of the later Hudson River School artists, such as Albert Bierstadt, created less comforting works that placed a greater emphasis (with a great deal of Romantic exaggeration) on the raw, terrifying power of nature.



The Oxbow by Thomas Cole, 1836: Thomas Cole was a founding member of the pioneering Hudson School, the most influential landscape art movement in 19th century America

The Gothic Revival

The Gothic strain of Romanticism was also seen in architecture. The Gothic Revival, as it was called, was an architectural movement beginning in England during the 1740s that sought to revive medieval forms.

Key Points

- Gothic Revival sought to revive medieval forms, much like the Neoclassical style sought to revive works from classical antiquity.
- The Gothic Revival occurred as industrialization progressed, in part because there was a reaction against the use of machinery and factory production.
- While the Neoclassical style of the 18th century was associated with “radical” and liberal perspectives, the Gothic Revival was associated with “traditional” sensibilities, such as conservatism and the monarchy. The Gothic Revival style is characterized by its stone and brick structures, many of which are religious in nature, as well as having heavy decoration, pointed arches, steep gables, and large windows.
- Gothic revival cottages and smaller buildings, called “Carpenter Gothic,” also became popular.
- A. W. N. Pugin was a prominent architect, designer, artist, and critic who was involved in the Gothic Revival style.

Key Terms

- **medievalism**: A custom or belief from the Middle Ages.
- **gable**: The triangular area of external wall adjacent to two meeting sloped roofs.
- **tracery**: Bars or ribs, usually of stone or wood, or other material, that subdivide an opening or stand in relief against a door or wall as an ornamental feature.

The Gothic Revival was primarily an architectural movement that began in 1740s England. The style sought to revive medieval forms, much as the Neoclassical style sought to revive works from classical antiquity. During the 18th century, the ruins of medieval Gothic architecture began to receive newfound appreciation after having been relatively dismissed in the overall history of architecture. Some critics believe there was a kind of nostalgia for an enchanted, less rational world that was linked to the perceived superstitions of medieval Catholicism.

In England, the center of the Gothic revival, the movement was intertwined with philosophical trends associated with a reawakening of Christian traditions in response to the growth of religious nonconformism. Ultimately, the Gothic style became widespread in the third quarter of the 19th century. While the Neoclassical style of the 18th century was associated with “radical” and liberal perspectives, the Gothic Revival was associated with “traditional” sensibilities, such as conservatism and the monarchy. As industrialization progressed, there was an increasing reaction against the use of machinery and factory production. Supporters of medievalism criticized industrial society, believing the pre-industrial model to be a golden age.

The Gothic Revival style is characterized by its stone and brick structures, many of which are religious in nature, as well as heavy decoration. The most fundamental element of the Gothic style of architecture is the pointed arch. Columns that support arches are smaller in Gothic buildings, and continue all the way to the roof, where they become part of the vault. In the vault, the pointed arch can be seen in three dimensions where the ribbed vaulting meets in the center of the ceiling of each bay. This ribbed vaulting is another distinguishing feature of Gothic architecture. The slender columns and lighter systems of thrust allowed for larger windows and more light in Gothic structures. The windows, tracery, carvings, and ribs make up a bewildering display of decoration where almost every surface is decorated with a profusion of shapes and patterns. Gothic revival cottages and smaller buildings also became popular and are referred to as “Carpenter Gothic.” These structures are defined by their use of Gothic elements such as pointed arches and steep gables.

A. W. N. Pugin was a prominent architect, designer, artist, and critic who was deeply involved in the Gothic Revival. The height of his work is seen in the interior design of the Palace of Westminster. Pugin designed many churches in England during his career and published a series of volumes of architectural drawings entitled *Examples of Gothic Architecture* and *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* that remained in print and were the standards for the Gothic Revival for the next century.



Exterior of the Palace of Westminster: A. W. N. Pugin designed the Palace of Westminster, and was an architect, designer, artist, and critic deeply involved in the Gothic Revival

Orientalism

Especially in France which had political and economic interests in overseas colonies, protectorates and mandate territories that came under French rule from the 16th century onward, the picturing of the "Oriental Other" became popular. France began with the conquest of Algiers in 1830 and would hold it until the 1960s..[1] The paintings that came out of this period are, as Linda Nochlin and others have pointed out, not a true record of the life of the people of these areas, but a romantic and essentially racist characterization of them as exotic, brutal, highly sexualized and essentially uncivilized compared to the French.



Eugène Delacroix, The Women of Algiers, 1834. Oil on canvas, 5'10 7/8 x 7'6 1/8". Louvre. PD-US. http://www.abcgallery.com/D/delacroi...lacroix22.html

Eugene Delacroix was the leading painter of the French Romantic movement and had made a trip to North Africa in 1832 to gain visual material for paintings. The results were romantic fantasies like *The Women of Algiers* from 1834. The idea of a harem – women who were sexually available to a single man – the Sultan – was part of the exotic appeal.

As opposed to the smooth, academic "licked surface" of Neoclassicism, Romantic paintings like those of Delacroix are characterized by more painterly brushstrokes, softer edges or contours, and areas of impasto paint (thicker paint).

Romantic Landscape in England

Key Points

- The Industrial Revolution also influenced Romanticism, which was in part about escaping from modern realities.
- Romanticism was a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and also a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature.
- Romanticism legitimized the individual imagination as a critical authority, which permitted freedom from classical notions of form in art.
- The decline of explicitly religious works, a result of the Protestant Reformation, contributed to the rise in the popularity of landscapes.
- English painters, working in the Romantic tradition, became well known for watercolor landscapes in the 18th century.
- Artists in the Barbizon School brought landscape painting to prominence in France, and were inspired by English landscape artist John Constable. The Barbizon school was an important precursor to Impressionism.
- The glorified depiction of a nation's natural wonders, and the development of a distinct national style, were both ways in which nationalism influenced landscape painting in Europe and America.
- The Hudson River School was the most influential landscape art movement in 19th century America.

Key Terms

- **Romanticism**: 18th century artistic and intellectual movement that stressed emotion, freedom, and individual imagination.
- **plein air**: En plein air is a French expression that means "in the open air," and refers to the act of painting outdoors. In the mid-19th century, working in natural light became particularly important to the Barbizon School and Impressionism.
- **Picturesque**: as described by Thomas Girtin, the picturesque was a method of creating satisfying landscape drawings, sketches, or paintings by including such formulaic things as a rough, dark foreground, a long light vista, and ruins.

In England, landscapes had initially only been painted as the backgrounds for portraits, and typically portrayed the parks or estates of a landowner. This changed as a result of Anthony van Dyck, who, along with other Flemish artists living in England, began a national tradition. In the 18th century, watercolor painting, mostly of landscapes, became an English speciality. The nation had both a buoyant market for professional works of this variety, and a large number of amateur painters. By the beginning of the 19th century, the most highly regarded English artists were all, for the most part, dedicated landscapists, including John Constable, J.M.W. Turner, and Samuel Palmer.

***The Hay Wain*by John Constable, 1821**: Constable was a popular English Romantic Painter.

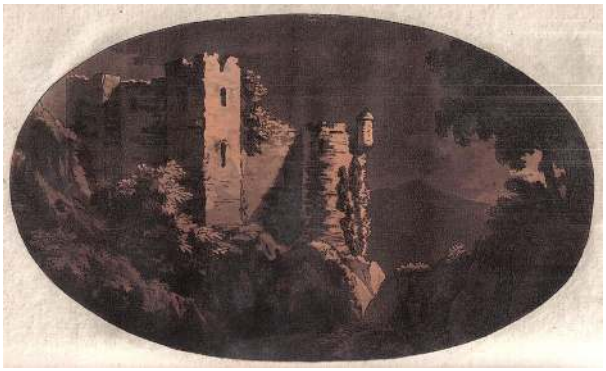
In Europe, as John Ruskin noted, and Sir Kenneth Clark confirmed, landscape painting was the "chief artistic creation of the 19th century," and "the dominant art." As a result, in the times that followed, it became common for people to "assume that the appreciation of natural beauty and the painting of landscape was a normal and enduring part of our spiritual activity."

William Gilpin was an English clergyman whose walks and sketches in the countryside resulted in a formula for the creation of pleasant views. His ideas resulted in more constrained landscapes with the sorts of restrained subjects young ladies of good breeding would feel comfortable, the culture thought, recreating. Jane Austin's heroine in *Pride and Prejudice* remarks upon being asked, belatedly, to join Darcy, Mrs. Hurst, and Miss Bingley on a walk she replies:

"No, no; stay where you are. You are charmingly group'd, and appear to uncommon, advantage. The picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth. Good bye."

She then ran gaily off …

As several critics have noted, the "subtext" here is Gilpin's appendix on his prints, where he explains in technical jargon that there are problems in "forming two into a group," while "*four* introduce a new difficulty in grouping." But with three you "are almost sure of a good group." Elizabeth shows herself to be a good student of Gilpin, like her creator; but the cause for her gay laugh is the little joke she shares with those of us who have read Gilpin, since what Gilpin is actually talking about is "the doctrine of grouping *larger cattle*."[2]



William Gilpin, Penrith Castle, 1772



John Constable, Dedham Vale, 1802, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

John Constable's landscapes never moved far from his childhood home on the River Stour in Suffolk. His father was a successful landowner and farmer, and Constable recorded the life of the rural gentry in the traditional English countryside that was rapidly giving way to the factories and choking coal smoke of the Industrial Revolution. He studied the old masters including Claude Lorrain and the Dutch landscapists of the Baroque, but his subject matter was always what he saw as the truth of what he knew best. He refused to travel on the continent, but ironically his work became well-known and admired in France and was influential to the Barbizon School which would, in turn, inspire the Impressionists. Constable, like Turner, was a Romantic at heart in that his work sometimes suggested the themes of Burke's Sublime. Turner was more dramatic in his subjects, but Constable's emphasis on the nostalgia of the English countryside as it disappeared was also in the Romantic tradition.

J.M.W. Turner looked to subjects of a more Sublime character including those of his own imagination. Unlike Constable, Turner traveled widely in Europe and incorporated elements of landscape, weather, sea travel and other subjects into the work. Some of his most awe-inspiring, or horror-inducing and therefore Sublime, subjects were the shipwrecks and especially the politically inspired *The Slave Ship*, of 1840. You can see a good analysis of that work at https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/enlightenment-revolution/v/turner-slave-ship-slavers-throwing-overboard-the-dead-and-dying-typhoon-coming-on-1840.



J.M.W. Turner, The Wreck of a Transport Ship, c. 1810, oil on canvas

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_colonial_empire
2 A. Walton Litz, “The Picturesque in *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen Society of North America, No. 1, Princeton University, Princeton, 1979.

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5.4: Realism

Academic Art

For a reading on Art of the Academy see:

https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/academic-art/

Realism

Realism, an artistic movement that began in France in the 1850s, rejected Romanticism, seeking instead to portray contemporary subjects and situations with truth and accuracy.

Key Points

- Realists revolted against the exotic subject matter and exaggerated emotionalism of the Romanticism that had dominated French literature and art since the late 18th century.
- Realist works depicted people of all classes in ordinary life situations, which often reflected the changes brought on by the Industrial and Commercial Revolutions.
- Realists tended to showcase sordid or untidy elements in their paintings.
- Important figures in the Realist art movement were Gustave Courbet, Honore Daumier, and Jean-Francois Millet.
- Realism emerges as socialism emerges in France as an ideas by way of Karl Marx.

Realism was an artistic movement that began in France in the 1850s, following the 1848 Revolution. Realists rejected Romanticism, which had dominated French literature and art since the late 18th century, revolting against the exotic subject matter and exaggerated emotionalism of the movement. Instead, Realists sought to portray “real” contemporary people and situations with truth and accuracy, including all the unpleasant or sordid aspects of life. Realist works depicted people of all classes in ordinary life situations, which often reflected the changes brought on by the Industrial and Commercial Revolutions.

The Realists depicted everyday subjects and situations in contemporary settings, and attempted to depict individuals of all social classes in a similar manner. Classical idealism, Romantic emotionalism, and drama were avoided equally, and often sordid or untidy elements of subjects were showcased somewhat, as opposed to being beautified or omitted. Social realism emphasized the depiction of the working class and treated working class people with the same seriousness as other classes in art. Realism also aimed to avoid artificiality in the treatment of human relations and emotions; treatments of subjects in a heroic or sentimental manner were rejected. Important figures in the Realist art movement were Gustave Courbet, Honore Daumier, and Jean-Francois Millet.

Realism in Painting

Two important figures in the Realist movement were Gustave Courbet and Jean-Francois Millet.

Key Points

- Realism arose in opposition to Romanticism, which had dominated French literature and art since the late 18th century.
- Realist painters often depicted common laborers, and ordinary people in ordinary surroundings engaged in real activities as subjects for their works.
- **Gustave Courbet** is known as the main proponent of Realism and his paintings challenged convention by depicting unidealized peasants and workers, often on a grand scale traditionally reserved for paintings of religious or historical subjects.
- Gustave Courbet was a socialist and that doctrine informed his work.
- Jean-Francois Millet is noted for his scenes of peasant farmers of which “The Gleaners” is one of his most well-known due to its depiction of the realities of the lower class.

Gustave Courbet

Jean Désiré Gustave Courbet (1819–December 31, 1877) was a French painter who led the Realist movement in 19th century French painting. Rejecting the predominant academic convention and the Romanticism of his time, Courbet’s independence set an example that was important to later artists, such as the Impressionists and the Cubists. As an artist, he occupies an important place in 19th century French painting as an innovator and as an artist willing to make bold social statements in his work.

Courbet's paintings of the late 1840s and early 1850s brought him his first recognition. They challenged convention by depicting unidealized peasants and workers, often on a grand scale traditionally reserved for paintings of religious or historical subjects. Courbet courted controversy by addressing social issues in his work, and by painting subjects that were considered vulgar, such as the rural bourgeoisie, peasants, and working conditions of the poor. For Courbet realism dealt not with the perfection of line and form, but entailed spontaneous and rough handling of paint, suggesting direct observation by the artist while portraying the irregularities in nature. He depicted the harshness in life, and in so doing challenged contemporary academic ideas of art.

When the Gleaners was exhibited in the Salon of 1857 it was widely criticized for "ugliness" and its seemingly revolutionary subject matter. One critic commented that "his three gleaners have gigantic pretensions, they pose as the Three Fates of Poverty… their ugliness and their grossness unrelieved." Another said it had the stench of the scaffold about it, referring to the scaffold of the guillotine of 1789.



A Burial at Ornans by Gustave Courbet, 1849–50: Exhibition of this piece at the 1850–1851 Paris Salon created an "explosive reaction" and brought Courbet instant fame

A Burial at Ornans was a vast painting, measuring 10 by 22 feet (3.1 by 6.6 meters), and drew both praise and fierce denunciations from critics and the public, in part because it upset convention by depicting a prosaic ritual by country people on a scale that previously would have been reserved for a religious or royal subject. Additionally, the painting lacks the sentimental rhetoric that was expected in a genre work. Courbet's mourners make no theatrical gestures of grief, and their faces seemed more caricatured than ennobled. The critics accused Courbet of a deliberate pursuit of ugliness.

Courbet is quoted as having said, "What was being buried in the *Burial at Ornans* was Romanticism."

Jean-Francois Millet

Jean-François Millet (October 4, 1814–January 20, 1875) was a French painter and one of the founders of the Barbizon School in rural France. Millet is noted for his scenes of peasant farmers and can be categorized as part of the Realism art movement.

One of the most well known of Millet's paintings is *The Gleaners* (1857). While Millet was walking the fields around Barbizon, one theme returned to his pencil and brush for seven years—gleaning—the centuries-old right of poor women and children to remove the bits of grain left in the fields following the harvest. He found the theme an eternal one, linked to stories from the Old Testament. In 1857, he submitted the painting *The Gleaners* to the Salon to an unenthusiastic, even hostile, public. The bourgeois audience, in a time when Marx's manifesto was gaining popularity with the common people, found the potential for revolution in the plight of the underclass unsettling.



Gleaners by Jean-Francois Millet, 1857: One of his most controversial, this painting by Millet depicts gleaners collecting grain in the fields near his home. The depiction of the realities of the lower class was considered shocking to the public at the time

Pre-Raphaelites

Key Points

- The Pre-Raphaelites sought to reform art by rejecting what they considered to be a mechanistic approach first adopted by the Mannerist artists who succeeded Raphael and Michelangelo.
- They believed the Classical poses and elegant compositions of Raphael in particular had been a corrupting influence on the academic teaching of art, hence the name “Pre-Raphaelite.” They wanted a return to the abundant detail, intense colors and complex compositions of Quattrocento Italian art.
- Influenced by romanticism, the Pre-Raphaelites thought freedom and responsibility were inseparable. Nevertheless, they were particularly fascinated by medieval culture, believing it to possess a spiritual and creative integrity that had been lost in later eras.
- In later years the movement divided and moved in two separate directions. The realists were led by Hunt and Millais, while the medievalists were led by Rossetti and his followers, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris.

Key Terms

- **Mannerist**: An artist who uses Mannerism, a style of European art that emerged from the later years of the Italian High Renaissance around 1520.
- **quattrocento**: The 1400s, the 15th century Renaissance Italian period.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (also known as the Pre-Raphaelites) was a group of English painters, poets, and critics, founded in 1848 by William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The three founders were soon joined by William Michael Rossetti, James Collinson, Frederic George Stephens and Thomas Woolner to form a seven-member brotherhood. The group’s intention was to reform art by rejecting an approach that they considered mechanistic, one that was first adopted by the Mannerist artists who succeeded Raphael and Michelangelo. Its members believed the Classical poses and elegant compositions of Raphael in particular had been a corrupting influence on the academic teaching of art, hence the name “Pre-Raphaelite.” The Pre-Raphaelites wanted a return to the abundant detail, intense colors and complex compositions of Quattrocento Italian and Flemish art. The Pre-Raphaelites defined themselves as a reform movement, created a distinct name for their form of art, and published a periodical, The Germ, to promote their ideas.

The brotherhood’s early doctrines emphasized the personal responsibility of individual artists to determine their own ideas and methods of depiction. Influenced by Romanticism, the Pre-Raphaelites thought freedom and responsibility were inseparable. Nevertheless, they were particularly fascinated by medieval culture, believing it to possess a spiritual and creative integrity that had been lost in later eras.

Pre-Raphaelites and Realism

The emphasis on medieval culture clashed with principles of realism, which stressed the independent observation of nature. In its early stages, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood believed its two interests were consistent with one another, but in later years the movement divided and moved in two separate directions. The realists were led by Hunt and Millais, while the medievalists were led by Rossetti and his followers, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. The split was never absolute, since both factions believed that art was essentially spiritual in character, opposing their idealism to the materialist realism associated with Courbet and impressionism.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was greatly influenced by nature and its members used great detail to show the natural world using bright and sharp focus techniques on a white canvas. In attempts to revive the brilliance of color found in Quattrocento art, Hunt and Millais developed a technique of painting in thin glazes of pigment over a wet white ground in the hope that the colors would retain jewel-like transparency and clarity. Their emphasis on brilliance of color was a reaction to the excessive use of bitumen by earlier British artists. Bitumen produces unstable areas of muddy darkness, an effect the Pre-Raphaelites despised.



Ophelia: Ophelia, by John Everett Millais, reflects the Pre-Raphaelite use of brilliance of color in composition

Exhibitions

The first exhibitions of Pre-Raphaelite work occurred in 1849. Both Millais's *Isabella* (1848–1849) and Holman Hunt's *Rienzi* (1848–1849) were exhibited at the Royal Academy. Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin* was shown at a Free Exhibition on Hyde Park Corner. As agreed, all members of the brotherhood signed their work with their name and the initials "PRB."

In 1850 the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood became the subject of controversy after the exhibition of Millais's painting, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, which was considered to be blasphemous by many reviewers, notably Charles Dickens. The brotherhood's medievalism was attacked as backward-looking and its extreme devotion to detail was condemned as ugly and jarring to the eye. According to Dickens, Millais made the Holy Family look like alcoholics and slum-dwellers, adopting contorted and absurd "medieval" poses.



Christ in the House of His Parents: Pre-Raphaelite Millais's painting, Christ in the House of His Parents, was considered to be blasphemous by many reviewers, notably Charles Dickens, who said Millais made the Holy Family look like alcoholics and slum-dwellers, adopting contorted and absurd "medieval" poses

After 1856, Dante Gabriel Rossetti became an inspiration for the medievalizing strand of the movement. He was the link between the two types of Pre-Raphaelite painting (nature and romance) after the PRB became lost in the late 1800s. Rossetti, although the least committed to the brotherhood, continued the name and changed its style. He began painting versions of women using models like Jane Morris, in paintings such as *Proserpine*, after the Pre-Raphaelites had disbanded.

Since the Pre-Raphaelites were fixed on portraying subjects with near-photographic precision—though with a distinctive attention to detailed surface-patterns—their work was devalued by many painters and critics. For instance, after the First World War, British Modernists associated Pre-Raphaelite art with the repressive and backward times in which they grew up.

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5.5: Manet and the Impressionists

Manet

Édouard Manet, a French painter, was a pivotal figure in the transition from Realism to Impressionism.

Key Points

- His early masterworks, *The Luncheon on the Grass (Le déjeunersur l'herbe)* and Olympia, engendered great controversy and served as rallying points for the young painters who would create Impressionism. Today, these are considered watershed paintings that mark the genesis of modern art.
- His style in this period was characterized by loose brush strokes, simplification of details, and the suppression of transitional tones.
- Manet's works were seen as a challenge to the Renaissance works that inspired his paintings. Manet's work is considered "early modern," partially because of the black outlining of figures, which draws attention to the surface of the picture plane and the material quality of paint.

Key Terms

- **juxtaposition**: The extra emphasis given to a comparison when the contrasted objects are close together.
- **Impressionism**: A 19th century art movement that originated with a group of Paris-based artists. Impressionist painting characteristics include relatively small, thin, yet visible brush strokes, open composition, emphasis on accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities (often accentuating the effects of the passage of time), common, ordinary subject matter, inclusion of movement as a crucial element of human perception and experience, and unusual visual angles.

Édouard Manet (1832–1883) was a French painter. One of the first 19th century artists to approach modern and postmodern-life subjects, he was a pivotal figure in the transition from Realism to Impressionism. His early masterworks, *The Luncheon on the Grass* (*Le déjeunersur l'herbe*) and *Olympia*, engendered great controversy and served as rallying points for the young painters who would create Impressionism. Today, these are considered watershed paintings that mark the genesis of modern art.

Manet opened a studio in 1856. His style in this period was characterized by loose brush strokes, simplification of details, and the suppression of transitional tones. Adopting the current style of realism initiated by Gustave Courbet, he painted *The Absinthe Drinker* (1858–59) and other contemporary subjects such as beggars, singers, Gypsies, people in cafés, and bullfights. *Music in the Tuileries* is an early example of Manet's painterly style. Inspired by Hals and Velázquez, it is a harbinger of his lifelong interest in the subject of leisure.



Music in the Tuileries, 1862: One of Manet's earliest works that demonstrates his interest in loose bush strokes and the leisurely social activities of 19th century Parisians

The Paris Salon rejected *The Luncheon on the Grass* for exhibition in 1863. Manet exhibited it at the Salon des Refusés (Salon of the Rejected) later in the year. The painting's juxtaposition of fully dressed men and a nude woman was controversial, as was its abbreviated, sketch-like handling, an innovation that distinguished Manet from Courbet. At the same time, this composition reveals

Manet's study of the old Renaissance masters. One work cited by scholars as an important precedent for *Le déjeunersur l'herbe* is Giorgione's *The Tempest* (or Titian's) *Pastoral Concert* from 1509.



Giorgione or Titian, Pastoral Concert, 1509. Oil on canvas, 43.3 x 53.3″. Louvre



The Luncheon on the Grass (Le déjeuner sur l'herbe) by Édouard Manet, 1863: The painting depicts the juxtaposition of a female nude and a scantily dressed female bather on a picnic with two fully dressed men in a rural setting. Rejected by the Salon jury of 1863, Manet seized the opportunity to exhibit this and two other paintings in the 1863 Salon des Refusés, where the painting sparked public notoriety and controversy

As he had in *The Luncheon on the Grass*, Manet again paraphrased a respected work by a Renaissance artist in his painting *Olympia* (1863), a nude portrayed in pose that was based on Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538). Manet created *Olympia* in response to a challenge to give the Salon a nude painting to display. His subsequently frank depiction of a self-assured prostitute was accepted by the Paris Salon in 1865, where it created a scandal.



Olympia by Édouard Manet, 1863: Manet's Olympia was a controversial painting at the time due to the confrontational gaze of the woman depicted and also to the fact that numerous details in the painting signify that she is a prostitute

The painting was controversial partly because the nude is wearing some small items of clothing such as an orchid in her hair, a bracelet, a ribbon around her neck, and mule slippers, all of which accentuated her nakedness, sexuality, and comfortable courtesan lifestyle. The orchid, upswept hair, black cat, and bouquet of flowers were all recognized symbols of sexuality at the time. This modern Venus' body is thin, counter to prevailing standards, and this lack of physical idealism rankled viewers. Olympia's body as well as her gaze is unabashedly confrontational. She defiantly looks out as her servant offers flowers from one of her male suitors. Although her hand rests on her leg, hiding her pubic area, the reference to traditional female virtue is ironic: female modesty is notoriously absent in this work. As with *Luncheon on the Grass*, the painting raised the issue of prostitution within contemporary France and the roles of women within society.

The roughly painted style and photographic lighting in these two controversial works was seen by contemporaries as modern: specifically, as a challenge to the Renaissance works Manet copied or used as source material. His work is considered "early modern," partially because of the black outlining of figures, which draws attention to the surface of the picture plane and the material quality of paint.

Impressionism

Impressionism is a 19th century movement known for its paintings that aimed to depict the transience of light, and to capture scenes of modern life and the natural world in their ever-shifting conditions.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the characteristics of Impressionism.

Key Points

- The term " impressionism " is derived from the title of Claude Monet's painting, *Impression, soleillevant* ("Impression, Sunrise").
- Impressionist works characteristically portray overall visual effects instead of details, and use short, "broken" brush strokes of mixed and unmixed color to achieve an effect of intense color vibration.
- During the latter part of 1873, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, and Sisley organized the Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs ("Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers") to exhibit their artworks independently to mixed critical response.
- The Impressionists exhibited together eight times between 1874 and 1886. The individual artists achieved few financial rewards from the impressionist exhibitions, but their art gradually won a degree of public acceptance and support.
- Impressionists typically painted scenes of modern life and often painted outdoors or *enpleinair*.
- In the middle of the 19th century, the Académie des Beaux-Arts dominated French art, valuing historical subjects, religious themes, and portraits as opposed to landscapes or still life.
- In the early 1860s Monet, Renoir, Sisley, and Bazille met while studying under the academic artist Charles Gleyre. They discovered that they shared an interest in painting landscape and contemporary life rather than historical or mythological scenes.

- Impressionist paintings can be characterized by their use of short, thick strokes of paint that quickly capture a subject's essence rather than details.
- Impressionist paintings do not exploit the transparency of thin paint films (glazes), which earlier artists manipulated carefully to produce effects.
- Thematically, Impressionists works are focused on capturing the movement of life, or quick moments captured as if by snapshot.

Key Terms

- **EnPleinair**: En plein air is a French expression that means "in the open air," and is particularly used to describe the act of painting outdoors, which is also called peinture sur le motif ("painting on the ground") in French.
- **Vista**: From Italian vista ("view, sight"). A distant view or prospect, especially one seen through an opening, avenue, or passage.
- **flâneur**: A man who observes society, usually in urban settings; a "people-watcher."

Impressionism is a 19th century art movement that was originated by a group of Paris-based artists, including Berthe Morisot, Claude Monet, August Renoir, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, and Alfred Sisley, as well as the American artist Mary Cassatt. These artists constructed their pictures with freely brushed colors that took precedence over lines and contours. They typically painted scenes of modern life and often painted outdoors. The Impressionists found that they could capture the momentary and transient effects of sunlight by painting *enpleinair*. However, many Impressionist paintings and prints, especially those produced by Morisot and Cassatt, are set in domestic interiors. Typically, they portrayed overall visual effects instead of details, and used short, "broken" brush strokes of mixed and unmixed color to achieve an effect of intense color vibration.

Radicals in their time, early impressionists violated the rules of academic painting. In 19th century France, the Académie des Beaux-Arts ("Academy of Fine Arts") dominated French art. The Académie was the preserver of traditional French painting standards of content and style. Historical subjects, religious themes, and portraits were valued (landscape and still life were not), and the Académie preferred carefully finished images that looked realistic when examined closely. Color was somber and conservative, and traces of brush strokes were suppressed, concealing the artist's personality, emotions, and working techniques.

Impressionist painters could not afford to wait for France to accept their work, so they established their own exhibition—apart from the annual salon organized by the Académie. During the latter part of 1873, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, and Sisley organized the Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs ("Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers") to exhibit their artworks independently. In total, 30 artists participated in their first exhibition, held in April 1874 at the studio of the French photographer and caricaturist Nadar.

The critical response was mixed. Critic and humorist Louis Leroy wrote a scathing review in the newspaper Le Charivari in which, making wordplay with the title of Claude Monet's *Impression, soleillevant* ("Impression, Sunrise"), he gave the artists the name by which they became known. The term "impressionists" quickly gained favor with the public. It was also accepted by the artists themselves, even though they were a diverse group in style and temperament, unified primarily by their spirit of independence and rebellion. They exhibited together eight times between 1874 and 1886. The individual artists achieved few financial rewards from the impressionist exhibitions, but their art gradually won a degree of public acceptance and support. Their dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, played a major role in this as he kept their work before the public and arranged shows for them in London and New York.

The Impressionists captured ordinary subjects, engaged in day-to-day activities in both rural and urban settings. Impressionist artists relaxed the boundary between subject and background so that the effect of an impressionist painting often resembles a snapshot, a part of a larger reality captured as if by chance. They were trying to show the spectacle of Paris and its surrounds that hadn't been available to the working class before.

Between 1853 and 1870, Napoleon III, nephew of the original Bonapart and the new Emperor, charged his prefect of the Seine, the Baron Haussmann, with the urban renewal project of Paris. Paris in the 19th c. was still a medieval city with narrow, cobbled streets and open sewers with no street lighting in most sections of the city. The urban poor mostly inhabited the central section of Paris and was the population who had fomented and carried out the great Revolution of 1889 and the smaller uprisings of 1830 and 1848. The dark, narrow streets of Paris made it difficult for the government to police those populations. Haussmann would clear the center of Paris of both people and buildings and install the wide, clear boulevards lined with expensive storefronts and apartment buildings for the new bourgeoisie. Sewage would no longer run down the center of the street and modern gas-lights would ensure that modern Paris would truly be "the city of lights." All of this became the spectacle that for the Impressionists would be what modernism was all about and the subject of many of their paintings.

The development of Impressionism can be considered partly as a reaction by artists to the challenge presented by photography, which seemed to devalue the artist's skill in reproducing reality. In spite of this, photography actually inspired artists to pursue other means of artistic expression, and rather than compete with photography to emulate reality, impressionists sought to express their perceptions of nature and modern city life.

Scenes from the bourgeois care-free lifestyle, as well as from the world of entertainment, such as cafés, dance halls, and theaters were among their favorite subjects. In their genre scenes of contemporary life, these artists tried to arrest a moment in their fast-paced lives by pinpointing specific atmospheric conditions such as light flickering on water, moving clouds, or city lights falling over dancing couples. Their technique tried to capture what they saw.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette, 1876. Oil on canvas, 4'3 ½" x 5'9". Musee d'Orsay, Paris. PD US

Impressionist painting broke from the traditions of the Academie, favoring everyday subject matter, exaggerated color, thick paint application, and an aim to capture the movement of life as opposed to staged scenes.

In the middle of the 19th century, the Académie des Beaux-Arts dominated French art. The Académie was the preserver of traditional French painting standards of content and style. Historical subjects, religious themes, and portraits were valued; landscape and still life were not. The Académie preferred carefully finished images that looked realistic when examined closely. Paintings in this style were made up of precise brush strokes carefully blended to hide the artist's hand in the work. Colour was restrained and often toned down further by the application of a golden varnish.

In the early 1860s, four young painters—Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Frédéric Bazille—met while studying under the academic artist Charles Gleyre. They discovered that they shared an interest in painting landscape and contemporary life rather than historical or mythological scenes. Following a practice that had become increasingly popular by mid-century, they often ventured into the countryside together to paint in the open air, or *enpleinair*, but not for the purpose of making sketches to be developed into carefully finished works in the studio, as was the usual custom. By painting in sunlight directly from nature, and making bold use of the vivid synthetic pigments that had become available since the beginning of the century, they began to develop a lighter and brighter manner of painting that extended further the Realism of Gustave Courbet and the Barbizon School.



Impression, soleil levant (Impression, Sunrise) by Claude Monet, 1872: This painting became the source of the movement's name, given derisively by a critic but embraced by the artists and public

Technique

Impressionist paintings can be characterized by their use of short, thick strokes of paint that quickly capture a subject's essence rather than details. Colors are often applied side-by-side with as little mixing as possible, a technique that exploits the principle of simultaneous contrast to make the color appear more vivid to the viewer. Impressionist paintings do not exploit the transparency of thin paint films (glazes), which earlier artists manipulated carefully to produce effects. Additionally, the painting surface is typically opaque and the play of natural light is emphasized.

Thematically, the Impressionists focused on capturing the movement of life, or quick moments captured as if by snapshot. The representation of light and its changing qualities were of the utmost importance. Ordinary subject matter and unusual visual angles were also important elements of Impressionist works. Note the factory in the background – another symbol of the modern life the Impressionists were trying to capture.



Autumn Effect at Argenteuil, by Claude Monet, 1873. Oil on canvas, 21.7 x 29.4", Courtauld Institute. PD US

Impressionist Sculpture

Modern sculpture is generally considered to have begun with the work of French sculptor Auguste Rodin.

Key Points

- Typically, modernist artists were concerned with the representation of contemporary issues as opposed to grand historical and allegorical themes previously favored in art. Rodin modeled complex, turbulent, deeply pocked surfaces into clay and many of his most notable sculptures clashed with the predominant figure sculpture tradition, in which works were decorative, formulaic, or highly thematic. The spontaneity evident in his works associates him with the Impressionists, though he never identified as such.
- Rodin's most original work departed from traditional themes of mythology and allegory in favor of modeling the human body with realism, and celebrating individual character and physicality.

- It was the freedom and creativity with which Rodin used these practices, along with his more open attitude toward bodily pose, sensual subject matter, and non-realistic surface, that marked the re-making of traditional 19th century sculptural techniques into the prototype for modern sculpture.
- Though his work crossed many stylistic boundaries, and he did not identify as an Impressionist specifically, Degas is nonetheless regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism.
- The sculpture *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years*, by Edgar Degas c. 1881 was shown in the Impressionist Exhibition of 1881 and drew a great deal of controversy due to its departures from historical precedent, a key motive of the Impressionists.

Key Terms

- **Auguste Rodin**: Auguste Rodin was a French sculptor. Although Rodin is generally considered the progenitor of modern sculpture, he did not set out to rebel against the past. He was schooled traditionally, took a craftsman-like approach to his work, and desired academic recognition, although he was never accepted into Paris's foremost school of art.

French Sculpture

Modern classicism contrasted in many ways with the classical sculpture of the 19th century, which was characterized by commitments to naturalism, the melodramatic, sentimentality, or a kind of stately grandiosity. Several different directions in the classical tradition were taken as the century turned, but the study of the live model and the post-Renaissance tradition was still fundamental. Modern classicism showed a lesser interest in naturalism and a greater interest in formal stylization. Greater attention was paid to the rhythms of volumes and spaces—as well to the contrasting qualities of surface (open, closed, planar, broken, etc.)—while less attention was paid to storytelling and convincing details of anatomy or costume. Greater attention was given to psychological effect than to physical realism, and influences from earlier styles worldwide were used.

Modern sculpture, along with all modern art, "arose as part of Western society's attempt to come to terms with the urban, industrial and secular society that emerged during the 19th century." Typically, modernist artists were concerned with the representation of contemporary issues as opposed to grand historical and allegorical themes previously favored in art.

Rodin's Influence

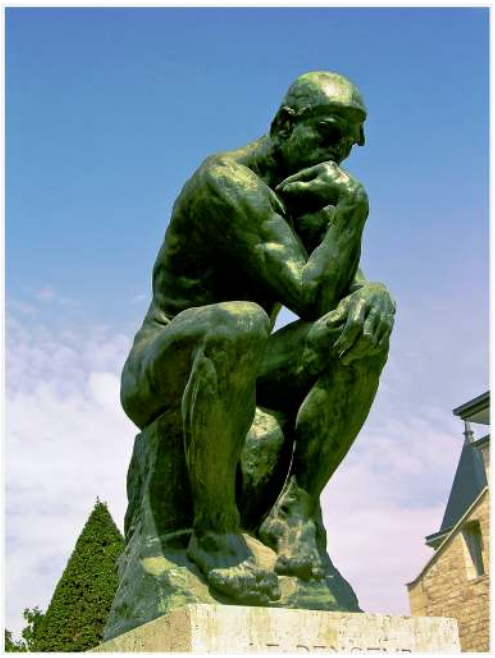
Modern sculpture is generally considered to have begun with the work of French sculptor Auguste Rodin. Rodin, often considered a sculptural Impressionist, did not set out to rebel against artistic traditions, however, he incorporated novel ways of building his sculpture that defied classical categories and techniques. Specifically, Rodin modeled complex, turbulent, deeply pocketed surfaces into clay. While he never self-identified as an Impressionist, the vigorous, gestural modeling he employed in his works is often likened to the quick, gestural brush strokes aiming to capture a fleeting moment that was typical of the Impressionists. Rodin's most original work departed from traditional themes of mythology and allegory, in favor of modeling the human body with intense realism, and celebrating individual character and physicality.

Rodin was a naturalist, less concerned with monumental expression than with character and emotion. Departing with centuries of tradition, he turned away from the idealism of the Greeks and the decorative beauty of the Baroque and neo-Baroque movements. His sculpture emphasized the individual and the concreteness of flesh, suggesting emotion through detailed, textured surfaces, and the interplay of light and shadow. To a greater degree than his contemporaries, Rodin believed that an individual's character was revealed by his physical features. Rodin's talent for surface modeling allowed him to let every part of the body speak for the whole. The male's passion in *The Kiss*, for example, is suggested by the grip of his toes on the rock, the rigidness of his back, and the differentiation of his hands. Rodin saw suffering and conflict as hallmarks of modern art. He states that "nothing, really, is more moving than the maddened beast, dying from unfulfilled desire and asking in vain for grace to quell its passion."

Rodin's major innovation was to capitalize on such multi-staged processes of 19th century sculpture and their reliance on plaster casting. Since clay deteriorates rapidly if not kept wet or fired into a terra-cotta, sculptors used plaster casts as a means of securing the composition they would make out of the fugitive material that is clay. This was common practice among Rodin's contemporaries: sculptors would exhibit plaster casts with the hopes that they would be commissioned to have the works made in a more permanent material. Rodin, however, would have multiple plasters made and treat them as the raw material of sculpture, recombining their parts and figures into new compositions and new names. As Rodin's practice developed into the 1890s, he became more and more radical in his pursuit of fragmentation, the combination of figures at different scales, and the making of new compositions from his earlier work.

It was the freedom and creativity with which Rodin used these practices—along with his activation of the surfaces of sculptures through traces of his own touch—that marked Rodin's re-making of traditional 19th century sculptural techniques into the

prototype for modern sculpture.



The Thinker by Auguste Rodin: Rodin's experiments with form, visible in the Thinker, launched modern abstract sculpture

Edgar Degas

Edgar Degas was a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings. He is especially identified with the subject of dance; more than half of his works depict dancers. He is regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism, although he rejected the term, preferring to be called a Realist.

During his life, public reception of Degas's work ranged from admiration to contempt. As a promising artist in the conventional mode, Degas had a number of paintings accepted in the Salon between 1865 and 1870. He soon joined forces with the Impressionists, however, and rejected the rigid rules, judgments, and elitism of the Salon—just as the Salon and general public initially rejected the experimentalism of the Impressionists.

Degas' work was controversial, but was generally admired for its draftsmanship. His *La Petite Danseuse de QuatorzeAns*, or *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years*, which he displayed at the sixth Impressionist Exhibition in 1881, was probably his most controversial piece; some critics decried what they thought its "appalling ugliness" while others saw in it a "blossoming." The sculpture is two-thirds life size and was originally sculpted in wax, an unusual choice of medium for the time. It is dressed in a real bodice, tutu and ballet slippers and has a wig of real hair. All but a hair ribbon and the tutu are covered in wax. The 28 bronze repetitions that appear in museums and galleries around the world today were cast after Degas' death. The tutus worn by the bronzes vary from museum to museum.



Little Dancer of Fourteen Years by Edgar Degas, c. 1881: The controversial sculpture that Degas showed in the Impressionist Exhibition of 1881 is noted for its experimentalism and breaks with tradition

Recognized as an important artist in his lifetime, Degas is now considered one of the founders of Impressionism. Though his work crossed many stylistic boundaries, his involvement with the other major figures of Impressionism and their exhibitions, his dynamic paintings and sketches of everyday life and activities, and his bold color experiments served to finally tie him to the Impressionist movement as one of its greatest artists.

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5.6: Post-Impressionism

Post-Impressionism

Post-Impression refers to a genre that rejected the naturalism of Impressionism in favor of using color and form in more expressive manners.

Key Points

- Post-Impressionists extended the use of vivid colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes, and real-life subject matter, and were more inclined to emphasize geometric forms, distort forms for expressive effect, and to use unnatural or arbitrary colors in their compositions.
- Although they were often exhibited together, Post-Impressionist artists were not in agreement concerning a cohesive movement, and younger painters in the early 20th century worked in geographically disparate regions and in various stylistic categories, such as Fauvism and Cubism.
- The term ” Post- Impressionism ” was coined by the British artist and art critic Roger Fry in 1910, to describe the development of French art since Manet and the Impressionists.

Key Terms

- **Post-Impressionism**: (Art) a genre of painting that rejected the naturalism of impressionism, using color and form in more expressive manners.
- **Post-Impressionist**: French art or artists belonging to a genre after Manet, which extended the style of Impressionism while rejecting its limitations; they continued using vivid colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes, and real-life subject matter, but they were more inclined to emphasize geometric forms, to distort form for expressive effect, and to use unnatural or arbitrary color.
- **post-and-lintel**: A simple construction method using a header or architrave as the horizontal member over a building void (lintel) supported at its ends by two vertical columns or pillars (posts).

Move from Naturalism

Post-Impression refers to a genre of painting that rejected the naturalism of Impressionism, in favor of using color and form in more expressive manners. The term “Post-Impressionism” was coined by the British artist and art critic Roger Fry in 1910 to describe the development of French art since Manet. Post-Impressionists extended Impressionism while rejecting its limitations. For example, they continued using vivid colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes, and real-life subject matter, but they were also more inclined to emphasize geometric forms, distort forms for expressive effect, and to use unnatural or arbitrary colors in their compositions.

Significant Artists of Post-Impressionism

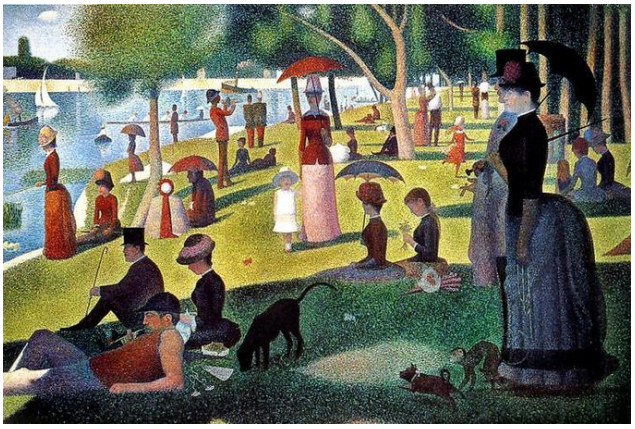
Post-Impressionism developed from Impressionism. From the 1880s onward, several artists, including Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, envisioned different precepts for the use of color, pattern, form, and line, deriving these new directions from the Impressionist example. These artists were slightly younger than the Impressionists, and their work contemporaneously became known as Post-Impressionism. Some of the original Impressionist artists also ventured into this new territory. Camille Pissarro briefly painted in a pointillist manner, and even Monet abandoned strict *enpleinair* painting. Paul Cézanne, who participated in the first and third Impressionist exhibitions, developed a highly individual vision emphasizing pictorial structure; he is most often called a post-Impressionist. Although these cases illustrate the difficulty of assigning labels, the work of the original Impressionist painters may, by definition, be categorized as Impressionism.



Vincent Van Gogh, Wheat Field with Crows, 1890, oil on canvas PD-US Source description: http://www.southern.net/wm/paint/auth/gogh/fields/, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=92718

A Diverse Search for Direction

The Post-Impressionists were dissatisfied with the triviality of subject matter and the loss of structure in Impressionist paintings, although they did not agree on the way forward. Georges Seurat and his followers, for instance, concerned themselves with Pointillism, the systematic use of tiny dots of color based on various new theories of optics. Paul Cézanne set out to restore a sense of order and structure to painting by reducing objects to their basic shapes while retaining the bright fresh colors of Impressionism. Vincent van Gogh used vibrant colors and active brush strokes to convey his feelings in the face of nature and his state of mind. Hence, although they were often exhibited together, PostImpressionist artists were not in agreement concerning a cohesive movement, and younger painters in the early 20th century worked in geographically disparate regions and in various stylistic categories.



A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte by Georges-Pierre Seurat, 1884–86: Georges Seurat's works are Pointillist, using systematic dots of color to create form and structure

Cézanne

Cézanne was a French, Post-Impressionist painter whose work highlights the transition from the 19th century to the early 20th century.

Key Points

- Cézanne's early work is often concerned with the figure in the landscape, often depicting groups of large, heavy figures. In Cézanne's mature work there is a solidified, almost architectural style of painting. To this end, he structurally ordered his perceptions into simple forms (techtonic "passages" of color) and color **planes**.
- This exploration rendered slightly different, yet simultaneous, visual perceptions of the same phenomena to provide the viewer with a different aesthetic experience.
- Cezanne 's "Dark Period" from 1861–1870 contains works that are characterized by dark colors and the heavy use of black.
- The lightness of his Impressionist works contrast sharply with the dramatic resignation found in his final period of productivity from 1898–1905. This resignation informs several still life paintings that depict skulls as their subject.

Key Terms

- **Cezanne**: Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) was a French artist and Post-Impressionist painter whose work laid the foundations of the transition from the 19th century conception of artistic endeavour to a new and radically different world of art in the 20th century.
- **Impressionism**: A 19th-century art movement that originated with a group of Paris-based artists. Impressionist painting characteristics include relatively small, thin, yet visible brush strokes, open composition, emphasis on accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities (often accentuating the effects of the passage of time), common, ordinary subject matter, inclusion of movement as a crucial element of human perception and experience, and unusual visual angles.
- **Post-Impressionism**: (Art) a genre of painting that rejected the naturalism of impressionism, using color and form in more expressive manners.

Introduction

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) was a French artist and Post- Impressionism painter whose work began the transition from the 19th century conception of artistic endeavor to a new and radically different world of art. Cézanne's often repetitive brushstrokes ("passages")are highly characteristic and clearly recognizable. He used planes of color and small brushstrokes to form complex fields and convey intense study of his subjects.

Early Work

Cézanne's early work is often concerned with the figure in the landscape, often depicting groups of large, heavy figures. Later, he became more interested in working from direct observation, gradually developing a light, airy painting style. Nevertheless, in Cézanne's mature work, there is development of a solidified, almost architectural style of painting. To this end, he structurally ordered whatever he perceived into simple forms and color planes.

Cézanne was interested in the simplification of naturally occurring forms to their geometric essentials, wanting to "treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone." For example, a tree trunk may be conceived of as a cylinder and an apple or orange as a sphere. Additionally, his desire to capture the truth of perception led him to explore binocular graphic vision. This exploration rendered slightly different, yet simultaneous, visual perceptions of the same phenomena, providing the viewer with a different aesthetic experience of depth.

After the start of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870, Cézanne's canvases grew much brighter and more reflective of Impressionism. Cézanne moved between Paris and Provence, exhibiting in the first (1874) and third Impressionist shows (1877). In 1875, he attracted the attention of collector Victor Chocquet, whose commissions provided some financial relief. On the whole, however, Cézanne's exhibited paintings attracted hilarity, outrage, and sarcasm.



Cezanne, The Pond of Jas de Bouffan, 1876.oil on canvas, 18.1 x 22.2", Hermitage Museum. Under the Impressionist's influence, Cezanne's works became much brighter and looser in style. PD US artheritage.org

The lightness of his Impressionist works contrast sharply with his dramatic resignation in his final period of productivity from 1898–1905. This resignation informs several still life paintings that depict skulls as their subject.



Pyramid of Skulls, c. 1901: The dramatic resignation to death informs several still life paintings Cézanne made between 1898 and 1905

Cézanne's explorations of geometric simplification and optical phenomena inspired Picasso, Braque, Gris, and others to experiment with ever more complex multiple views of the same subject. Cézanne thus sparked one of the most revolutionary areas of artistic enquiry of the 20th century, one which was to affect the development of modern art. A prize for special achievement in the arts was created in his memory. The "Cézanne medal" is granted by the French city of Aix en Provence, his home town.

He painted Mont Sainte-Victoire near his home more than 60 times. The passages of paint he used to create the various planes that suggest structures and foliage can be seen in the image below. These passages are characterized by a single color – say, ocher – applied to an area in four or five brushstrokes going in the same direction. Another color – possibly a grey – is applied in brushstrokes going in another direction. Together they suggest the planes of a house or rock without painting either the contours of that object or its local color.



Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1902-04. Oil on canvas, 27 ½ x 35 ¼". Philadelphia. PD-US http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2006/...ne/motif9.shtm The palette of greens, ochres, and blues as well as the passages of paint will be very influential to George Braque as Cubism develops

Van Gogh

Vincent van Gogh initially intended to be a preacher in his native Holland. He especially wanted to minister to the poverty-stricken peasants and miners for whom he had a deep sympathy. Sadly, he was never able to connect with people for long but his spiritual feelings eventually found an outlet in his paintings and drawings, done largely in isolation during his lifetime. His early work from the 1880s evinced thick brushstrokes of darkly pigmented earth tones. Van Gogh did go to Paris where his brother, Theo, was an art dealer. There he became familiar with both the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists (or Post-Impressionists) like Signac. He found in the work of Gauguin what he thought was a kindred spirit and left Paris for the south of France in Arles hoping to found an artists' collective with Gauguin and Emile Bernard as members. After an abortive visit from Gauguin this idea had to be abandoned.

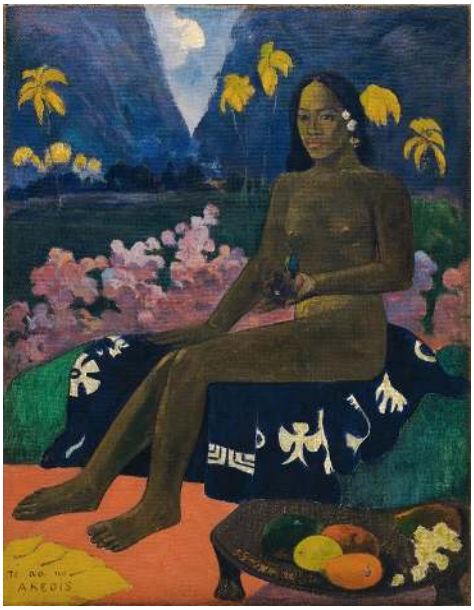
In Arles, van Gogh's style became pronounced with brilliant color and an energetic surface with active brushstrokes of paint. Some of his most characteristic works, like Starry Night, seem to suggest a kind of spirit – or animism – moving through nature.



Vincent van Gogh, Starry Night, 1889. Oil on canvas, 28.7 x 36 1⁄4", MoMA PD-US, File:Van Gogh – Starry Night – Google Art Project.jpg, created: 1889date QS:P571,+1889-00-00T00:00:00Z/9

Gauguin

Paul Gauguin is associated with the Post Impressionists. He came to painting late after a career as a stockbroker leaving a family to search for a more "primitive" and perfect style of life. After finding first Arles with van Gogh and then Brittany in France still too civilized, Gauguin decamped to Tahiti where he painted the indigenous people. Influenced in his style by both Pissarro and Paul Cézanne, Gauguin used color and distorted form and perspective to evoke what he felt was an essential or spiritual truth in his subjects. He died during his second trip to Tahiti having never achieved much recognition or financial success in France.



Gauguin, Tea a no areois (The Seed of the Areoi), 1892, oil on burlap, 36.3 x 28.4", MoMA. PD US SAFhIKAr_n0oUg at Google Cultural Institute

Seurat

Georges Seurat was a Parisian from a wealthy landowning family. He studied art at a school of design and sculpture near the family home before enrolling at the École des Beaux-Arts which he left in 1879 for military service. He returned to Paris and took an apartment with his friend from the army, another artist, Aman-Jean.



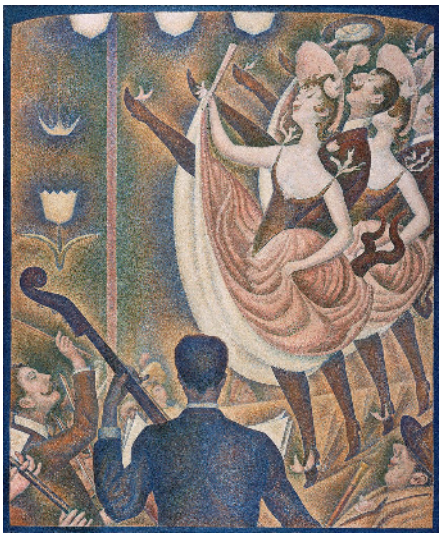
Seurat's first exhibited work at the Salon of 1883 was a Conté crayon drawing of Aman-Jean.

Seurat was a modernist; he turned to the subject matter of the Impressionists, the café-concerts, circuses, and images of the classes mixing in moments of leisure in the landscape. His style was his own. Drawn to contemporary theories about color, optics, and perception, Seurat knew of the scientist-writers Michel Eugène Chevreul and Ogden Rood. Chevreul came to his color theories after having served as the director of the Gobelins Manufactory in Paris. There he became aware of the different perceptions about color depending on the colors surrounding it – he called this concept simultaneous contrast. His "chromatic diagram" of 1855 is an early color wheel with complementary colors and other color relatio ships. Chevreul was also a chemist, an inventor of an early form of soap, and a gerontologist who himself lived to be 102.

Seurat developed his reading on color theory into his own method called "pointillism". He laid down color in small brushstrokes – dots – next to each other and overlapping. In this way he thought to create the light and shadow other painters got from pre-mixing color on a palette and placing it down in a solid brushstroke or area of paint. For Seurat this wasn't strictly about color or science – he believed that this approach created harmony and emotion in a painting. He looked for emotional effects through color –warm or cool – and directional line.

In addition to the paintings Seurat was a prolific drawer. To bring his pointillist technique into the dry medium he used a soft waxy crayon called a Conté crayon after the French military man who had invented it – on a paper with a rough "toothy" surface. He could modulate the pressure of the crayon to create basically a dot-screened effect on the paper.

Seurat died at the very early age of 31, but he left behind a body of work that is unique and has inspired other artists and even a Broadway musical – Sunday in the Park with Georges by Steven Sondheim. His work is sometimes called "NeoImpressionism" instead of Post-Impressionism, but for our purposes it belongs in this category.



Georges Seurat, 1889–90, Le Chahut, oil on canvas, 170 x 141 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. PD- Art

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5.7: Early 20th Century in Europe

The Rise of Modernism

Modernism was a philosophical movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that was based on an underlying belief in the progress of society.

Key Points

- Among the factors that shaped modernism were the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed by the horror of World War I.
- Modernism was essentially based on a utopian vision of human life and society and a belief in progress, or moving forward.
- Modernist ideals pervaded art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, activities of daily life, and even the sciences.
- In painting, modernism is defined by Surrealism, late Cubism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, Dada, German Expressionism, and Matisse as well as the abstractions of artists like Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky, which characterized the European art scene.
- The end of modernism and beginning of postmodernism is a hotly contested issue, though many consider it to have ended roughly around 1940.

Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from enormous transformations in Western society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped modernism were the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed by the horror of World War I.

Modernism was essentially based on a utopian vision of human life and society and a belief in progress, or moving forward. It assumed that certain ultimate universal principles or truths such as those formulated by religion or science could be used to understand or explain reality.

Modernist ideals were far-reaching, pervading art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, activities of daily life, and even the sciences. The poet Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction to "Make it new!" was the touchstone of the movement's approach towards what it saw as the now obsolete culture of the past. In this spirit, its innovations, like the stream-of-consciousness novel, atonal (or pantonal) and twelve-tone music, divisionist (or pointillist) painting and abstract art, all had precursors in the 19th century.

In painting, during the 1920s and the 1930s and the Great Depression, modernism is defined by Surrealism, late Cubism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, Dada, German Expressionism, and Modernist and masterful color painters like Henri Matisse as well as the abstractions of artists like Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky, which characterized the European art scene. In Germany, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, and others politicized their paintings, foreshadowing the coming of World War II, while in America, modernism is seen in the form of American Scene painting and the social realism and regionalism movements that contained both political and social commentary dominated the art world.

Modernism is defined in Latin America by painters Joaquín Torres García from Uruguay and Rufino Tamayo from Mexico, while the muralist movement with Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Pedro Nel Gómez, and Santiago Martinez Delgado, and Symbolist paintings by Frida Kahlo, began a renaissance of the arts for the region, characterized by a freer use of color and an emphasis on political messages. The end of modernism and beginning of postmodernism is a hotly contested issue, though many consider it to have ended roughly around 1940.



Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon by Picasso, 1907: Picasso is a ubiquitous (common) example of a modernist painter

Fauvism and Expressionism

Fauvism

The Fauves were a group of early 20th century Modern artists based in Paris whose works challenged Impressionist values.

Key Points

- The Fauvist movement, led by Henri Matisse and Andre Derain, officially lasted for only four years: 1904–1908.
- Vivid color, simplification, abstraction, and unusual brush strokes are hallmarks of the Fauvist style. Fauvist influences and references include Van Gogh's Post- Impressionism and the Neo-Impressionist technique of Pointillism.
- Gustave Moreau, a controversial professor at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, mentored several of the Fauves, including Matisse, and profoundly influenced their work.

Key Terms

- **Post-Impressionism**: (Art) a genre of painting that rejected the naturalism of impressionism, using color and form in more expressive manners.
- **pointillism**: In art, the use of small areas of color to construct an image.
- **Fauvism**: An artistic movement of the last part of the 19th century that emphasized spontaneity and the use of extremely bright colors.

Fauvism is the style of *les Fauves* (French for "the wild beasts"), a short-lived and loose group of early 20th century Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism. While Fauvism as a style began around 1900 and continued beyond 1910, the movement as such lasted only a few years, 1904–1908, and had three exhibitions. The leaders of the movement were Henri Matisse and André Derain.

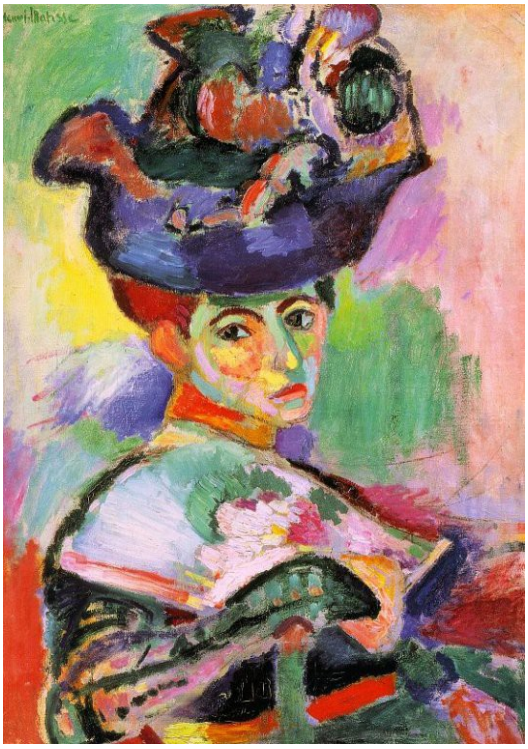


Charing Cross Bridge, London by André Derain, 1906: The vibrant, surprising use of color in this work is characteristic of the Fauvist style

Apart from Matisse and Derain, other artists included Albert Marquet, Charles Camoin, Louis Valtat, the Belgian painter Henri Evenepoel, Maurice Marinot, Jean Puy, Maurice de Vlaminck, Henri Manguin, Raoul Dufy, Othon Friesz, Georges Rouault, the Dutch painter Kees van Dongen, the Swiss painter Alice Bailly, and Georges Braque (subsequently Picasso's partner in Cubism).

The paintings of the Fauves were characterized by seemingly wild brushwork and strident colors, while their subject matter had a high degree of simplification and abstraction. Fauvism can be classified as an extreme development of Van Gogh's Post-Impressionism fused with the pointillism of Seurat and other Neo-Impressionist painters, in particular Paul Signac. Other key influences were Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin, whose employment of areas of saturated color—notably in paintings from Tahiti—strongly influenced Derain's work.

Derain and Matisse worked together through the summer of 1905 in the Mediterranean village of Collioure, and later that year displayed their highly innovative paintings at the Salon d'Automne. The vivid, unnatural colors led the critic Louis Vauxcelles to derisively dub their works as *les Fauves*, or "the wild beasts," which the artists then appropriated as the title for their movement. The painting that was singled out for special condemnation, Matisse's *Woman with a Hat*, was subsequently bought by the major patrons of the avant-garde scene in Paris, Gertrude and Leo Stein.



Woman with a Hat by Henri Matisse, 1905.: This painting was rejected by critics when initially exhibited, but was soon acquired by avant-garde collectors Leo and Gertrude Stein



Henri Matisse, The Joy of Life, 1905-06. Oil on canvas, 5'81/2" x 7'91/4", Philadelphia. PD US

Matisse vied for the title of King of the Avant-garde with Picasso during the first decade or so of the twentieth century. Paintings like *Joie de Vivre* or *Joy of Life* had conventional subject matter – a pastorale setting for music, dance, and love – but pictured very differently. He divorces color from form and creates a gentle fantasy that delights the American chemist, businessman, and art collector. His Barnes collection in Philadelphia has many of Matisse's most formidable works.

“Primitivism” and Cubism

As one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Pablo Picasso is widely known for his involvement in Cubism and Primitivism.

Key Points

- 1906–1909 is referred to as Picasso’s African period, during which he produced *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* and several other paintings incorporating primitivist elements.
- Picasso was inspired by African artifacts as well as the work of Post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin.
- The formal elements of *Les Desmoisellesd’Avignon* bridged Picasso’s African Period and subsequent Cubist work.
- Picasso and Georges Braque co-founded the Cubist movement, one of the most influential movements in Modern Art.
- Cubism stressed basic abstract geometric forms that presented the subject from many angles simultaneously.

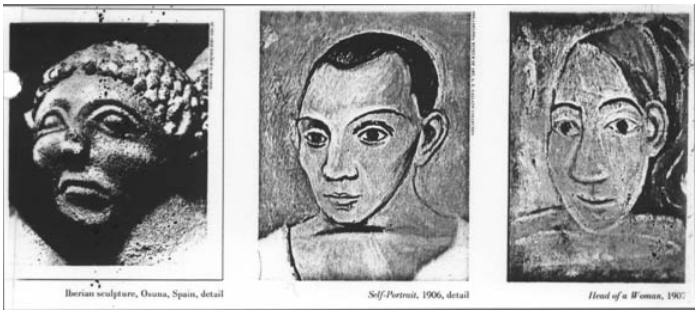
Key Terms

- **primitivism**: Primitivism is a term that borrows visual forms from non-Western or prehistoric peoples, a practice that was central to the development of modern art. Generally considered today to be a colonialist or derogatory way of describing the culture of the other civilizations.

African Period (1906–1910)

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the European cultural elite were discovering African, Micronesian, and Native American art. African artifacts were being brought back to Paris museums following the expansion of the French empire into Africa. The press was abuzz with exaggerated stories of cannibalism and exotic tales about the African kingdom of Dahomey. The mistreatment of Africans in the Belgian Congo was exposed in Joseph Conrad’s popular book, *Heart of Darkness*.

Artists such as Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, and Picasso were intrigued and inspired by the stark power and simplicity of styles of “primitive” cultures. Around 1906, Picasso, Matisse, Derain, and other Paris-based artists had acquired an interest in Primitivism, Iberian sculpture, African art, and tribal masks, in part due to the works of Paul Gauguin that had recently achieved recognition in Paris’s avant-garde circles. Gauguin’s powerful posthumous retrospective exhibitions at the Salon d’Automne in Paris in 1903 and 1906 had a powerful influence on Picasso’s paintings. Picasso created a style of portraiture that seems to have been based, largely, on Iberian masks – appealing because they came from the Iberian, or Spanish and Portuguese, peninsula just as Picasso himself had.

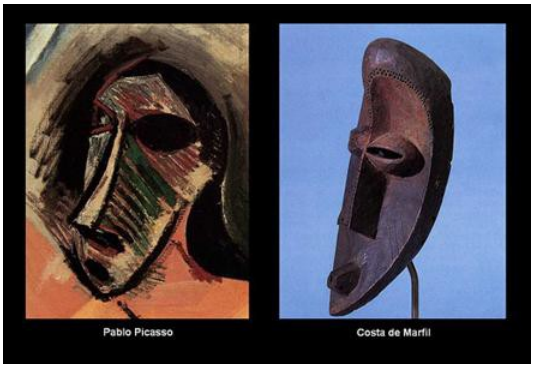


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Pablo Picasso, Self-Portrait, 1906, oil on canvas. PD US

In 1907, Picasso experienced a “revelation” while viewing African art at the ethnographic museum at Palais du Trocadéro. African art influenced Picasso’s painting *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907), especially in its treatment of the two figures on the right side of the composition. This painting is also considered a protocubist work bridging Picasso’s African and Cubist periods.



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Les Desmoiselles D’Avignon by Picasso, 1907: Picasso is a ubiquitous (common) example of a modernist painter

George Braque was a little older than Picasso. He had been painting in an Impressionist, then Fauvist style. After Cézanne died in 1906, his paintings were exhibited in a large retrospective in 1907. The breaking up of forms into planes of space with brushwork

and color greatly influenced Braque. He even painted some of Cézanne's motifs like the Castle at Roche-Guyon.



George Braque, Castle at Roche-Guyon, 1909, oil on canvas, 251/2 x 211/2, MoMA. PD US © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Analytic Cubism (1909–1912)

Cubism, established by Picasso and his colleague Georges Braque, was marked by a revolutionary departure from representational art. In Cubist artwork, objects were analyzed, broken up, and reassembled in an abstracted form instead of being depicted from one viewpoint. Picasso, Braque, and other Cubists depicted subjects from a multitude of viewpoints to create a greater scope of context. Cubism has been considered the most influential art movement of the 20th century.



Violin and Candlestick by Georges Braque, 1910: Georges Braque, with Picasso, was one of the founders of Cubism

Cubism had a global reach as a movement, influencing similar schools of thought in literature, music, and architecture. Particular offshoots beyond France included the movements of Futurism, Suprematism, Dada, Constructivism, and De Stijl, which all developed in response to Cubism. Early Futurist paintings have some commonalities with Cubism: the fusing of the past and the present and the representation of different views of the subject pictured at the same time, also called multiple perspective, simultaneity or multiplicity. Constructivism was influenced by Picasso's technique of constructing sculpture from separate elements. Other common threads between these disparate movements include the faceting or simplification of geometric forms, and the association of mechanization and modern life.

The first phase of Cubism is called Analytic Cubism; the multiple perspectives and planes in space in a limited, neutral palette is characteristic of this moment.



Braque, The Portuguese, 1911, oil on canvas, 81 x 118.8 cm, Basel Public domain US

In Cubist artwork, objects are analyzed, broken up, and reassembled in an abstracted form. Instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint, the artist depicts the subject from a multitude of viewpoints to represent the subject in a greater context.

Synthetic Cubism (1912-14)

The second phase of Cubism from about 1912 – 1914 is called Synthetic Cubism. It features papier collé, or cut paper collage, as well as Analytic Cubist painting. Braque is credited with the first of these collage/paintings, but Picasso wasn't far behind. In his *Still Life with Chair Caning*, commercially printed oilcloth creates the "seat" of the chair and the objects on a café tabletop are painted. The scalloped edge of the table is created from rope with an invisible join!



Pablo Picasso, Still Life with Chair Caning, 1912, oil on oil-cloth over canvas edged with rope, 29 x 37 cm (Musée Picasso)

Futurism

Futurism was an Italian movement that emphasized and glorified themes associated with contemporary concepts of the future such as speed, technology, youth, and violence, as well as objects such as the car, the airplane, and the industrial city. In 1910 and 1911 futurist painters made use of the technique of divisionism, which entails breaking light and color down into a field of stippled dots and stripes. Severini was the first to come into contact with Cubism. Following a visit to Paris in 1911, the Futurist painters adopted the methods of the Cubists. Cubism offered them a means of analyzing energy in paintings and visually expressing their desired focus on dynamism, motion, and speed. The adoption of Cubism determined the style of much subsequent Futurist painting.

Futurism as a movement didn't survive WWI. After witnessing the carnage machines enacted on the human body in that war the idealistic concept of progress by way of technology was diminished in Europe.



Abstract Speed + Sound, by Giacomo Balla 1913–1914: This is a seminal work from the Futurist movement which was influenced by Cubism. Public domain US



Umberto Boccioni, Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, 1913. Bronze sculpture. MoMA PD US

German Expressionism

German Expressionism refers to a number of related creative movements beginning before WWI and peaking in Berlin during the 1920s.

Key Points

- Kathe Kollwitz and are among the independent German Expressionists who were unaffiliated with other Expressionist groups but nonetheless successful.
- Kollwitz is best remembered for her compassionate series, The Weavers.
- Many of Egon Schiele's contemporaries found the explicit sexual themes of his work disturbing.
- Paula Modersohn-Becker is among the first recognized female artists to create nude self-portraits.

Key Terms

- **Weimar Republic**: The democratic regime of Germany from 1919 to the assumption of power by Adolf Hitler in 1933.
- **expressionism**: A movement in the arts in which the artist does not depict objective reality, but rather a subjective expression of inner experience.
- **Fauvism**: An artistic movement of the last part of the 19th century that emphasized spontaneity and the use of extremely bright colors.

Expressionism

Expressionism was a modernist movement, beginning with poetry and painting, that originated in Germany at the start of the 20th century. It emphasized subjective experience, manipulating perspective for emotional effect in order to evoke moods or ideas. Expressionist artists sought to express meaning or emotional experience rather than physical reality.

Expressionism was developed as an avant-garde style before the First World War and remained popular during the Weimar Republic, particularly in Berlin. The style extended to a wide range of the arts, including painting, literature, theatre, dance, film, architecture, and music.



Still from the 1920 film The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Robert Wieni, director. PD US

Expressionist painters had many influences, among them Edvard Munch, Vincent van Gogh, and several African artists. They were also aware of the Fauvist movement in Paris, which influenced Expressionism's tendency toward arbitrary colors and jarring compositions.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Berlin Street Scene, 1913. Oil on canvas, 47.6 x 37.4", New York, MoMA, 2008. PD US

Kathe Kollwitz

Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) was a German painter, printmaker, and sculptor whose work offered an eloquent and often searing account of the human condition, and the tragedy of war, in the first half of the 20th century. Initially, her work was grounded in Naturalism, and later took on Expressionistic qualities. Inspired by a performance of Gerhart Hauptmann's The Weavers, which dramatized the oppression of the Silesian weavers in Langembielau and their failed revolt in 1842, Kollwitz produced a cycle of six works on the Weavers theme. Rather than a literal illustration of the drama, the works were a free and naturalistic expression of the workers' misery, hope, courage, and, eventually, doom. The Weavers became Kollwitz' most widely acclaimed work.



Mother with her Dead Son by Käthe Kollwitz: This Kollwitz sculpture is a WWII war memorial

Influence of Cubism

Cubist sculpture developed in parallel with Cubist painting, centered in Paris beginning around 1909 and evolving through the early 1920s. The style is most closely associated with the formal experiments of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Others were quick to follow Braque and Picasso's lead in Paris, including Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Alexander Archipenko, Joseph Csaky, Jacques Lipchitz, Henri Laurens, and Ossip Zadkine.

During his period of Cubist innovation, Picasso revolutionized the art of sculpture by combining disparate objects and materials into one sculptural work—the sculptural equivalent of collage in two dimensional art. Just as collage was a radical development in two dimensional art, so was Cubist construction a radical development in three dimensional sculpture.

Dada and Surrealism

Dada and Surrealism were multidisciplinary cultural movements of the European avant-garde that emerged in Zurich and Paris respectively during the time of WWI.

Key Points

- Dada was a political movement opposed to artistic and social conformity as well as the capitalist forces that led to WWI.
- Dada artists worked in non-traditional media including collage, photomontage, and assemblage. Dada artist Michel Duchamp pioneered the notion of the "readymade;" everyday objects appropriated for artistic purposes.
- Dada spread throughout Europe and North America following WWI; by the early 1920s the center of Dada activity was Paris.
- Dada informed many of the major avant-garde movements of the 20th century century, including Surrealism and Social Realism.
- Surrealism began in the 1920s and had a lot in common with Dadaism.
- Surrealist works drew inspiration from intuition, the power of the unconscious mind, and various psychological schools of thought.
- Surrealist artists and writers regarded their work as an expression of the philosophical movement, with the artwork being an artifact.

Key Terms

- **readymade**: Everyday objects found or purchased and declared art. The readymades of Marcel Duchamp are ordinary manufactured objects that the artist selected and modified as an antidote to what he called "retinal art." By simply choosing the object (or objects) and repositioning, joining, titling, and signing it, the object became art.
- **collage**: A composite object or collection (abstract or concrete) created by the assemblage of various media; especially for a work of art like text, film, etc.
- **social realism**: An artistic movement that depicted social and racial injustice and economic hardship through unvarnished pictures of life's struggles.

Dada

World War I was a cataclysmic event in Europe. A generation of young men were lost and many countries had their cities and landscapes devastated. The psychic toll on those who endured the war was very great. Artists reacted against the war in a variety of ways, but one of the most influential was the Dada movement.

Dada was a multi-disciplinary art movement that rejected the prevailing artistic standards by producing “anti-art” cultural works. Dadaism was intensely anti-war, anti-bourgeois, and held strong political affinities with the radical left. For many participants, the movement was a protest against the bourgeois nationalist and colonialist interests, which many Dadaists believed were the root cause of the war, and against the cultural and intellectual conformity—in art and more broadly in society—that corresponded to the war. Many Dadaists believed that the reason and logic of bourgeois capitalist society had led people into war. They expressed their rejection of that ideology in artistic expression that appeared to reject logic and embrace chaos and irrationality.

The origin of the name Dada is unclear. Some believe that it is a nonsensical word while others maintain that it originates from the Romanian artists Tristan Tzara’s and Marcel Janco’s frequent use of the words “da, da,” meaning “yes, yes” in Romanian. Another theory posits that the name “Dada” came during a meeting of when a knife stuck into a French–German dictionary happened to point to *dada*, a French word for “hobbyhorse.” Likely, the origin of the name Dada is another attempt to devalue a system of logic, namely that of language.

Dada began in Zurich, Switzerland, at the Café Voltaire in 1916. Key figures in the Dada movement included Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Hans Arp, Hannah Hoch, and Raoul Hausmann, among others. The movement influenced later styles like avant-garde, and movements including Surrealism, Nouveau réalisme, pop art and Fluxus.



Hannah Hoch, Cut with a Kitchen Knife through the Weimar Beer Belly of the First Cultural Epoch in Germany, 1919, collage, 144 x 90 cm, Berlin. PD US Jennifer Mei via https://www.flickr.com/photos/47357563@N06/8235465163



Plaque commemorating the birth of Dada movement: This plaque is from the Cabaret Voltaire, the first venue where Dada artists showcased their work in 1916

Dada was an informal international movement with participants in Europe and North America that employed all kinds of media but are known especially for collage, writing, photomontage and performance. Dadaists worked in collage, creating compositions by pasting together transportation tickets, maps, plastic wrappers and other artifacts of daily life. Dada artists also worked in photomontage, a variation on collage that utilized actual or reproductions of photographs printed in the press. In Cologne, Max Ernst used photographs taken from the front during World War I to comment on the war. Another variation on collage used by Dadaists was assemblage, the assembly of everyday objects to produce meaningful or meaningless pieces of work, including war objects and trash.

When World War I ended in 1918, most of the Zurich Dadaists returned to their home countries, while some began Dada activities in other cities.



Dada poster from 1923: This poster for a Dada soiree references the medium of collage

Like Zurich, New York City was a refuge for writers and artists from World War I. Frenchmen Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia met American artist Man Ray in New York City in 1915. The trio soon became the center of radical anti-art activities in the United States.

One of those influenced by Dada's freedom from constraint in art was Marcel Duchamp who brought some of those ideas to New York with him before WWI. Through his "readymades" – ordinary objects like a bicycle wheel and a wooden stool or the famous urinal that became known as *Fountain*, 1917 – this repurposing of objects as art introduced very radical ideas about what art could be and who it could be for. Initially an object of scorn within the arts community, the *Fountain* has since become almost canonized by some as one of the most recognizable modernist works of sculpture. The committee presiding over Britain's prestigious Turner Prize in 2004, for example, called it "the most influential work of modern art."

Duchamp's work would bear fruit in the 1960s and after with the movements of Pop Art, Happenings, Fluxus, and Conceptual Art.



Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917. Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz. Porcelain urinal with paint. MoMA. PD US

Surrealism

Surrealism was a cultural movement beginning in the 1920s that sprang directly out of Dadaism and overlapped in many senses. Surrealist works drew inspiration from intuition, the power of the unconscious mind, and various psychological schools of thought. The work often features unexpected juxtapositions, non sequiturs, and elements of surprise.

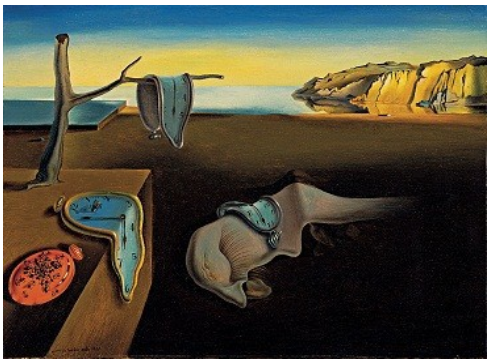
First and foremost, Surrealist artists and writers regarded their work as an expression of the philosophical movement, with the artwork being an artifact. Leader André Breton was explicit in his assertion that Surrealism was above all a revolutionary movement. Breton had studied the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, and his concept of the unconscious became a centerpiece of Surrealist thought. The most important center of the movement was Paris. From the 1920s onward, the movement spread around the globe, eventually affecting the visual arts, literature, film, and music of many countries and languages, as well as political thought and practice, philosophy, and social theory.

As the Surrealists developed their philosophy, they believed that Surrealism would advocate the idea that ordinary and representative expression was vital and important, but that expression must be fully open to the imagination. Freud's work with free association, dream analysis, and the unconscious was of utmost importance to the Surrealists as they developed methods to liberate their imaginations.

Like Dada, Surrealism aimed to revolutionize human experience, in terms of the personal, cultural, social, and political aspects. Surrealists wanted to free people from false rationality, and also from restrictive customs and structures. Breton proclaimed that the true aim of Surrealism was "long live the social revolution, and it alone!"



Meret Oppenheim, Object (Luncheon in Fur), 1936. Fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon; h. 2 7/8". MoMA via http://leslouille.blogspot.com/2012/...-dejeuner.html



Salvador Dali, The Persistence of Memory, 1931. Oil on canvas, 9 ½ x 13", MoMA. Image taken from About.com

Europe from 1920-1945 CE

Soviet Constructivism

Constructivism, an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia in 1919, rejected the idea of autonomous art.

Key Points

- As much as involving themselves in designs for industry, the Constructivists worked on public festivals and street designs for the post-October revolution Bolshevik government.
- The canonical work of Constructivism was Vladimir Tatlin's proposal for the Monument to the Third International (1919), which combined a machine aesthetic with dynamic components celebrating technology such as searchlights and projection screens.
- The First Working Group of Constructivists defined Constructivism as the combination of faktura—the particular material properties of an object—and tektonika, its spatial presence.

Key Terms

- **Vladimir Tatlin:** (1885–1953) A Russian and Soviet painter and architect. With Kazimir Malevich he was one of the two most important figures in the Russian avant-garde art movement of the 1920s, and he later became an important artist in the Constructivist movement. He is most famous for his attempts to create the giant tower, The Monument to the Third International.
- **constructivism:** An artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1919, which was a rejection of the idea of autonomous art. The movement was in favor of art as a practice for social purposes. Constructivism had a great effect on modern art movements of the 20th century, influencing major trends such as Bauhaus and the De Stijl movement.
- **suprematism:** A genre of abstract art based on simple, geometric forms.

Overview

Constructivism was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1919. At the heart of the movement was a rejection of the idea of autonomous art. The movement was in favor of art as a practice for social purposes and participation in industry. Constructivism had a considerable effect on modern art movements of the 20th century, influencing major trends such as Bauhaus and the De Stijl movement. Its influence was pervasive, with major impacts upon architecture, graphic and industrial design, theatre, film, dance, fashion, and to some extent music.

Origins and Evolution

The term Construction Art was first used as a derisive term by Kazimir Malevich, an artist of the Suprematist movement, to describe the work of Alexander Rodchenko in 1917. Constructivism as theory and practice was derived largely from a series of debates at INKhUK (Institute of Artistic Culture) in Moscow, from 1920–22. After deposing its first chairman, Wassily Kandinsky, for his "mysticism," The First Working Group of Constructivists (including Liubov Popova, Alexander Vesnin, Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, and the theorists Alexei Gan, Boris Arvatov, and Osip Brik) would develop a definition of Constructivism as the combination of *faktura*—the particular material properties of an object—and *tektonika*, its spatial presence. Initially the Constructivists worked on three-dimensional constructions as a means of participating in industry: the OBMOKhU (Society of Young Artists) exhibition showed these three-dimensional compositions by Rodchenko, Stepanova, Karl Ioganson, and the Stenberg Brothers. Later the definition would be extended to designs for two-dimensional works such as books or posters, with montage and factography becoming important concepts.

Public Art

As much as involving themselves in designs for industry, the Constructivists worked on public festivals and street designs for the post-October revolution Bolshevik government. Perhaps the most famous of these was in Vitebsk, where Malevich's UNOVIS Group painted propaganda plaques and buildings (the best known being El Lissitzky's 1919 poster *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*). Inspired by Vladimir Mayakovsky's declaration "the streets our brushes, the squares our palettes," artists and designers participated in public life during the Civil War. A striking instance was the proposed festival for the Comintern congress in 1921 by Alexander Vesnin and Liubov Popova, which resembled the constructions of the OBMOKhU exhibition as well as their work for the theater.

There was a great deal of overlap during this period between Constructivism and Proletkult; the ideas of Proletkult concerning the need to create an entirely new culture struck a chord with the Constructivists. In addition, some Constructivists were heavily involved in the "ROSTA Windows," a Bolshevik public information campaign carried out around 1920. Some of the most famous of these were by the poet-painter Vladimir Mayakovsky and Vladimir Lebedev.



Agitprop poster by Mayakovsky: Mayakovsky worked for the Russian State Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) creating—both graphic and text—satirical Agitprop posters

Tatlin's Vision Versus Gabo's

The canonical work of Constructivism was Vladimir Tatlin's proposal for the Monument to the Third International (1919), which combined a machine aesthetic with dynamic components celebrating technology such as searchlights and projection screens. Gabo publicly criticized Tatlin's design, saying he should "Either create functional houses and bridges or create pure art, not both." This position had already caused a major controversy in the Moscow group in 1920, when Gabo and Pevsner's Realistic Manifesto asserted a spiritual core for the movement. This was opposed to the utilitarian and adaptable version of Constructivism held by Tatlin and Rodchenko. Tatlin's work was immediately hailed by artists in Germany as a revolution in art. A 1920 photograph shows George Grosz and John Heartfield holding a placard saying "Art is Dead–Long Live Tatlin's Machine Art. " The designs for the tower were published in Bruno Taut's magazine *Fruhlicht*.



Vladimir Tatlin, Monument to the Third International, 1919, model. PD US source; http://barista.media2.org/?cat=14&paged=2

Tatlin's tower started a period of exchange of ideas between Moscow and Berlin, something reinforced by El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg's Soviet-German magazine *Veshch-Gegenstand-Objet*, which spread the idea of "Construction art," as did the Constructivist exhibits at the 1922 Russische Ausstellung in Berlin, organised by Lissitzky. A "Constructivist international" was

formed, which met with Dadaists and De Stijl artists in Germany in 1922. Participants in this short-lived international group included Lissitzky, Hans Richter, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.

However, the idea of "art" was becoming anathema to the Russian Constructivists. The INKhUK debates of 1920–22 had culminated in the theory of Productivism propounded by Osip Brik and others, which demanded direct participation in industry and the end of easel painting. Tatlin was one of the first to attempt to transfer his talents to industrial production, with his designs for an economical stove, for workers' overalls, and for furniture. The Utopian element in Constructivism was maintained by his "letatlin," a flying machine which he worked on until the 1930s.

German Bauhaus Art

The Bauhaus was a school in Germany that combined crafts and the fine arts and was famous for its functionalist approach to design.

Key Points

- The Bauhaus had a profound influence on subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, and typography.
- The Bauhaus style was marked by the absence of ornamentation and by harmony between function and overall design.
- The design innovations commonly associated with Gropius and the Bauhaus—radically simplified forms, rationality, functionality, and the idea that mass-production was reconcilable with the individual artistic spirit—were already partly developed in Germany before the Bauhaus was founded.

Key Terms

- **Bauhaus:** A style in Modernist architecture and modern design, popularized at the "Staatliches Bauhaus" originally in Weimar, Germany.
- **Walter Gropius:** (1883—1969) A German architect and founder of the Bauhaus School who is widely regarded as one of the pioneering masters of modern architecture.

The Bauhaus was a school in Germany that operated from 1919 to 1933, combined crafts and the fine arts, and was famous for the functional design approach it taught and publicized. Despite its name meaning "house of construction" in German and the founder, Walter Gropius, being an architect, the Bauhaus did not have an architecture department during its first years. Nonetheless, the school was founded on the idea of "total" creativity, or *gesamtkunstwerk*, in which all arts would be brought together. Many well-known artists attended the Bauhaus, including Josef Albers, Anni Albers, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Max Bill, and Herbert Bayer. The Bauhaus style became one of the most influential currents in Modernist architecture and modern design, having a profound influence on subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, and typography.



Gerrit Rietveld, Schroeder House, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1924

Germany's defeat in World War I, the fall of the German monarchy, and the abolition of censorship under the new, liberal Weimar Republic allowed an upsurge in artistic experimentation. Many Germans of left-wing views were influenced by the cultural radicalization that followed the Russian Revolution. Yet the political influences can be overstated: Gropius himself did not have radical views and said Bauhaus was entirely apolitical. Another significant influence was the 19th century English designer

William Morris, who had argued that art should meet the needs of society and that there should be no distinction between form and function. Thus the Bauhaus style was marked by the absence of ornamentation and by harmony between function and overall design.



Marcel Breuer, Armchair, c. 1928. Chrome plated tubular steel with canvas slings. MoMA PDUS read more about Breuer here: https://www.1stdibs.com/furniture/se...d-f_5801443/#0

The school existed in three German cities: Weimar from 1919 to 1925, Dessau from 1925 to 1932, and Berlin from 1932 to 1933, under three different architect-directors: Walter Gropius from 1919 to 1928, Hannes Meyer from 1928 to 1930, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe from 1930 until 1933, when the school was closed by its own leadership under pressure from the Nazi regime, having being painted as a centre of communist intellectualism. Although the school was closed, the staff continued to spread its idealistic precepts as they left Germany and emigrated all over the world.

The influence of the Bauhaus on design education was significant. One of the main objectives of the Bauhaus was to unify art, craft, and technology, and this approach was incorporated into the curriculum of the Bauhaus. The structure of the Bauhaus *Vorkurs* (preliminary course) reflected a pragmatic approach to integrating theory and application. In their first year, students learned the basic elements and principles of design and color theory, and experimented with a range of materials and processes. This approach to design education became a common feature of architectural and design school in many countries.



The Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany: Bauhaus means “house of construction”

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5.8: Modernism in America

American Painting: The Ashcan School

The Ashcan School was a movement within American Realism known for portraying scenes of daily life in New York's poorer neighborhoods.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the origins and focus of the Ashcan School.

Key Points

- American Realism arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with works of art that depicted contemporary views of daily life, and the Ashcan School was central to that movement.
- The artists of the Ashcan School rebelled against American Impressionism, contrasting the Impressionists' emphasis on light with Realist works that were darker in tone and captured harsher moments in life.
- Ashcan School artists portrayed prostitutes, drunks, butchered pigs, overflowing tenements, and boxing matches. Their focus on poverty and the daily realities of urban life prompted critics to consider them on the fringe of Modern art.

Key Terms

- **American Realism**: An early 20th century idea in art, music, and literature that reflected contemporary issues and events.
- **American Impressionism**: American Impressionism was a style of painting related to European Impressionism and practiced by American artists in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. American Impressionism is a style of painting characterized by loose brushwork and vivid colors.

Overview

The Ashcan School was a movement within American Realism that came into prominence in New York City during the early 20th century and is best known for works portraying scenes of daily life in New York's poorer neighborhoods.

American Realism

American Realism was a concept that arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in art, music, and literature. Whether it was a portrayal of contemporary culture, or a scenic view of downtown New York City, Realist works depicted a contemporary view of what was happening or what was "real."

In America at the beginning of the 20th century, a new generation of painters, writers, and journalists were coming of age who were interested in creating a new style that reflected city life and an American population that was becoming increasingly more urban as the country entered the new century. American Realism attempted to portray the exhaustion and cultural exuberance of the American landscape and the life of ordinary people at home. Artists used the rapidly growing setting of the city – increasingly a city of immigrants – to influence the color, texture, and look of their creative projects.

Until the first decade of the 20th century American art was still looking to Europe – especially the French Impressionists – to provide models of "modernism". While many would continue to paint in an Impressionistic style, after the Armory Show in 1913 American art began to experiment with a number of styles and ideas that would allow a number of distinctively "American" kinds of painting to emerge. Pulling away from fantasy and focusing on the grit and reality of daily life, American Realism presented a breakthrough—introducing Modernism, and what it means to be in the present. The Ashcan School, also known as "The Eight," was central to the new American Modernism in the visual arts.

The Ashcan School

The Ashcan School was a group of New York City artists who sought to capture the feel of turn-of-the-century New York through realistic portraits of everyday life. The movement grew out of a group known as The Eight, many of whom had experience as newspaper illustrators, and whose only show together in 1908 created a sensation. These artists were not only depicting Fifth Avenue socialites, but also the lower class and richly textured immigrant cultures. Critics of the time did not always appreciate their choice of subjects, which included alleys, tenements, slum dwellers, and in the case of John French Sloan, taverns frequented by the working class.

Five artists of The Eight, William Glackens, Robert Henri, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and John French Sloan became associated with the Ashcan School. However, the Ashcan School was not an organized group. Instead their unity consisted of a desire to tell truths about the state of the city. The first known use of the "ashcan" terminology in describing the movement was by Art Young in 1916.



Shinn Henri Sloan: Everett Shinn, Robert Henri, and John Sloan, c. 1896 (unidentified photographer, black and white print, 18 x 13 cm)

The artists of the Ashcan School rebelled against the New York Design Academy – the equivalent of the European Academic schools – with its focus on upper-class American portraiture and a style of American Impressionism, which was the vanguard of American art at the time. In contrast to the Impressionists' emphasis on light and retinal impression, their Realist works were generally darker in tone, capturing harsher moments of life and often portraying such subjects as prostitutes, drunks, butchered pigs, overflowing tenements, boxing matches, and wrestlers. It was their frequent, although not total, focus upon poverty and the daily realities of urban life that prompted American critics to consider them to be on the fringe of Modern art.



Both Members of This Club: Both Members of This Club by George Bellows, 1909 (oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art)

Modern Photography in America

Photography developed as an art form throughout the early 20th century largely due to a number of artists who worked to legitimize the medium by moving it into a gallery setting.

Learning Objectives

Describe the establishment of photography as an art form in the early 20th century.

Key Points

- In the early 1900s, the Daguerreotype emerged as the most popular and affordable photographic method for the general public.

- In 1884 George Eastman, of Rochester, New York, developed dry gel on paper, or film, to replace the photographic plate so that a photographer no longer needed to carry boxes of plates and toxic chemicals around, further popularizing the medium.
- Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen were instrumental in making photography a fine art, and Stieglitz was especially notable in introducing it into museum collections.
- In addition to his fame as a photographer, Stieglitz is known as a writer, publisher, exhibition organizer, and collector. As an owner of multiple New York art galleries, he introduced many photographers and other artists, including new European avante-garde artists, to the U.S. art world.
- Stieglitz was involved in a number of photographic organizations and journals in New York city throughout his career. He used these platforms to promote photography as a fine art, and contributed to its acceptance in the art world.
- The Photo-Secession movement placed the focus on the role of the photographer as an artist and was characterized by pictorialism, in which pictures and photographic materials were manipulated to emulate the quality of paintings and etchings being produced at that time.

Key Terms

- **abstract**: Free from representational qualities. Abstract art uses a visual language of form, color, and line to create a composition that exists with a degree of independence from visual references in the world.

History of Photography – a Review

The history of photography has roots in antiquity with the discovery of the principle of the camera obscura, and the observation that some substances are visibly altered by exposure to light. In the mid-1820s, Nicéphore Niépce succeeded in fixing an image, but several days of exposure in the camera were required and the earliest results were very crude. Niépce's associate Louis Daguerre went on to develop the Daguerreotype process, the first publicly announced photographic process, which required only minutes of exposure in the camera and produced clear, finely detailed results. It was commercially introduced in 1839, a date generally accepted as the birth year of practical photography.

Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s a number of competing processes were experimented with and distributed to the public in varying degrees. The demand for portraiture that emerged from the middle classes during the Industrial Revolution could not be met in volume and in cost by oil painting, a factor that added to the push for the development of photography. Eventually, the Daguerreotype emerged as the most popular and affordable method for the general public, however, Daguerreotypes were fragile and difficult to copy, and lacked portability as they required plates and toxic chemicals to be carried around.

In 1884 George Eastman, of Rochester, New York, developed dry gel on paper, or film, to replace the photographic plate so that a photographer no longer needed to carry boxes of plates and toxic chemicals around. In July 1888 Eastman's Kodak camera went on the market with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest." Now anyone could take a photograph and leave the complex parts of the process to others, and photography became available for the mass-market in 1901 with the introduction of the Kodak Brownie.

Photography as Art

Successful attempts to make fine art photography can be traced to Victorian era practitioners such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Oscar Gustave Rejlander, and others. In the U.S., F. Holland Day, Ansel Adams, Alfred Stieglitz, and Edward Steichen were instrumental in making photography a fine art, and Stieglitz was especially notable in introducing it into museum collections. Until the late 1970s several genres predominated, such as nudes, portraits, and natural landscapes. Breakthrough artists in the 1970s and 80s, such as Sally Mann, Robert Mapplethorpe, Robert Farber, and Cindy Sherman, still relied heavily on such genres, although saw them with fresh eyes. Others investigated a snapshot aesthetic approach. American organizations, such as the Aperture Foundation and the Museum of Modern Art, have done much to keep photography at the forefront of the fine arts.

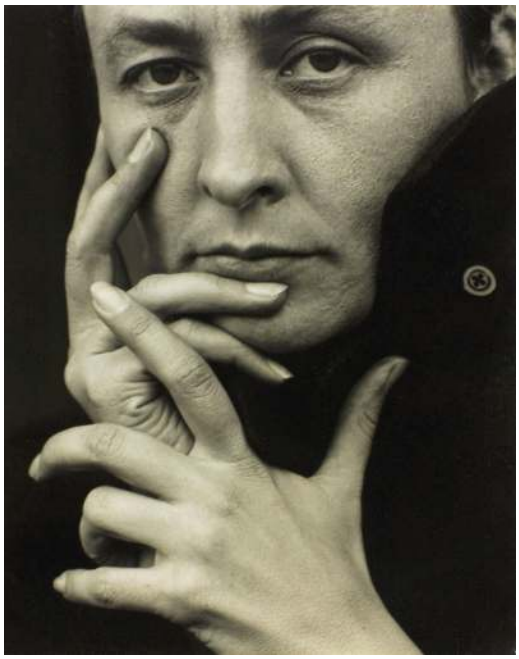
Photo-Secession Movement

Photographer Alfred Steiglitz (1864–1946) led the Photo-Secession movement, a movement that promoted photography as a fine art and sought to raise standards and awareness of art photography. The Photo-Secession movement placed the focus on the role of the photographer as an artist. It was characterized by **pictorialism**, in which pictures and photographic materials were manipulated to emulate the quality of paintings and etchings being produced at that time. Among the methods used were soft focus; special filters and lens coatings; burning, dodging and/or cropping in the darkroom to edit the content of the image; and alternative printing processes such as sepia toning, carbon printing, platinum printing or gum bichromate processing.



Gertrude Käsebier, Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz: A picture of Alfred Stieglitz by Gertrude Käsebier, 1902

Centered in Gallery 291 in New York City from 1902–1916, membership to the Photo-Secession movement was by invitation-only and varied according to Stieglitz's interests. The most prominent members included Edward Steichen, Clarence H. White, Gertrude Käsebier, Frank Eugene, F. Holland Day, and Alvin Langdon Coburn.



Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keeffe, Hands: Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keeffe, Hands, 1918

At the same time, however, photography's use as a tool of realistic documentation mirrored the growth of American Realism in art and sculpture. Many photographers sought to capture everyday life of American people—both the wealthy and the poor—in a realistic and often gritty fashion. Lewis Hine (1874–1940) used light to illuminate the dark areas of social existence in his Pittsburgh Survey (1907), which investigated working and living conditions in Pittsburgh. He later became the photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. Paul Strand (1890–1976) created brutally direct abstractions, close-up portraits, and documented machines and cityscapes.

Precisionist Movement in Photography

Edward Weston (1886–1958) would become a leader in the Precisionist Movement, a style that functioned in direct opposition to the Photo-Secession Movement. This movement was the first true use of modernism in photography. It was characterized by sharp focus and carefully framed images. James Van Der Zee (1886–1983) was an African American photographer who became emblematic of the Harlem Renaissance movement. He was best known for his portraits of black New Yorkers and produced the most comprehensive documentation of the period.

Commercial Photography

Commercial photography also expanded during this time, as in the works of Edward Steichen (1879–1973). Steichen broke with Stieglitz toward the end of the Photo-Secession movement and created the first commercial image in 1919, entitled *Pear and Apple*. His work was featured in magazines such as *Vanity Fair*. Ansel Adams (1902–1984) also began his career as a commercial photographer and became widely known for his images of American landscapes.



Ansel Adams, The Tetons and the Snake River, 1942: A typical Ansel Adams photograph featuring the American landscape in black and white

The Armory Show

The Armory Show of 1913 displayed the work of European avant-garde artists alongside their American counterparts.

Learning Objectives

Discuss the influence of the Armory Show in introducing the artistic styles of Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism to the American public.

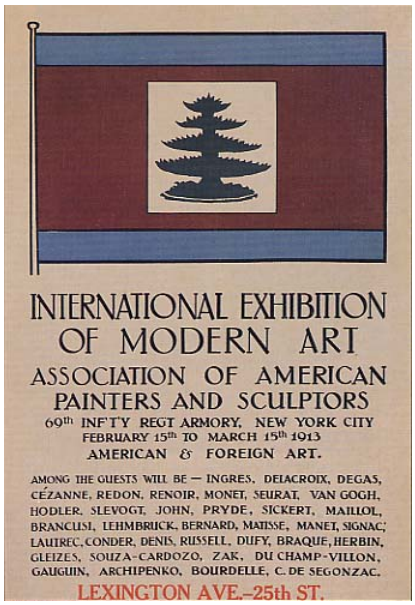
Key Points

- The Armory Show of 1913 displayed about 1,300 works by over 300 artists with the goal of bringing the best avant-garde European art to an American audience.
- Contemporary responses to the European Impressionist, Fauvist, and Cubist works were filled with accusations of quackery, insanity, immorality, and anarchy.
- The Armory Show introduced New Yorkers accustomed to the naturalistic art of American Realism to the styles of European avant-garde artists and served as a catalyst for American artists to create their own artistic language.
- The Armory Show has since evolved into an annual contemporary art fair.

Key Terms

- **Fauvism**: An artistic movement of the last part of the 19th century that emphasized spontaneity and the use of extremely bright colors.
- **Cubism**: An early 20th century avant-garde art movement pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, where objects are analyzed, broken up, and reassembled in an abstracted form.
- **American Realism**: An early 20th century idea in art, music, and literature that reflected contemporary issues and events.

The Armory Show was the first exhibition organized by the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. The exhibition ran in New York City's 69th Regiment Armory from February 17 until March 15, 1913 and displayed about 1,300 paintings, sculptures, and decorative works by over 300 artists. The initial premise of the show was to exhibit the best avant-garde European art alongside the best works of American artists to audiences in New York City, Chicago, and Boston.



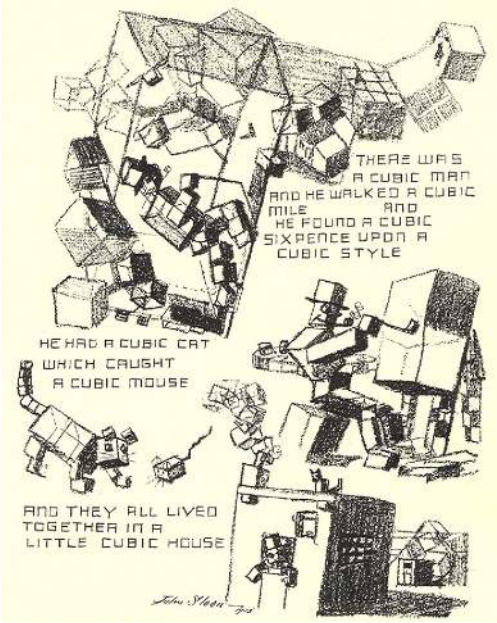
Armory Show Poster, 1913: A poster displaying the name of the show, the time and place of the show, and the featured artists

Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism were among the European avant-garde schools represented. News reports and reviews of the show were filled with accusations of quackery, insanity, immorality and anarchy, often including parodies, caricatures, and mock exhibitions. Criticism aside, civil authorities did not interfere with the show. Among the scandalously radical works of art were Marcel Duchamp's Cubist/Futurist style *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912), in which he expressed motion with successive superimposed images.



Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 by Marcel Duchamp: Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912, oil on canvas, 58 x 35 in. Philadelphia Museum of Art

Art critic Julian Street wrote that the work resembled “an explosion in a shingle factory” while cartoonists satirized the piece. Gutzon Borglum (sculptor, famously, of the presidential portraits on Mount Rushmore), one of the early organizers of the show, labeled this piece “A staircase descending a nude,” while J. F. Griswold, a writer for the *New York Evening Sun*, entitled it “The rude descending a staircase (Rush hour in the subway).” Despite these negative reactions, the purchase of Paul Cézanne’s *Hill of the Poor (View of the Domaine Saint-Joseph)* by the Metropolitan Museum of Art signaled an integration of Modernism into the established New York museums. Duchamp’s brother, going by the “nom de guerre” Jacques Villon, also exhibited at the Armory Show, striking a sympathetic chord with New York collectors.The exhibition went on to the Art Institute of Chicago and then to The Copley Society of Art in Boston.



Caricature of Cubism at the Armory Show: “A Slight Attack of Third Dimentia Brought on by Excessive Study of the Much Talked of Cubist Pictures in the International Exhibition at New York,” drawn by John French Sloan in April 1913. Published before 1923

The Armory Show introduced New Yorkers accustomed to the naturalistic art of American Realism to the styles of the European avant-gardes. The show also served as a catalyst for American artists, who subsequently began to experiment more and became more independent in creating their own artistic language. There have been many exhibitions throughout the 20th century that celebrated the show’s legacy. The “New” New York Armory Show was held in piers on the Hudson River in 1994 and has since evolved into an annual contemporary art fair.

Precisionism

This movement was never a formally organized movement; the artists generally grouped under the title were painting at the same time, around 1920, and their style was a kind of fusion of the industrial or geometric shapes of Futurism and the planar qualities of Cubism. Generally abstract in the stylization of subjects and often in unexpected cropping or point of view, Precisionism above all celebrated American industry in a moment when it was booming. From 1910 through the 20’s America’s economy expanded; the visual correlatives of Modernism in America – urban skyscrapers, the Ford River Rouge motor works in Dearborn Michigan, or the steel mills of Pittsburgh, were depicted by the Precisionist artists as modern icons as significant as the Pyramids in Egypt or the Eiffel Tower.

Charles Demuth, Charles Sheeler, and Elsie Driggs are among the better known artists painting in the Precisionist style. It was Alfred H. Barr, the director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, that officially used the name “Precisionists” to describe the group in 1927.2 The style continued in some popularity until the end of WWII when the atomic bomb made technology seem less attractive just as it had to the Italian Futurists in the wake of WWI.



Charles Demuth, The Figure 5 in Gold, 1928. Oil, graphite, ink, and gold leaf on paperboard, 35 ½ x 30”, MET, PD Art

Demuth lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, his whole life. His work celebrated the symbols of industry and American life in that city. He had studied in Paris and been befriended by Marsden Hartley, Alfred Stieglitz, and the poet William Carlos Williams whose poem “The Great Figure” is the subject of Demuth’s painting.



Elsie Driggs, Pittsburgh, 1927. Oil on canvas, 34 1/4 × 40 1/4 in., Whitney Museum of Art, Fair Use

The only woman to be associated with the Precisionist movement, Driggs was from a wealthy New York family and studied with members of the Ashcan School. Her most famous work, *Pittsburgh*, depicted the smokestacks of the Jones & Laughlin steel mills in that city. Like her male counterparts she was interested in the images of industry as emblems of the dynamism and progress of America in the 1920s and painted them in the most modern style that referenced Cubism, Futurism, and the geometric planar style of Cézanne. With the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that followed, Driggs abandoned the style, married and turned to other mediums.

Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem renaissance was an arts and literary movement in the 1920s that brought African- American culture to mainstream America.

Learning Objective:

- Analyze the Harlem Renaissance.

Key Points:

- Racial consciousness was the prevailing theme of the Harlem Renaissance, an African- American cultural movement in the 1920s named for the historically black Harlem neighborhood of New York City.
- The Renaissance was built upon the “New Negro Movement”, which was founded in 1917 by Hubert Harrison and Matthew Kotleski as a reaction to race and class issues, including calls for political equality and the end of segregation.
- In several essays included in the 1925 anthology, *The New Negro*, editor Alain Locke contrasted the “Old Negro” with the “New Negro” by stressing African-American assertiveness and self-confidence during the years following World War I and the Great Migration.
- Seeking to counteract the rise in racism during the postwar years, black artists, writers and musicians developed unique styles that challenged pervading stereotypes of African- American culture as the Harlem Renaissance developed.

During the early portion of the 20th Century, Harlem became home to a growing “Negro” middle class. In 1910, a large block along 135th Street and Fifth Avenue was purchased by various African-American realtors and a church group. Many more African-Americans arrived during World War I. Due to the war, the migration of laborers from Europe virtually ceased, while the war effort resulted in a massive demand for unskilled industrial labor. The Great Migration brought hundreds of thousands of African-Americans from the South to cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and New York. Among them were a great number of artists whose influence would come to bear, especially in Jazz music.

Artists of the Harlem Renaissance distinguished themselves in theater, literature, music, and the visual arts. Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Aaron Douglas, Jacob Lawrence, Augusta Savage, Romare Bearden, and many others created work in an extraordinary moment of artistic expression and invention that began in about 1920.

Aaron Douglas painted murals for public buildings and in 1940 founded the Art Department at Fisk University where he taught for almost thirty years. During the Depression he painted a WPA (Works Progress Administration) mural for the 135th St. branch of the New York Public Library in Harlem. *Aspects of Negro Life* was a four-panel series that chronicled the social and cultural history of African Americans from slavery to modern life.



Aaron Douglas, Aspects of Negro Life: From slavery Through Reconstruction, 1934. Oil on canvas, The New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Art and Artifacts Division. Fair Use

Jacob Lawrence is best known for his series of *Migration* paintings. His tempera paintings of the movement of African Americans from the South to the North are among his most significant.



Panel 1 of the series. 1941 caption: “During the World War there was a great migration North by Southern Negros.” 1993 caption: “During World War I there was a great migration north by southern African Americans.” Source (WP:NFCC#4) Fair Use

Augusta Savage was a sculptor, activist, and teacher, and was the first black artist to be elected to the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors.3 Much of her work was in clay or plaster; bronze was too expensive for her and she struggled with finances for much of her life.

Her work was realistic and expressive, unlike the more abstract work of many artists of the time.



Andrew Herman, photographer, Augusta Savage posing with her Sculpture, ca. 1938. 8.2 x 10.2", Archives of American Art PD Art

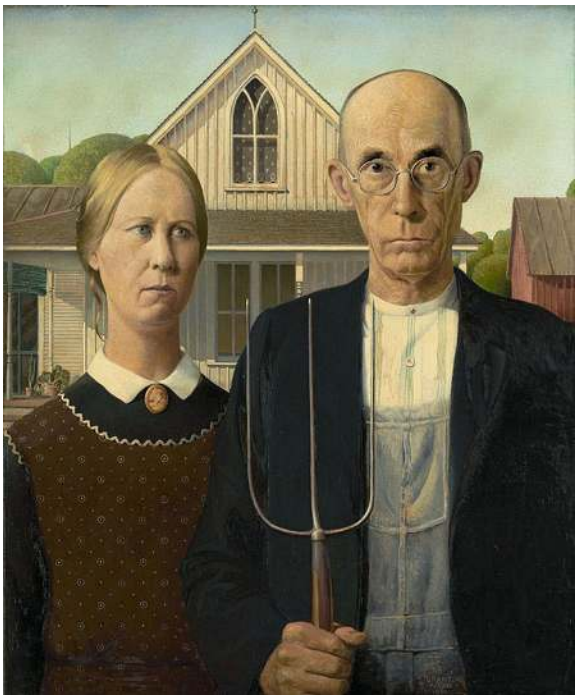
Regionalism

In 1929 the economic boom ended with the crash of the stock market and the Great Depression began which would continue for over a decade. During the 1930s in the Plains states it was exacerbated by the Dust Bowl, a drought that created devastating dust storms eroding much of the top soil and causing many families to lose their farms. *Migrant Mother: Nipomo, CA* by photographer Dorothea Lange is the record of one such family.

In cities bread lines and soup kitchens were crowded and artists like Raphael Soyer documented that reality for the WPA Federal Arts Project. The WPA provided work for artists of all backgrounds and ethnicities. Erika Doss records that a 1935 survey showed that 41 % of WPA artists were female and most were working class.4

But these gritty images were not the most popular style of art at that time. A number of artists from rural states were making paintings that gave a heroic and positive image of the American Heartland. Thomas Hart Benton from Missouri, Grant Wood from Iowa, and John Steuart Curry from Kansas were the best-known of this "Regionalist" movement. None of these men were unsophisticated; all had an awareness of the modern styles abstraction and brought that sensibility to their images of stoic, strong American figures. Benton would go on to teach a young painter from Cody, Wyoming, named Jackson Pollock at the Art Students League in New York. Regionalism was in line with the democratic ideals of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, although there is also a nationalistic quality to the stereotypical figures pictured by these artists. The extremity that the country found itself in required a more positive, hopeful art that found its expression in Regionalism. A discussion of Grant Wood's iconic American Gothic can be seen at Grant Wood, American Gothic**Authored by**: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker.

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Grant Wood, American Gothic, 1930, oil on beaver board, 30-3/4 × 25-3/4”, The Art Institute of Chicago. PD Art



Thomas Hart Benton, A Social History of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City, Missouri, Thomas Hart Benton room, 1935. Onasill Bill Badzo via Flickr. CC BY SA



John Steuart Curry, Baptism in Kansas, 1928. Whitney Museum. PD-Art

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5.9: Abstract Expressionism

The Development of Abstract Expressionism

Abstract expressionism was an American, post–World War II art movement.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the abstract expressionist movement of the 1940s.

Key Points

- Abstract expressionism has an image of being rebellious, anarchic, highly idiosyncratic, and nihilistic. In practice, the term is applied to any number of artists working (mostly) in New York who had quite different styles, and even to work that is neither especially abstract nor expressionist.
- Although it is true that spontaneity or the impression of spontaneity characterized many of the abstract expressionists works, most of these paintings involved careful planning, especially since their large size demanded it.
- Abstract expressionist paintings share certain characteristics, including the use of large canvases and an all-over approach, in which the whole canvas is treated with equal importance.

Key Terms

- **New York School**: The New York School (synonymous with abstract expressionist painting) was an informal group of American poets, painters, dancers, and musicians active in the 1950s and 1960s in New York City.

Abstract Expressionism Overview

Abstract expressionism was an American post–World War II art movement. Although the term abstract expressionism was first applied to American art in 1946 by the art critic Robert Coates, it had been used previously in Germany's Der Sturm magazine in 1919.

Abstract expressionism is derived from the combination of the emotional intensity and self-denial of the German expressionists with the anti-figurative aesthetic of the European abstract schools, such as Futurism, the Bauhaus, and Synthetic Cubism. Additionally, it has an image of being rebellious, anarchic, highly idiosyncratic, and sometimes nihilistic. In practice, the term is applied to any number of artists who worked (mostly) in New York during the 1940s and 50s.

Abstract expressionism has many stylistic similarities to the Russian artists of the early 20th century, such as Wassily Kandinsky. Although it is true that spontaneity or the impression of spontaneity characterized many of the abstract expressionists' works, in reality most of these paintings involved careful planning, especially since their large size demanded it. In many instances, abstract art implied the expression of ideas that concern the spiritual, the unconscious, and the mind.

Characteristics of Abstract Expressionist Painting

Abstract Expressionism expanded and developed the definitions and possibilities that artists had available in the creation of new works of art. Although Abstract Expressionism spread quickly throughout the United States, the major centers of this style were New York and California. Abstract Expressionist paintings share certain characteristics, including the use of large canvases and an all-over approach, in which the whole canvas is treated with equal importance (as opposed to the center being of more interest than the edges).



Jackson Pollock, No. 5, 1948, 1948. Oil on fiberboard, 8’ x 4’, Private collection, New York. Fair Use

Jackson Pollock is known for his techniques in action painting, a style of Abstract Expressionism in which paint is spontaneously dripped, splashed, or smeared onto the canvas rather than being carefully applied, as seen in this painting done in 1948.

Jackson Pollock’s energetic action paintings, so-called by critic Harold Rosenberg in 1952 for the gesturally active quality of the brushwork, are different both technically and aesthetically from the violent and grotesque *Women* series of Willem de Kooning. In contrast to the emotional energy and gestural surface marks of Pollock and de Kooning, the **color-field painters** initially appeared to be cool and austere, eschewing the individual mark in favor of large, flat areas of color, which these artists considered to be the essential nature of visual abstraction, along with the actual shape of the canvas. In later years, color-field painting has proven to be both sensual and deeply expressive, albeit in a different way from gestural Abstract Expressionism.

Abstract Expressionism flourished after World War II until the early 1960s. It is characterized by the view that art should be non-representational and chiefly improvisational. The canvas as the arena became a credo of action painting, while the integrity of the picture plane became a credo of the color-field painters.

The post-World War II era benefited some of the artists who were recognized early on by art critics. Some artists from New York, such as Norman Bluhm and Sam Francis, took advantage of the GI Bill and left for Europe, to return later with acclaim.

Many artists from all across the U.S. arrived in New York City to seek recognition, and by the end of the decade the list of artists associated with the New York School had greatly increased. Painters, sculptors, and printmakers created art that was termed action painting, or color-field painting; Fluxus, hard-edge painting, pop art, minimal art and lyrical abstraction, among other styles and movements followed Abstract Expressionism.

New York

During the period leading up to and during World War II, modernist artists, writers, and poets, as well as important collectors and dealers, fled Europe and the onslaught of the Nazis for safe haven in the United States. New York replaced Paris as the new center of the art world.

The 1940s in New York City heralded the triumph of American Abstract Expressionism—a modernist movement that combined lessons learned from Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Surrealism, Joan Miró, Cubism, Fauvism, and early Modernism via the great teachers who arrived in America, like Hans Hofmann, Josef and Anni Albers from Germany, and John D. Graham from Russia.

Graham’s influence on American art during the early 1940s was particularly visible in the work of Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock. Gorky’s contributions to American and world art are difficult to overestimate. His works—such as *The Liver is the Cock’s Comb*, *The Betrothal II*, and *One Year the Milkweed*—immediately prefigured Abstract Expressionism.

Gorky was originally Armenian having escaped the Armenian Genocide with his mother by going to a Russian-controlled area. There his mother starved to death; Gorky eventually escaped to the United States. His earlier work was figurative, but in the U.S. he began the nonrepresentational art that would be so influential to other Abstract Expressionists.



Arshile Gorky, The Liver is the Cock's Comb, 1944. Oil on canvas, 73 1/4 x 98″, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. The image is copyright © 1999 Estate of Arshile Gorky / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Fair Use

Jackson Pollock

During the late 1940s, Jackson Pollock's radical approach to painting revolutionized the potential for all contemporary art that followed him. To some extent, Pollock realized that the journey toward making a work of art was as important as the work of art itself.

Pollock redefined what it was to produce art. His move away from easel painting and conventionality was a liberating signal to the artists of his era and to all that came after. Artists realized that Jackson Pollock's process—the placing of unstretched raw canvas on the floor where it could be attacked from all four sides using artist materials and industrial materials—essentially took making art beyond any prior boundary.

Jackson Pollock and Action Painting

Action painting, created by Jackson Pollock, is a style in which paint is spontaneously splattered, smeared, or dripped onto the canvas.

Learning Objectives

- Describe Jackson Pollock's method of action painting.

Key Points

- Action painting was developed as part of the abstract expressionism movement that took place in post–World War II America, especially in New York, during the 1940s through until the early 1960s.
- Action painting places the emphasis on the act of painting rather than the final work as an artistic object.
- Jackson Pollock challenged traditional conventions of painting by using synthetic, resin-based paints, laying his canvas on the floor, and using hardened brushes, sticks, and even basting syringes to apply paint.

Key Terms

- **abstract**: Art that does not depict objects in the natural world, but instead uses color and form in a non-representational way.
- **aesthetic**: Concerned with beauty, artistic impact, or appearance.

Action Painting

Action painting is a style of painting in which paint is spontaneously dripped, splashed, or smeared onto the canvas, rather than being carefully applied with a brush. The resulting work often emphasizes the physical act of painting itself as an essential aspect of the finished work.

Action painting is inextricably linked to abstract expressionism, a school of painting popular in post-World War II America that was characterized by the view that art is non-representational and chiefly improvisational. The major artists associated with this movement are Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline, and Mark Rothko, among others.

The term action painting was coined by the American art critic Harold Rosenberg in 1952 in his essay *The American Action Painters*, signaling a major shift in the aesthetic perspective of the New York School painters and critics. According to Rosenberg, the canvas was not an object, but rather "an arena in which to act."

Rosenberg's critique shifted the emphasis from the object to the struggle of painting itself, with the finished work being only the physical manifestation, a kind of residue, of the actual work of art, which was in the process of the painting's creation. This physical emphasis echoed the hyper-masculine atmosphere of the Abstract Expressionists who seemed to see themselves as heroes, American cowboys up against the challenge and danger of the blank canvas. This did not prove good for many of the artists as the stress exhibited itself in alcoholism, depression, suicide and other personal problems.

Action painting refers to the spontaneous activity that was the action of the painter—through arm and wrist movement, painterly gestures— and led to paint that was thrown, splashed, stained, splattered, poured, and dripped. The painter would sometimes let the paint drip onto the canvas while rhythmically dancing or even while standing on top of the unstretched canvas laying on the floor—both techniques invented by one of the most important abstract expressionists: Jackson Pollock.

Jackson Pollock

"My painting does not come from the easel. I prefer to tack the unstretched canvas to the hard wall or the floor. I need the resistance of a hard surface. On the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from the four sides, and literally be in the painting." Jackson Pollock in **Jackson Pollock** 51, 1951 (excerpt) Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg (directors) Morton Feldman (composer).



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=389

Born in Cody, Wyoming in 1912, Jackson Pollock moved to New York City in 1930, where he studied under Thomas Hart Benton at the Art Students League of New York. From a young age Pollock had been an alcoholic and in New York he would undertake therapy from a Jungian analyst in an effort to overcome it. Some of the Jungian archetypes made their way into his earlier abstract paintings like the She-Wolf from 1943. In 1948 he married the American painter Lee Krasner, and they moved to what is now known as the Pollock-Krasner House and Studio in the Springs area of East Hampton, Long Island, NY, with a down payment provided by collector and socialite Peggy Guggenheim.



Jackson Pollock, The She-Wolf, 1943. Gouache, oil, pastel on canvas, 42 x 67”, MoMA. Fair Use



The Pollock Barn: Pollock’s studio in Springs, New York

Materials and Process

After his move to Springs, he began painting with his canvases laid out on the studio floor, turning to synthetic, resin-based paints called alkyd enamels. These were much more fluid than traditional paint and, at that time, were a novel medium. Pollock described his use of household paints, instead of fine art paints, as “a natural growth out of a need.”

He used hardened brushes, sticks, and even basting syringes as paint applicators. By defying the convention of painting on an upright surface, he added a new dimension by being able to view and apply paint to his canvases from all directions—the term all-over painting has been used to describe some of his work, as well as the work of other artists from that time.

In the process of making paintings in this way, he moved away from figurative representation, and challenged the Western tradition of using easel and brush. In addition, he also moved away from the use of only the hand and wrist, since he used his whole body to paint.



Jackson Pollock in his studio: The artist threw, splashed, stained, splattered, poured, and dripped paint to create his works

Titles with Numbers

Pollock wanted an end to the search for figurative elements in his paintings, so he abandoned titles and started numbering his paintings instead. The numbering relates to the way composers title their works. Furthering the musical metaphor, Pollock's action paintings have been often described as improvisational works of art, similar to how jazz musicians approach the performance of a piece.

Death

At the peak of his fame, Pollock abruptly abandoned the drip style and by 1951 his works had turned darker in color. This was followed by a return to color, and he reintroduced figurative elements. During this period Pollock moved to a more commercial gallery and there was great demand from collectors for his new paintings.

In response to this pressure, along with personal frustration, his long-term problem with alcoholism worsened. He painted his two last works in 1955. On August 11, 1956, Pollock died in a single-car crash in his Oldsmobile convertible while driving under the influence of alcohol.

After Pollock's demise at age 44, his widow, Lee Krasner, managed his estate and ensured that Pollock's reputation remained strong despite changing art-world trends. They are both buried in Green River Cemetery in Springs, Long Island, NY.



Woman V: Willem de Kooning was an influential abstract expressionist painter

Willem de Kooning vied with Jackson Pollock for the title of King of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s. De Kooning had come to America from the Netherlands with a degree in art. He initially made a living painting billboards and like Pollock sometimes used housepaint in his work. De Kooning shocked the New York art world when he exhibited a series of violently paintings with a recognizable image of a woman as the subject. The *Woman* series was disturbing to the abstract artists and critics not because of the suggestion of misogyny, but because it reinserted recognizable imagery into a here-to-fore nonrepresentational movement.

9th Street Art Exhibition

The 9th Street Art Exhibition was held on May 21–June 10, 1951. It was a historical, ground-breaking exhibition that gathered a number of notable artists, and it was the stepping-out of the post-war New York avant-garde, collectively known as the New York School.

The show was hung by Leo Castelli, an art dealer who had fled Europe to escape WWII and who became possibly the most influential dealer in New York for the rest of his life; he was liked by most of the artists and thought of as someone who would hang the exhibition without favoritism. The opening of the show was a great success.

There are also commonalities among the New York School and members of the beat-generation poets who were active in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s in New York City, including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Diane Wakoski, and several others.

Color-Field Painting

Color-field painting can be recognized by its large fields of solid color spread across or stained into the canvas to create areas of unbroken surface and a flat picture plane.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate color-field painting from other contemporary abstract art such as Abstract Expressionism.

Key Points

- Color-field painting is a style of abstract painting that emerged in New York City during the 1950s and 1960s. It is closely linked to abstract expressionism, post-painterly abstraction, and lyrical abstraction.
- Distinct from the emotional energy and gestural surface marks and paint handling seen in the work of abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock, color-field painting came across as cool and austere.
- The movement places less emphasis on gesture, brushstrokes, and action in favor of an overall consistency of form and process, with color itself becoming the subject matter.
- Mark Rothko, Frank Stella, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, and Morris Louis are among the many artists who used color-field techniques in their work.
- Color-field painters revolutionized the way paint could be effectively applied, through their use of acrylic paint and techniques such as staining and spraying.

Key Terms

- **abstract expressionism**: An American genre of modern art that used improvised techniques to generate highly abstract forms.
- **action painting**: A genre of modern art in which the paint is dribbled, splashed, or poured onto the canvas to obtain a spontaneous and totally abstract image.
- **lyrical abstraction**: A type of abstract painting related to abstract expressionism; in use since the 1940s.

Color-Field Painting

Color-field painting is a style of abstract painting that emerged in New York City during the 1950s and 1960s. Inspired by European modernism and closely related to Abstract Expressionism, many of its notable early proponents were among the pioneering abstract expressionists.

Color-field is characterized primarily by its use of large fields of flat, solid color spread across or stained into the canvas to create areas of unbroken surface and a flat picture plane. The movement places less emphasis on gesture, brushstrokes, and action than Abstract Expressionism, favoring instead an overall consistency of form and process, with color itself becoming the subject matter.

Clement Greenberg

The focus of attention in the contemporary art world began to shift from Paris to New York after World War II and the development of American Abstract Expressionism. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Clement Greenberg was the first art critic to suggest and identify a dichotomy between differing tendencies within the abstract expressionist canon—especially between action painting and what Greenberg termed post-painterly abstraction (today known as color-field).

Color-Field Formats

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, young artists began to break away stylistically from abstract expressionism, experimenting with new ways of handling paint and color. Moving away from the gesture and angst of action painting towards flat, clear picture planes and a seemingly calmer language, color-field artists used formats of stripes, targets, and simple geometric patterns to concentrate on color as the dominant theme their paintings.

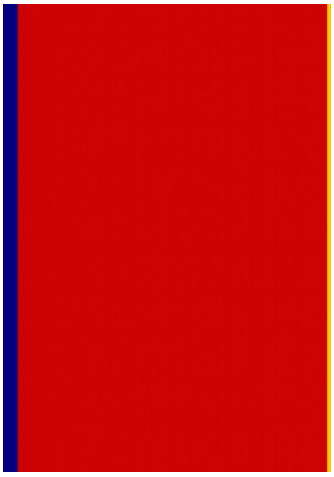
Color-field painting initially referred to a particular type of Abstract Expressionism, exemplified especially in the work of Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, Robert Motherwell, Adolph Gottlieb and several series of paintings by Joan Miró.

Color-field painting sought to rid art of superfluous rhetoric and gesture. Artists like Morris Louis, Jules Olitski, and Kenneth Noland often used greatly reduced formats, simplified or regulated systems, and basic references to nature to draw the focus of the painting to color, and the interactions of color, as the most important element.



Kenneth Noland, Beginning, 1958. Magna (acrylic resin) on canvas, Hirshorn Museum

This color-field painting is characterized by simple geometric forms and repetitive, regulated systems. It was painted by Kenneth Noland in 1958. The target-like shape will become reified in the work of Jasper Johns at about this time.



Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue?, 1966, Oil on canvas, 75 x 48″. PDUS

The flat, solid picture plane that is typical of color-field paintings is evident in this 1966 piece by Barnett Newman, where the color red takes center stage.

An important distinction between color-field painting and abstract expressionism is the way paint is handled. The most basic defining technique of painting is the application of paint, and the color-field painters revolutionized the way paint could be effectively applied.

Water-soluble, artist-quality acrylic paints first became commercially available in the early 1960s, coinciding with the color-field movement. The most common applications were:

- Soak-Stain painting, where artists mix and dilute their paint in buckets or coffee cans to make it a more fluid liquid, then pour it onto raw, unprimed canvas and draw shapes and areas as they stain. Pioneered by Helen Frankenthaler.
- Spray painting, a technique using a spray gun to create large expanses and fields of color sprayed across the canvas.

- The use of stripes, or “zips” as Barnett Newman characterized them.

Color-field painting initially appeared to be cool and austere due to these methods of handling paint that tended to eschew the individual mark of the artist. However, color-field painting has proven to be both sensual and deeply expressive, albeit in a different way from gestural abstract expressionism.

Mark Rothko



Rothko, No. 14, 1960, 1960; oil on canvas; 114 1/2 in. x 105 5/8 in., SFMoMA. Photo: Allie Caulfield, taken on Aug. 27, 2011. Accessed from Flikr

Rothko immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1913. His family settled in Portland, Oregon. Rothko would eschew the family business, go to Yale on a scholarship, and move to New York where he would become part of the New York School. He identified as an Abstract Expressionist, but his mature paintings are basically large floating areas of color. He has written about a kind of spiritual dimension to be found in the paintings, but they share many of the qualities of other color-field work.

His personal life became troubled in his later years and like Gorky – and, arguably, Pollock – he committed suicide. After his death the de Menil family in Houston had a chapel built to house several of his paintings. Given his specific description of his intention and effect as meditative, this was a particularly significant way to honor the artist and his work.

While Abstract Expressionism was the major American art movement of the early Post-War era with influence all over the world, younger generations of artists would find it a useful point against which to push as they moved American painting into new and even more avant-garde areas.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: THE HISTORY OF ART—MODERNISM TO POSTMODERNISM

6.1: Modern to Postmodern

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6.1: Modern to Postmodern

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between the categories of late Modernism and post Modernism in art.

Key Points

- The predominant term for art produced since the 1950s is Contemporary Art. The terminology often points to similarities between late Modernism and Postmodernism, although there are differences.
- Modern art, radical movements in Modernism, and radical trends regarded as influential and potentially as precursors to late Modernism and Postmodernism emerged around World War I and particularly in its aftermath.
- The discourse that encompasses the two terms Late Modernism and Postmodern art is used to denote what may be considered as the ultimate phase of modern art, as art at the end of Modernism or as certain tendencies of contemporary art.
- Late Modernism describes movements which arise from and react against trends in Modernism and rejects some aspect of Modernism, while fully developing the conceptual potentiality of the modernist enterprise.

Key Points

- **precursors**: That which precedes; a forerunner; a predecessor; an indicator of approaching events.

Background

The predominant term for art produced since the 1950s is Contemporary Art, although more specifically it might be used to refer to art created within a decade of the current moment. Not all art labeled ‘contemporary’ is modern or postmodern, and the term contemporary encompasses both artists who continue to work in modernist or late modernist traditions, as well as artists who reject Modernism for Postmodernism or other reasons. Arthur Danto argues explicitly in *After the End of Art* that contemporaneity is the broader term, and that postmodern objects represent a sub-sector of the contemporary movement which replaced modernity and Modernism.

Radical movements in modern art

Modern art, radical movements in Modernism, and radical trends regarded as influential and potential precursors to late Modernism and Postmodernism emerged around World War I and particularly in its aftermath. With the introduction of the use of industrial artifacts in art came movements such as Cubism, Dada, and Surrealism as well as techniques such as collage and art forms such as cinema and the rise of reproduction as a means of creating artworks. Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, and many others created important and influential works from found objects. There was about Modernism also a kind of implicit idea of the forward and inevitable movement of human culture. WWI and especially WWII disrupted this idea and made the Modern moment more problematic.

Late Modernism vs. Postmodernism

The discourse surrounding the terms Late Modernism and Postmodern art is fraught with many differing opinions. There are those who argue against any division into Modern and Post-Modern periods. Some don’t believe that the period called Modernism is over or even near the end, and there certainly is no agreement that all art after Modernism is Post-Modern, nor that Post- Modern art is universally separated from Modernism; many critics see it as merely another phase in Modern art or another form of late Modernism. There is, however, a consensus that a profound change in the perception of works of art, and works of art themselves, has occurred and that a new era has been emerging on the world stage since at least the 1960s.

Late Modernism describes movements which arose from and react against trends in Modernism, rejecting some aspect of Modernism, while fully developing the conceptual potentiality of the modernist enterprise. In some descriptions Postmodernism as a period in art history is completed, whereas in others it is a continuing movement in Contemporary art. In art, the specific traits of Modernism which are cited generally consist of: formal purity, medium specificity, art for art’s sake, the possibility of authenticity in art, the importance or even possibility of universal truth in art, and the importance of an avant-garde and originality. This last point is one of particular controversy in art, where many institutions argue that being visionary, forward-looking, cutting edge, and progressive are crucial to the mission of art in the present, and that postmodern art therefore represents a contradiction of the value of art of our times.

One compact definition of Postmodernism is that it rejects Modernism’s grand narratives of artistic direction, eradicates the boundaries between high and low forms of art, disrupts the genre and its conventions with collision, collage, pastiche, and

fragmentation. Postmodern art comes from the viewpoint that all stances are unstable and insincere, and therefore irony, parody, and humor are the only positions which cannot be overturned by critique or later events.

Rauschenberg and Johns

Both men fought in WWII and used the Post-War G.I. Bill to study art. They met at the Black Mountain art school in North Carolina being run at that time by Josef and Annie Albers.

Eventually they became a couple and moved to New York City into two lofts in the same downtown building. Rauschenberg was already creating avant-garde art like his “all whites”, or canvases painted in that single color. Many elements of the art might be seen in contrast to the preeminent movement of the day, Abstract Expressionism. The Combines of Rauschenberg which combined paint with found objects and other materials took Duchamp’s Readymades one step further.



Robert Rauschenberg, Monogram, 1955-59. Combine: oil, paper, fabric, printed paper, printed reproductions, metal, wood, rubber shoe heel, and tennis ball on canvas with oil and rubber tire on Angora goat on wood platform mounted on four casters 42 x 63 1/4 x 64 1/2 inches Moderna Museet, Stockholm. RRF # 59.024 © 2019 Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. All right reserved. CC BY-NC 4.0

Johns used encaustic paint (pigment in hot wax), often over newsprint to mimic the brushwork of the Abstract Expressionists without the actual hand of the artist being involved. This ironic remove suggests the issues addressed by Post-Modern artists in the decades to come.



Jasper Johns, Target with Four Faces, 1955. Encaustic on newspaper and cloth over canvas surmounted by four tinted-plaster faces in wood box with hinged front; dimensions overall, with box open, 33 5/8 x 26 x 3″, box (closed) 3 3/4 x 26 x 3 1/2″, MoMA. © 2019 Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY, Fair Use

While their partnership was relatively short-lived, Rauschenberg and Johns inspired each other in a conversation that took Modern art in America to a new and unique place.

Happenings

Alan Kaprow was the major innovator behind the performances called Happenings in the 1950's and 60's. He studied at Columbia University with Meyer Shapiro, but also at the New School with John Cage whose experiments in "chance operations" and other ideas coming rom Cage's interest in Zen Buddhism were influential. Happenings were often a kind of street theater, although not all took place in the street, and involved a sometimes invited, sometimes ad hoc audience who would interact with whatever was going on. These often highly scripted events would become part of the environment that would become true Conceptual art. Both Happenings and Pop Art began to remove art from the rarified elite world of museums and galleries and insist on work that engaged with the contemporary world as it was. This disruptive and revolutionary mind-set was also part of the zeitgeist in America following the country's entrance into the Vietnam conflict. Revolution was in the air and artists were making work that was very much of the time.

Pop Art

Possibly the most popular form of American art is art that takes its name from that word – popular. Popular culture became the subject matter of much of the work made in the 50s and 60s. As we have seen, after WWII, American culture was in the ascendant and in England American G.I.'s brought magazines, records, and other elements of everyday life with them. Richard Hamilton was in art school at that time and found the images from America with its suggestion of consumer abundance fascinating.



Richard Hamilton, Just What is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?, 1956. Collage, 10 ¼ x 9 ¾", Tübingen Museum

In American, Andy Warhol was making paintings of subjects like water heaters taken from newspaper ads. He disliked the technique of painting which he has said was too personal. When he was introduced to silkscreen printing he began to make art using that technique with all of its deletion of the hand of the artist and incorporation of chance operations – registration could create large differences between canvases.



Andy Warhol, Marilyn Diptych, 1962. Silkscreen (acrylic paint) on canvas, 80.88 in × 114.00", Tate. Fair Use

Conceptual Art

Conceptual art is defined by concepts or ideas taking precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns.

Key Points

- Conceptual art emerged as a movement during the 1960s. In part, it was a reaction against formalism articulated by the influential New York art critic Clement Greenberg.
- Some have argued that conceptual art continued this dematerialization of art by removing the need for objects altogether, while others, including many of the artists themselves, saw conceptual art as a radical break with Greenberg's formalist Modernism.
- French artist Marcel Duchamp paved the way for the conceptualists, providing examples of prototypically conceptual works such as his ready-mades.
- Conceptual artists began a far more radical interrogation of art than was previously possible. One of the first and most important things they questioned was the common assumption that the role of the artist was to create special kinds of material objects.
- The notion that art should examine its own nature was already a potent aspect of the influential art critic Clement Greenberg's vision of modern art during the 1950s.

Key Terms

- **conceptualist**: An artist involved in the conceptualism movement.
- **dematerialization**: The act or process of dematerializing.

Formalism, Dematerialization and the Commodification of Art

Conceptual art is defined by the concepts of a work taking precedence over the traditional aesthetic and material concerns. It began to emerge as a movement during the 1960s, in part as a reaction against formalism as then articulated by the influential New York art critic Clement Greenberg. According to Greenberg, modern art followed a process of progressive reduction and refinement toward the goal of defining the essential, formal nature of each medium. The task of painting, for example, was to define precisely what kind of object a painting truly is: what makes it a painting and nothing else. For example, if the nature of paintings is as flat canvas objects onto which colored pigment is applied, elements such as figuration, 3-D perspective illusion, and references to external subject matter were extraneous to the essence of painting and should thus be removed.

Some have argued that conceptual art continued this dematerialization of art by removing the need for objects altogether while others, including many of the artists themselves, saw conceptual art as a radical break with Greenberg's formalist Modernism. Later artists continued to share a preference for art to be self-critical and a distaste for illusion. However, by the end of the 1960s it was clear that Greenberg's stipulations for art to continue within the confines of each medium and exclude external subject matter no longer held traction. Lucy Lippard, an internationally known writer, art critic, activist and curator from the United States, was among the first writers to recognize the dematerialization at work in conceptual art and was an early champion of feminist art. Her book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* remains a seminal text on the subject.

Conceptual art also reacted against the commodification of art, attempting subversion of the gallery or museum as the location and determiner of art and the art market as the owner and distributor of art. Many conceptual artists' work can therefore only be known through documentation such as photographs, written texts, or displayed objects, which some might argue are not in themselves the art. Conceptual art is sometimes reduced to a set of written instructions describing a work without actually making it, emphasizing the notion of the idea as more important than the artifact.

Precursors

French artist Marcel Duchamp paved the way for the conceptualists, providing examples of prototypically conceptual works such as the ready-mades. The most famous of Duchamp's ready-mades was *Fountain* (1917), a standard urinal basin signed by the artist with the pseudonym "R.Mutt" and submitted for inclusion in the annual, unjuried exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York. (It was rejected.) In traditional terms, a commonplace object such as a urinal cannot be art because it is not made by an artist or with any intention of being art, nor is it unique or handcrafted. Duchamp's relevance and theoretical influence for future "conceptualists" was later acknowledged by US artist Joseph Kosuth in his 1969 essay, "Art After Philosophy," when he wrote, "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually."



Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917, photographed by Alfred Stieglitz at the 291 (Art Gallery) following the 1917 Society of Independent Artists exhibit, with entry tag visible. Duchamp's appropriation of a urinal as a piece of art challenged the prevailing definition of sculpture. PD

Historical Examples

In 1953, artist Robert Rauschenberg created *Erased De Kooning Drawing*, which was literally a drawing by Willem de Kooning that Rauschenberg erased. It raised many questions about the fundamental nature of art, challenging the viewer to consider whether erasing another artist's work could be a creative act, as well as whether the work was only "art" because the famous Rauschenberg had done it.

In 1960, Yves Klein carried out an action called *A Leap IntoThe Void*, in which he attempted to fly by leaping out of a window. As with much of conceptual art, the performance is largely presented through its documentation. In 1961, Robert Rauschenberg sent a telegram to the Galerie Iris Clert which said: "This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so" as his contribution to an exhibition of portraits. In 1969, Vito Acconci created *Following Piece*, in which he followed random members of the public until they disappeared into a private space. The piece is presented as photographs.

Contemporary Influence

The first wave of the conceptual art movement extended from approximately 1967 to 1978. Early concept artists like Henry Flynt, Robert Morris, and Ray Johnson influenced the later movement of conceptual art. Conceptual artists like Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, and Lawrence Weiner have proven influential on subsequent artists, and well-known contemporary artists such as Mike Kelley and Tracey Emin are sometimes labeled second- or third-generation conceptualists or post-conceptual artists.

Contemporary artists have addressed many of the concerns of the conceptual art movement. While they may or may not term themselves conceptual artists, ideas such as anti- commodification, social and/or political critique, and ideas/information as medium continue to be aspects of contemporary art, especially among artists working with installation art, performance art, net art, and electronic/digital art.

Minimalism

The term minimalism is used to describe a trend in design and architecture in which the subject is reduced to its necessary elements.

Key Points

- Minimalist design has been highly influenced by Japanese traditional design and architecture. In addition, the work of De Stijl artists is a major source of reference for this style.
- The term minimalism dates to the early 19th century and gradually became an important movement in response to the ornate design of the previous period. Minimalist architecture became popular in the late 1980s in London and New York.
- The concept of minimalist architecture is to strip everything down to its essential qualities to achieve simplicity.

- Zen concepts of simplicity transmit the ideas of freedom and essence of living. Simplicity is not only an aesthetic value, it has a moral perception that looks into the nature of truth and reveals the inner qualities of materials and objects.

Key Terms

- **Zen**: A philosophy of calm reminiscent of that of the Buddhist denomination.
- **aesthetic**: Concerned with beauty, artistic impact, or appearance.

The term minimalism can be used to describe a trend in design and architecture in which the subject is reduced to only its necessary elements. Minimalist design in the west has been highly influenced by Japanese traditional design and architecture. In addition, the work of De Stijl artists is a major source of reference for this style. De Stijl expanded the ideas that could be expressed by using basic elements such as lines and planes organized in very particular manners.



Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona Pavilion: The reconstruction of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion in Barcelona is minimalist in its use of space and pared down architectural elements

Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe adopted the motto "less is more" to describe his aesthetic of arranging the numerous necessary components of a building to create an impression of extreme simplicity. By enlisting every element and detail to serve multiple visual and functional purposes, such as designing a floor to also serve as the radiator or a massive fireplace to also house the bathroom, spaces become visually pared down and highly functional.

Minimalist architecture became popular in the late 1980s in London and New York, a few decades after the movement's prevalence in other art forms. White elements, cold lighting, large open spaces with minimal objects and furniture, and a simplified living space revealed the essential quality of buildings and attitudes toward life. While ornamentation is spare, it's not totally absent. Instead this style maintains the idea that all parts, details, and joinery have been reduced such that nothing could be further removed to improve the design.

Minimalist design and architecture accounts for light, form, material, space and location. In minimalist architecture, design elements convey the message of simplicity. The basic geometric forms, elements without decoration, simple materials and repetitions of structures represent a sense of order and essential quality. The movement of natural light in buildings reveals simple and clean spaces. In late 19th century, as the arts and crafts movement became popularized in Britain, people valued the attitude of "truth to materials." Minimalist architects humbly listen to figure, seeking essence and simplicity by rediscovering the valuable qualities in simple common materials.

The idea of simplicity appears in many cultures, especially the Japanese traditional culture of Zen Philosophy. Zen concepts of simplicity transmit the ideas of freedom and essence of living. Simplicity is not only an aesthetic value, but has a moral perception that considers the nature of truth and reveals the inner qualities of materials and objects for their essence. For example, the dry rock garden in Ryoan-ji temple demonstrates the concepts of simplicity from the considered setting of a few stones and a huge empty space.



Ryoan-Ji Temple: Ryoan-Ji Temple is a Zen temple that exemplifies the minimalism and simplicity that is typical in Japanese design

Minimalism in Art

Minimalism as a movement in art is primarily identified in the late 1960s and 1970s with artists like Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Dan Flavin, and Robert Morris. The objects of Donald Judd were often manufactured by others and installed by the artist. Sculpture was reductive and geometric, often rectangular metal boxes. Agnes Martin made paintings and drawings within the minimalist aesthetic by using primarily thin lines in repetitive patterns on a pale background. Stressing the basic materiality of either sculpture or painting stripped away what might have been seen as decorative or pretentious in Abstract Expressionism, for example.

Process Art or Post-Minimalism

Process-based art focuses on the creative journey instead of the end product.

Learning Objectives

- Contrast the focus of process art with that of product-focused artists.

Key Points

- The processes involved in creating art are any actions used to make a work of art.
- The process art movement began in the U.S. and Europe in the mid-1960s. It has roots in performance art and Dadaism.
- In process art, the ephemeral nature and insubstantiality of materials are often showcased and highlighted.
- Process art and environmental art are directly related. Process artists engage the primacy of organic systems, using perishable, insubstantial, and transitory materials.

Key Terms

- **ephemeral**: Something which lasts for a short period of time, fleeting.

Background

Process art is an artistic movement and creative sentiment in which end product is not the primary focus. The processes referred to are those of creating art: the gathering, sorting, collating, associating, patterning, and the initiation of actions that must be in place. Process art is concerned with actual creation and how actions can be defined as art, seeing the expression of the artistic process as more significant than the product created by the process. Process art often focuses on motivation, intent, the rationale, with art viewed as a creative journey that doesn't necessarily lead to a traditional fine art object destination.

Process Art Movement

The process art movement began in the U.S. and Europe in the mid-1960s. It has roots in performance art, the Dada movement and, more traditionally, the drip paintings of Jackson Pollock. Change, transience, and embracing serendipity are themes in this movement. In 1968, the Guggenheim Museum hosted a groundbreaking exhibition and essay defining the movement by Robert Morris, noting: "Process artists were involved in issues attendant to the body, random occurrences, improvisation, and the liberating qualities of nontraditional materials such as wax, felt, and latex. Using these, they created eccentric forms in erratic or

irregular arrangements produced by actions such as cutting, hanging, and dropping, or organic processes such as growth, condensation, freezing, or decomposition."



Bruce Nauman, Human Need/Desire/Hope/Dream, 1983. Like the live immediacy of performance art, process art is focused on the creative journey instead of a traditional fine art destination.

In process art, the ephemeral nature and insubstantiality of materials are often showcased and highlighted. Process art and environmental art are directly related: process artists engage the primacy of organic systems, using perishable, insubstantial, and transitory materials such as dead rabbits, steam, fat, ice, cereal, sawdust, and grass. The materials are often left exposed to natural forces like gravity, time, weather, or temperature in order to celebrate natural processes. The emphasis on material put these artists in contrast to the minimalists and so are sometimes also called Post-Minimal.

Eva Hesse came to America with her parents, observant Jews, to escape Nazi Germany in 1939. She studied at a number of institutions but completed a BA from Yale. Her work recalls the human body in abstract ways; shapes made of fiberglass and latex suggest interiors, like those of the body. She died at 34 of a brain tumor, but left behind a body of work over one decade that remains influential.

Process Art Precedents

Inspiring precedents for process art that are fundamentally related include indigenous rites, shamanic and religious rituals, and cultural forms such as sandpainting, sun dance, and tea ceremonies. For example, the construction process of a Vajrayana Buddhist sand mandala by monks from Namgyal Monastery in Ithaca, New York was recorded and exhibited online by the Ackland's Yager Gallery of Asian Art. The monks' creation of a Medicine Buddha mandala began February 26, 2001 and concluded March 21, 2001, and the dissolution of the mandala was on June 8, 2001, demonstrating that the process of creating the art was more important than preserving the finished product.

The Influence of Feminism

Feminist and intersectional sentiments in art have always existed in opposition to the white, patriarchal foundations and current realities of western art markets and art history.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the origin, evolution, and influence of the feminist art movement during the late 20th century.

Key Points

- Feminism in art has always sought to change the reception of contemporary art and bring visibility to women within art history and practice.
- In line with the development of western civilization, art in the west has been built upon white, patriarchal, capitalist values, and while women artists have always existed they have largely been omitted from history.
- The women-in-arts movement corresponded with general developments in feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.
- One of the first self-proclaimed feminist art classes in the United States was started in the fall of 1970 at Fresno State University by visiting artist Judy Chicago. The students who formed the program included Susan Boud, Dori Atlantis, Gail Escola, Vanalyne Green, Suzanne Lacy, and Cay Lang.
- The strength of the feminist movement allowed for the emergence and visibility of many new types of work by women.
- From 1980 onward, art historian Griselda Pollock challenged the dominant museum models of art and history so excluding of women's artistic contributions. She helped articulate the complex relations between femininity, modernity, psychoanalysis, and representation.

Key Terms

- **feminism**: A social theory or political movement supporting the equality of both sexes in all aspects of public and private life; specifically, a theory or movement that argues that legal and social restrictions on females must be removed in order to bring about such equality.

Origins

Feminism in art has always sought to change the reception of contemporary art and bring visibility to women within art history and practice. In line with the development of western civilization, art in the west has been built upon white, patriarchal, capitalist values, and while women artists have always existed they have largely been omitted from history. Feminism has always existed and generally prioritizes the creation of an opposition to this system. Corresponding with general developments within feminism, the so-called "second wave" of the movement gained some prominence in the 1960s and flourished throughout the 1970s.

The Feminist Art Program

One of the first self-proclaimed feminist art classes in the United States, the Feminist Art Program, was started in the fall of 1970 at Fresno State University by visiting artist Judy Chicago. Chicago (born 1939) is an American feminist artist and writer known for her large collaborative art installation pieces which examine the role of women in history and culture. Chicago's work incorporates artistic skills stereotypically placed upon women, such as needlework, contrasted with stereotypical male skills such as welding and pyrotechnics. Chicago's masterpiece work is a mixed-media piece known as *The Dinner Party*, which is in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum.



Judy Chicago's installation "The Dinner Party" at the Brooklyn Museum of Art: The Dinner Party is an installation artwork by feminist artist Judy Chicago depicting place settings for 39 mythical and historical famous women

The students who formed the Feminist Art Program along with Judy Chicago included Susan Boud, Dori Atlantis, Gail Escola, Vanalyne Green, Suzanne Lacy, and Cay Lang. The group refurbished an off-campus studio space in downtown Fresno for artists to create and discuss their work "without male interference". Participants lived and worked in the studio, leading reading groups and collaborating on art. In 1971, the class became a full-time program at the university.

The program was different than a standard art class. Instead of the typical teaching of techniques and art history, students focused on raising their feminist consciousness. Students would share personal experiences about specific topics like money and relationships. It was believed that by sharing these experiences, students were able to insert more emotion into their artwork. Furthermore, instead of supporting the typical idea of artists being secluded and working as independent "geniuses," the class emphasized collaboration, a radical departure for the time period.

Feminist Art Movements: U.S and Europe

During the heyday of second wave feminism, women artists in New York began to come together for meetings and exhibitions. Collective galleries like A.I.R. Gallery were formed to provide visibility for art by feminist artists. The strength of the feminist movement allowed for emergence and visibility of many new types of work by women. Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) formed in 1969 to protest the lack of exposure for women artists. The Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee (AWC) formed in 1971 to address the Whitney Museum's exclusion of women artists.

There are thousands of examples of women associated with the feminist art movement. Artists and writers credited with making the movement visible in culture include:

- Judy Chicago, founder of the first known Feminist Art Program

- Miriam Schapiro, co-founder of the Feminist Art Program at Cal Arts
- Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Arlene Raven, co-founders of the Woman's Building

Both Suzanne Lacy and Faith Wilding were participants in all the early arts' programs. Other important names include Martha Rosler, Mary Kelly, Kate Millett, Nancy Spero, Faith Ringgold, June Wayne, Lucy Lippard, Griselda Pollock, and art-world agitators The Guerrilla Girls.

The Women's Interart Center in New York, meanwhile, is still in operation, while the Women's Video Festival was held in New York City for a number of years during the early 1970s. Many women artists continue to organize working groups, collectives, and nonprofit galleries in various locales around the world.

From 1980 onward, art historian Griselda Pollock challenged the dominant museum models of art and history so excluding of women's artistic contributions. She helped articulate the complex relations between femininity, modernity, psychoanalysis, and representation. While many argued with the initial feminist movement's focus and use of women's bodies as subject matter suggesting that it was still subjecting women to the patriarchal gaze, artists at the time considered it a reassertion of agency – by taking back the images of women's bodies from the historical use they found it empowering and fundamentally transgressive.

Current Climate

Things are beginning to shift in terms of a more gender-balanced art world as postmodern thought and gender politics become more important to the general public. Postmodern feminism is an approach to feminist theory that incorporates postmodern and post-structuralist theory, and thus sees itself as moving beyond the modernist polarities of liberal feminism and radical feminism towards a more intersectional concept of reality.

Land Art or Earth Art

Site-specific art refers to art that has been created for a specific environment or space.

Key Points

- Site-specific art is artwork created to exist in a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork.
- The actual term was promoted and refined by Californian artist Robert Irwin, but it was actually first used in the mid-1970s by young sculptors such as Patricia Johanson, Dennis Oppenheim, and Athena Tacha.
- Outdoor site-specific artworks often include landscaping combined with permanently sculptural elements. Site-specific art can be linked with environmental art, Earth art, or land art.
- Robert Smithson and Christo and Jeanne Claude are land/Earth artists who created site-specific work.

Key Terms

- **topographies**: Detailed graphic representations of the surface features of a place or object.

Site-specific art is artwork created to exist in a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork. The actual term was promoted and refined by Californian artist Robert Irwin, but it was actually first used in the mid-1970s by young sculptors, such as Patricia Johanson, Dennis Oppenheim, and Athena Tacha, who executed public commissions for large urban sites. Architectural critic Catherine Howett and art critic Lucy Lippard were among the first to describe site-specific environmental art as a movement.



Site-specific installation by Dan Flavin, 1996, Menil Collection.: This site-specific installation by Dan Flavin uses colored lights to illuminate this interior gallery space

Background

Site-specific art emerged as a reaction to the proliferation of modernist art objects as transportable, nomadic, museum-oriented, objects of commodification, with the desire to draw attention to the site and the context of the art. Site-specific work can refer to any form of art as long as it has been created for a specific environment or space. Closely related to land art and environmental art movements, site-specific art is the broadest of the three as it is not medium-specific.

Land Art and Earth Art

Land art, earthworks (coined by Robert Smithson), or Earth art is an art movement in which landscape and of art are inextricably linked, so in this way it is site-specific. It is also an art form created in nature, using organic materials such as soil, rock (bed rock, boulders, stones), organic media (logs, branches, leaves), and water with introduced materials such as concrete, metal, asphalt, or mineral pigments. Sculptures are not placed in the landscape; rather, the landscape is the means of their creation. Earth-moving equipment is often involved. The works frequently exist in the open, located well away from civilization, left to change and erode under natural conditions. Many of the first works of this kind, created in the deserts of Nevada, New Mexico, Utah or Arizona, were ephemeral in nature and now only exist as video recordings or photographic documents.

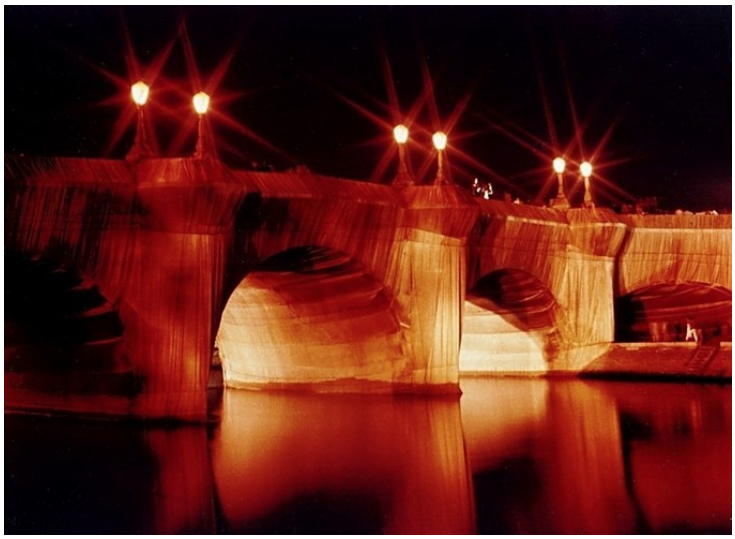
Robert Smithson (January 2, 1938 – July 20, 1973) was an American land artist. His most famous work is *Spiral Jetty* (1970), a 1,500-foot long spiral-shaped jetty extending into the Great Salt Lake in Utah constructed from rocks, earth, and salt. It was entirely submerged by rising lake waters for several years, but has since re-emerged.



Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty: Spiral Jetty is a site-specific piece of Land Art or Earth Art created by Robert Smithson in the Great Salt Lake, Utah. Using rocks and earth, Smithson built a spiral-shaped relief in the lake bed. Best viewed from above, the piece is altered by the shifting waters over time and in this way is forever linked to the environment it was intended for

Christo Vladimirov Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude, known as Christo and Jeanne-Claude, are a married couple who created site-specific environmental works of art. Their works nearly always entail wrapping a large area of space or piece of architecture in a textile, and include the wrapping of the Reichstag in Berlin and the Pont-Neuf bridge in Paris, the 24-mile (39 km)-long artwork

called *Running Fence* in Sonoma and Marin counties in California, and *The Gates* in New York City's Central Park. The purpose of their art, they contend, is simply to create works of art for joy and beauty and to create new ways of seeing familiar landscapes.



Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Pont Neuf, 1985: The artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude are known for their site-specific works that make use of large-scale wrapping techniques. In this piece, they wrapped an entire stone bridge built over a river in Paris to mesmerizing effect

Postmodernism

Post-Modern Architecture

The ideas of Postmodernism based on the ideas of French philosophers like Jacques Derrida (deconstruction) arguably first appeared in architecture of the 1980's. Buildings like the Beaubourg Center in Paris by Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and Gianfranco Franchini was completed in 1977. It's inside-out structure with most of the internal mechanical and functional systems exposed on the exterior seemed to coincide with the deconstructionist ideas of Derrida. It houses much of Frances contemporary art.



The Pompidou Center or The Beaubourg in Paris. CC BY-SA 3.0 Leland

Race and Ethnicity in Postmodernism

Postmodernism had a profound influence on the concepts of race and ethnicity in the United States in the mid-20th century.

Key Points

- Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, arguing that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative rather than certain or universal.
- A great deal of art during this era sought to deconstruct race through a postmodern lens, arguing that race is not based in any biological reality but is instead a socially constructed category.

- Primarily through a postmodern perspective, the author bell hooks has addressed the intersection of race, class, and gender in education, art, history, sexuality, mass media, and feminism.
- The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s led artists to express the ideals of the times. Galleries and community art centers were developed for the purpose of displaying African-American art, and collegiate teaching positions were created by and for African- American artists.
- By the 1980s and 1990s, hip-hop graffiti became predominate in urban communities. Most major cities developed museums devoted to African American artists. The National Endowment for the Arts provided increasing support for these artists.
- Post-black art is a phrase that refers to a category of contemporary African-American art. It is a paradoxical genre in which race and racism are intertwined in a way that rejects their interaction.

Key Terms

- **bell hooks**: Born Gloria Jean Watkins (1952 –); an American author, feminist, and social activist; known for her focus on the interconnectivity of race, capitalism, and gender and their ability to perpetuate systems of oppression.
- **deconstruction**: A philosophical theory of textual criticism; a form of critical analysis.
- **post-structuralism**: A doctrine that rejects structuralism's claims to objectivity and emphasizes the plurality of meaning.

Background

Postmodernism (also known as post-structuralism) is skeptical of explanations that claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person (i.e. Postmodernism = relativism). In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only exists through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, arguing that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative rather than certain or universal.

Postmodernism frequently serves as an ambiguous, overarching term for skeptical interpretations of culture, literature, art, philosophy, economics, architecture, fiction, and literary criticism. It is often associated with deconstruction and post-structuralism because its usage gained significant popularity at the same time as 20th-century post-structural thought.

Postmodernism postulates that many, if not all, apparent realities are only social constructs and therefore subject to change. It claims that there is no absolute truth and that the way people perceive the world is subjective and emphasizes the role of language, power relations, and motivations in the formation of ideas and beliefs. In particular, it attacks the use of binary classifications such as male versus female, straight versus gay, white versus black, and imperial versus colonial; it holds realities to be plural, relative, and dependent on who the interested parties are and the nature of these interests. Postmodernist approaches consider that the ways in which social dynamics, such as power and hierarchy, affect human conceptualizations of the world have important effects on the way knowledge is constructed and used. Postmodernist thought often emphasizes constructivism, idealism, pluralism, relativism, and skepticism in its approaches to knowledge and understanding.

Postmodernism and Race

Postmodernism had a profound influence on the concepts of race and ethnicity in the United States in the mid-20th century. Many people began to reconceptualize the term "race" as a social construct – meaning that it has no inherent biological reality, but is a classification system that's been constructed or invented for societal purposes. Following the Second World War, evolutionary and social scientists were acutely aware of how beliefs about race were used to justify discrimination, apartheid, slavery, and genocide. This questioning gained momentum in the 1960s during the U.S. civil rights movement and the emergence of numerous anti-colonial movements worldwide.

A great deal of art during this era sought to deconstruct race through a postmodern lens. The author bell hooks is widely known for her writing focused on the connection of race, capitalism, and gender and what she describes as their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and class domination. She has published more than 30 books and numerous scholarly and mainstream articles, appeared in several documentary films, and participated in various public lectures. Primarily through a postmodern perspective, hooks has addressed race, class, and gender in education, art, history, sexuality, mass media, and feminism.



bell hooks: The author bell hooks is widely known for her postmodern writing focused on the connection of race, capitalism, and gender

Some African-American artists began taking a global approach after World War II. Artists such as Barbara Chase-Riboud, Edward Clark, Harvey Cropper, and Beauford Delaney worked and exhibited abroad in Paris, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. Other African-American artists made it into important New York galleries by the 1950s and 1960s: Horace Pippin and Romare Bearden were among the few who were successfully received in a gallery setting. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s led artists to capture and express the times and changes. Galleries and community art centers were developed for the purpose of displaying African- American art, and collegiate teaching positions were created by and for African-American artists.



Eugene J. Martin, Midnight Golfer, 1990. Mixed media collage on rag paper

Post-black art arose during this time as a category of contemporary African-American art. It is a paradoxical genre of art where race and racism are intertwined in a way that rejects their interaction. By the 1980s and 1990s, hip-hop graffiti became predominate in urban communities. Most major cities had developed museums devoted to African American artists. The National Endowment for the Arts provided increasing support for these artists.

Postmodernist Sculpture

The characteristics of Postmodernism, such as collage, pastiche, appropriation, and the destruction of barriers between fine art and popular culture, can be applied to sculptural works.

Key Points

- While inherently difficult to define by nature, Postmodernism began with pop art and continued within many following movements including conceptual art, neo- expressionism, feminist art, and the young British artists of the 1990s.
- Intermedia, installation art, conceptual art, video, light art, and sound art are often regarded as postmodern mediums.
- In the 1960s and 1970s artists like Eduardo Paolozzi, Chryssa, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, Edward Kienholz, Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Duane Hanson, and John DeAndrea explored abstraction, imagery, and figure by using video art, environment, light sculpture, and installation art in new ways.
- Jeff Koons is a good example of a postmodern sculptor; his works elevate the mundane, contain a heavy dose of kitsch, and project an element of ambiguous cynicism often seen in postmodern works.

Key Terms

- **postminimalist**: One who works in the style of postminimalism.
- **kinetic**: Of or relating to motion.

Background

The characteristics of Postmodernism, include bricolage, collage, appropriation, the recycling of past styles and themes in a modern-day context, and destruction of the barriers between fine arts, craft and popular culture, can be applied to sculpture. While inherently difficult to define by nature, Postmodernism began with pop art and continued within many following movements including conceptual art, neo-expressionism, feminist art, and the young British artists of the 1990s. The plurality of idea and form that defines Postmodernism essentially allow any medium to be considered postmodern. In terms of sculpture, characteristics like mixed media, installation art, conceptual art, video light art, and sound art are often regarded as postmodern.



Claes Oldenburg, Typewriter Eraser, 1999. Claes Oldenburg is known for memorializing everyday objects in his works, challenging the idea that public monuments must commemorate historical figures or events

Jeff Koons

Jeffrey “Jeff” Koons (born January 21, 1955) is an American artist known for working with popular culture subjects and reproducing banal objects, such as balloon animals produced in stainless steel with mirror-finish surfaces. His works have sold for substantial sums, including at least one world record auction price for a work by a living artist.

Koons gained recognition in the 1980s and subsequently set up a factory-like studio in a SoHo loft on the corner of Houston Street and Broadway in New York. It was staffed with over 30 assistants, each assigned to a different aspect of producing his work, in a similar mode as Andy Warhol’s Factory (notable because all of his work is produced using a method known as art fabrication). Today, he has a 16,000-square-foot factory near the old Hudson rail yards in Chelsea, working with 90 to 120 regular assistants. Koons developed a color-by-numbers system so that each of his assistants could execute his canvases and sculptures as if they had been done “by a single hand”.



Jeff Koons, Balloon Dog (Magenta), 1994–2000. One of five unique versions (Blue, Magenta, Orange, Red, Yellow). Made from mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent color coating, the Orange version was sold in 2013 for a record price for a living sculptor.

Koons is a good example of a postmodern sculptor because his works elevate the mundane, contain a heavy dose of kitsch, and project an element of ambiguous cynicism often seen in Postmodern works.



The “Puppy” topiary sculpture by Jeff Koons, on the outdoor terrace at Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain.: Koons’ “Puppy” presents a large scale puppy on the terrace of the Guggenheim, Bilbao

Neo-Expressionism

Neo-expressionists sought to portray recognizable subjects in rough and violently emotional ways using vivid color schemes.

Key Points

- Related to American lyrical abstraction, the Bay Area Figurative School, the continuation of abstract expressionism, new image painting, and pop art, neo-expressionism developed as a reaction against the conceptual art and minimal art of the 1970s.
- Critics questioned neo-expressionism’s relation to marketability, the rapidly expanding art market, celebrity, the backlash against feminism, anti-intellectualism, and a return to mythic subjects and individualist methods that some deemed outmoded.
- Women were marginalized by the movement, with painters such as Elizabeth Murray and Maria Lassnig omitted from many key exhibitions.
- The return to traditional painting in the late 1970s and early 1980s seen in neo- expressionist artists such as Georg Baselitz and Julian Schnabel is described as having had postmodern tendencies.
- Neo-expressionism’s strong links to the commercial art market has raised questions about its status as a postmodern movement and about the definition of Postmodernism itself.

Key Terms

- **outmoded**: Something that is considered unfashionable.
- **neo-expressionism**: A style of modern painting and sculpture that emerged in the late 1970s and dominated the art market until the mid-1980s; characterized by portraying recognizable objects like the human body in rough and violently emotional ways

using vivid color schemes.

- **bay**: An opening in a wall, especially between two columns; the distance between two supports in a vault or building with a pitched roof.

Background

Neo-expressionism is a style of modern painting and sculpture that emerged in the late 1970s and dominated the art market until the mid-1980s. Related to American lyrical abstraction of the 60s and 70s, the Bay Area Figurative School of the 50s and 60s, the continuation of abstract expressionism, new image painting, and pop art, neo-expressionism developed as a reaction against the conceptual and minimalist art of the 1970s. Neo-expressionists returned to portraying recognizable objects such as the human body (though sometimes an abstracted version), in rough and violently emotional ways using vivid colors and color harmonies.

Overtly inspired by so-called German expressionist painters such as Emil Nolde, Max Beckmann, George Grosz, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and other expressionist artists such as James Ensor and Edvard Munch, neo-expressionists were sometimes called Neue Wilden ("the new wild ones'"). The style emerged internationally and was viewed by critics as a revival of traditional themes of self-expression in European art after decades of American dominance. The social and economic value of the movement was hotly debated. Critics questioned neo-expressionism's relation to marketability, the rapidly expanding art market, celebrity, the backlash against feminism, anti-intellectualism, and a return to mythic subjects and individualist methods that some deemed outmoded. Women were marginalized in the movement, with painters such as Elizabeth Murray and Maria Lassnig omitted from many of its key exhibitions, most notoriously from the 1981 "New Spirit in Painting" exhibition in London that included 38 male painters and no female painters.



Elizabeth Murray, Wiggle Manhattan, lithograph, 1992. Elizabeth Murray is an example of a Neo-Expressionist painter who was marginalized in the movement due to her gender

Neo-Expressionism Around the World

Georg Baselitz, born January 1938, is a German painter who studied in the former East Germany before moving to West Germany. Baselitz's style is interpreted as neo-expressionist, but from a European perspective it is seen as postmodern. His career was amplified in the 1960s after the police took action against one of his paintings because of its provocative and offensive sexual nature.



Georg Baselitz by Lothar Wolleh (Mülheim, 1971): Georg Baselitz's paintings are representative of neo-expressionism

Neo-Expressionism As Postmodern Art?

The return to traditional painting in the late 1970s and early 1980s seen in neo-expressionist artists such as Georg Baselitz and Julian Schnabel has been described as one of the first coherent postmodern movements. Its strong link to the commercial art market has raised questions about its status as a postmodern movement and about the definition of Postmodernism itself. Hal Foster stated that Neo-Expressionism was complicit with the conservative cultural politics of the Reagan-Bush era in the U.S. Félix Guattari disregarded the "large promotional operations dubbed 'Neo-Expressionism' in Germany" as an example of a "fad that maintains itself by means of publicity…Postmodernism is nothing but the last gasp of Modernism."

These critiques of Neo-Expressionism reveal that money and public relations strained the credibility of the contemporary art world in America during the same period that conceptual artists and women artists including painters and feminist theorists like Griselda Pollock were systematically reevaluating modern art. Brian Massumi claims that Deleuze and Guattari opened the horizon for new definitions of beauty in postmodern art. For Jean-François Lyotard, paintings by Valerio Adami, Daniel Buren, Marcel Duchamp, Bracha Ettinger, and Barnett Newman, and the painting of Paul Cézanne and Wassily Kandinsky, were the vehicles for new ideas of the sublime in contemporary art.

Political Art

Political art in the nineties was a form of protest for queer and feminist movements against the patriarchy.

Key Points

- The 90s saw a continuation of political art whereby stigmatized communities such as racial minorities, women, and LGBT individuals created what is termed political art in opposition to the patriarchy.
- The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous group of feminist, female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world.
- The LGBT community responded to the AIDS crisis by organizing, engaging in direct actions, staging protests, and creating political art.
- Street art can be a powerful platform for reaching the public and a potent form of political expression for the oppressed.

Key Terms

- **feminism**: A social theory or political movement supporting the equality of both sexes in all aspects of public and private life; specifically, a theory or movement that argues that legal and social restrictions on females must be removed in order to bring about such equality.

Background

A strong relationship between the arts and politics has existed across cultural boundaries and throughout history. Artistic responses to contemporaneous events take on political and social dimensions, becoming a focus of controversy and even a force of political and social change. The 1990s saw a continuation of political art around the world. Stigmatized communities such as racial minorities, women, and the LGBT individuals created political art in opposition to the patriarchy.

The notion that personal revelation through art can be a political tool guided activist art in its study of public dimensions and private experience. The strategies deployed by feminist artists paralleled those of other activist artists, including "collaboration, dialogue, a constant questioning of aesthetic and social assumptions, and a new respect for audience." These were used to articulate and negotiate issues of self-representation, empowerment, and community identity.

The Guerrilla Girls

The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous group of feminist, female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world. The group formed in New York City in 1985 with the mission of bringing gender and racial inequality in the fine arts into focus within the greater community. Members are known for the gorilla masks they wear to remain anonymous.

Throughout their existence, the Guerrilla Girls have utilized protest art to express their ideals, opinions, and concerns, as well as to fundraise for the group. Their posters, which now are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and others they once protested against, are known for their bold statements such as, "When racism and sexism are no longer fashionable, what will your art collection be worth?" In the early days, posters were brainstormed, designed, critiqued and posted around New York. Small handbills based on their designs were also passed out at events by the thousands.



In 1990, the group designed a billboard featuring Mona Lisa that was placed along the West Side Highway, supported by the New York City public art fund. For one day, New York's MTA Bus Company also displayed bus advertisements asking, "Do women have to get naked to get into the Met Museum?" Stickers also became popular calling cards representative of the group. In the mid-1980s members infiltrated the Guggenheim Museum bathrooms and placed stickers about female inequality on the walls.

Since 2002, Guerrilla Girls, Inc. has designed and installed billboards in Los Angeles during the Oscars to expose white male dominance in the film industry, such as: "Anatomically Correct Oscars," "Even the Senate is More Progressive than Hollywood," and "The Birth of Feminism, Unchain the Women Directors. " Guerrilla Girls have also published books that include their statistical data, information about protest arts, and goals regarding inequality in the art world. Their first book, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*.



Guerrilla Girls Billboard: Guerrilla Girls billboard in Los Angeles protests white male dominance at the Oscars in 2009

LGBT Rights and the AIDS Crisis

The AIDS crisis of the 1980s led to increasing stigma against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, who in turn protested with political art and activism.

The LGBT community responded to the AIDS crisis by organizing, engaging in direct actions, staging protests, and creating political art. Some of the earliest attempts to bring attention to the new disease were staged by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a protest and street performance organization that uses drag and religious imagery to call attention to sexual intolerance and satirize issues of gender and morality. At the group's inception in 1979, a small group of gay men in San Francisco began wearing the attire of nuns in visible situations, using high camp to draw attention to social conflicts and problems in the Castro District.

One of their most enduring projects of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, in which members who have died (referred to as "Nuns of the Above") are immortalized. Created in the early 1990s, the quilt has frequently been flown around the United States for local displays.



The AIDS Memorial Quilt: The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, often abbreviated to AIDS Memorial Quilt, is an enormous quilt made as a memorial to celebrate the lives of people who have died of AIDS-related causes. Weighing an estimated 54 tons, it is the largest piece of community folk art in the world as of 2016

A number of young artists who themselves were victims of AIDS made art that brought attention to the issue. Keith Haring, David Wojnarowicz and Robert Mapplethorpe were artists who succumbed to the disease but created lasting work that brought attention to an issue that was for too long ignored by the politicians given the populations most affected by it at that time, and also especially in the case of Mapplethorpe – creating a Foundation for the arts and ongoing research into the disease.

Street Art or Graffiti

Street art is an umbrella term defining forms of visual art created in public locations, usually unsanctioned artwork executed outside of the context of traditional art venues. The term gained popularity during the graffiti art boom of the early 1980s. The terms “urban art”, “guerrilla art”, “post-graffiti” and “neo-graffiti” are also sometimes used when referring to artwork created in these contexts.

There is a strong current of activism and subversion in urban art, as it can be a powerful platform for reaching the public and a potent form of political expression for the oppressed. Some street artists use “smart vandalism” as a way to raise awareness of social and political issues, especially around issues of race and racism. Street artists sometimes present socially relevant content infused with aesthetic value to attract attention to a cause or as a form of “art provocation.” Street art is a controversial issue: some people consider it a crime, others consider it a form of art. Graffiti art proved to be one of the most lucrative kinds of work for the small galleries on the cutting edge on the Lower East Side in the 80s and 90s. It continues to be popular today as witnessed by the recent sale of a Banksy which he engineered to self-destruct in a gesture against the commodification of what had been a purely rhetorical and political art form.

Performance and Body Art

Performance emerged alongside conceptual art to challenge notions of institutional visual art.

Key Points

- Conceptual art emerged as a movement during the 1960s. In part, it was a reaction against formalism as articulated by the influential New York art critic Clement Greenberg.
- Some have argued that conceptual art continued this dematerialization of art by removing the need for objects altogether, while others, including many of the artists themselves, saw conceptual art as a radical break with Greenberg’s kind of formalist Modernism.
- Performance art is traditionally an interdisciplinary performance presented to an audience. It may be scripted or unscripted, random or carefully orchestrated, spontaneous or planned, and occur with or without audience participation. It generally involves the body of the artist herself.

Key Terms

- **conceptual**: Of, or relating to concepts or mental conception; existing in the imagination.

Background

Performance art is a traditionally interdisciplinary performance presented to an audience. It may be scripted or unscripted, random or carefully orchestrated, spontaneous or otherwise planned, and occur with or without audience participation. The performance can be live or distributed via media; the performer can be present or absent. Any situation that involves the four basic elements of time, space, the performer’s body or presence in a medium, and a relationship between the performer and the audience can be considered performance art. It can happen anywhere, in any venue or setting, and for any length of time.



Marina Abramovic Performance Artist: Marina Abramovic – Guggenheim – Seven Easy Pieces – 1st Night

Contemporary Influence In Conceptual and Performance Art

The first wave of the conceptual art movement extended from approximately 1967 to 1978, influenced by early concept artists like Henry Flynt, Robert Morris, and Ray Johnson. Conceptual artists like Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, and Lawrence Weiner have

proven very influential on subsequent artists, and well-known contemporary artists such as Mike Kelley or Tracey Emin are sometimes labeled “second- or third-generation” conceptualists, or post-conceptual artists.

Contemporary artists have adopted many of the concerns of the conceptual art movement. While these artists may or may not identify themselves as conceptual artists, ideas such as anti- commodification, social and political critique, and ideas/information as medium continue to have a place in contemporary art, especially among artists working with installation art, performance art, net art, and digital art.

Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Art Performance

Performance art is an essentially contested concept: any single definition implies the recognition of rival uses. Like concepts such as ”democracy” or “art,” it implies productive disagreement with itself.

The narrower meaning of the term refers to postmodernist traditions in Western culture. From about the mid-1960s into the 1970s, performance art often derived from concepts of visual art, with respect to Antonin Artaud, Dada, the Situationists, Fluxus, installation art, and conceptual Art. It was often defined as the antithesis to theatre, challenging orthodox art forms and cultural norms. The ideal was an ephemeral and authentic experience for the performer and audience in an event that could not be repeated, captured, or purchased.

Performance artists often challenge the audience to think in new and unconventional ways, break conventions of traditional arts, and break down conventional ideas about “what art is.” As long as the performer does not become a player who repeats a role, performance art can include satirical elements (compare Blue Man Group); utilize robots and machines as performers, as in pieces of the Survival Research Laboratories; or borrow elements of any performing arts such as dance, music, and circus.

Video Art

Video art relies on moving pictures and is comprised of video and/or audio data.

Key Points

- Video art came into existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s as new technology became available outside corporate broadcasting.
- This form can consist of recordings that are broadcast, viewed in galleries, or distributed as video tapes or DVD discs; sculptural installations incorporating one or more television sets or video monitors; and performances in which video representations are included.
- Many artists found video more appealing than film, particularly when the medium ‘s greater accessibility was coupled with technologies able to edit or modify the video image.
- Installation works involve either an environment, distinct pieces of video presented separately, or any combination of video with traditional media like sculpture.

Key Terms

- **choreography**: The art of creating, arranging, and recording dance movements.
- **video art**: A type of art relying on moving pictures and comprising of video and/or audio data. Video art came into existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s as the new technology became available outside corporate broadcasting.

Video art came into existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s as new technology became available outside corporate broadcasting for the production of moving image work. The medium of video being used to create the work, which can then be broadcast, viewed in galleries, distributed as video tapes or DVD discs, or presented as sculptural installations incorporating one or more television sets or video monitors.

History of Video Art

Prior to the introduction of this new technology, moving image production was only available to the consumer through 8 or 16 millimeter film. Many artists found video more appealing than film, particularly when the medium’s greater accessibility was coupled with technologies able to edit or modify the video image. The relative affordability of video also led to its popularity as a medium.



The Art of Video Games Exhibition Crowd, March 16, 2012 – September 30, 2012: Exhibit at the Smithsonian American Art Museum that showcased video games as moving image art works

The first multi-channel video art was Wipe Cycle by Ira Schneider and Frank Gillette. An installation of nine television screens, Wipe Cycle combined live images of gallery visitors, found footage from commercial television, and shots from pre-recorded tapes. The material was alternated from one monitor to the next in an elaborate choreography.

Prominent Video Artists

The first video cameras made available to the public in ca. 1963-65 were given for promotion to Nam June Paik, a Korean-American artist for whom video became his primary medium, and Andy Warhol. Paik and other early video artists explored the medium in much the way early photographers had that technology – screens were manipulated to create colors and shapes as if they were canvases. Today video artists use the medium in many ways; some, like Matthew Barney, create cinematic productions the equal of any narrative film. Many early prominent video artists were involved with concurrent movements in conceptual art, performance, and experimental film. These include Americans Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, and Peter Campus, among others. Some, like Steina and Woody Vasulka, employed video synthesizers to create abstract works.

Much video art in the medium's heyday experimented formally with the limitations of the format. For example, American artist Peter Campus' *Double Vision* combined the video signals from two Sony Portapaks through an electronic mixer, resulting in a distorted and radically dissonant image. Another representative piece, Joan Jonas' *Vertical Roll*, involved recording previously-recorded material of Jonas dancing while playing the videos back on a television, resulting in a layered and complex representation of mediation.



Joan Jonas, Vertical Roll, 1972: A still from Vertical Roll by Joan Jonas, a video that experiments with the formal limitations of video as a medium

Video Art Today

Currently, video art is represented by two varieties: single-channel and installation. Single- channel works are much closer to the conventional idea of television in that a video is screened, projected, or shown as a single image. Installation works, meanwhile, involve either an environment, distinct pieces of video presented separately, or any combination of video coupled with traditional media like sculpture. Installation video is the most common form of video art today. Sometimes it is combined with other media and is often subsumed by the greater whole of an installation. Contemporary contributions are being produced at the crossroads of such disciplines as installation, architecture, design, sculpture, and electronic art.

Digital Art

Digital art describes artistic works and practices that use digital technology as a part of the creative process.

Key Points

- Since the 1970s, digital art has been described with terms like computer art and multimedia art. This modality falls under the umbrella of new media art.
- The impact of digital technology has transformed activities such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and music, while new forms, such as net art, digital installation art, and virtual reality, have become recognized as art.
- The techniques of digital art are used extensively by the mainstream media in advertisements and by filmmakers to produce special effects.
- Digital art can be purely computer-generated or taken from other sources, such as a scanned photograph or an image drawn using graphics software.

Key Terms

- **imagery**: Visible representations of objects.
- **stylus**: A sharp stick used in ancient times for writing in clay tablets; a sharp tool for engraving.

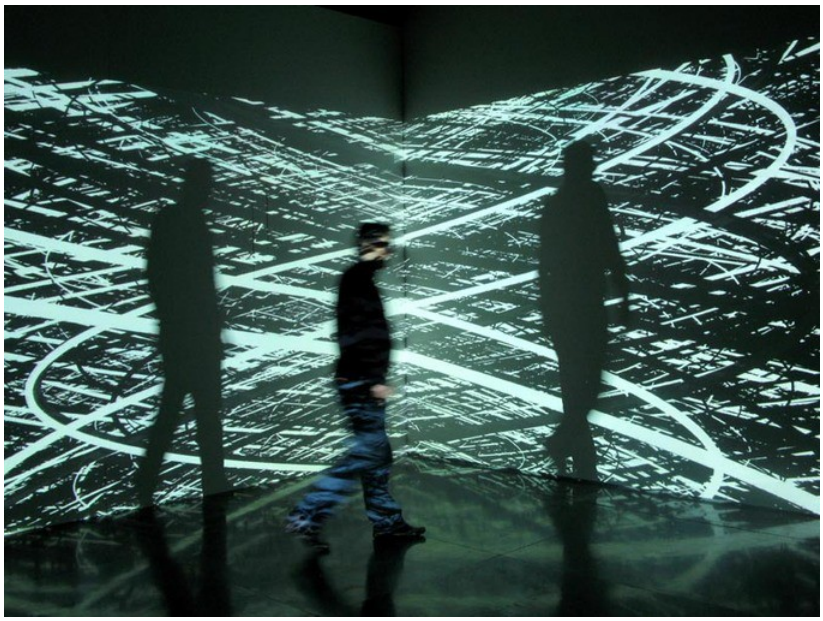
Digital art is a general term for any art that uses digital technology as an essential part of the creative process. Since the 1970s, various names have been used to describe such artwork, including computer art and multimedia art, and digital art itself is placed under the larger umbrella term of new media art.

The impact of digital technology has transformed activities such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and music, while new forms (such as net art, digital installation art, and virtual reality) have become recognized as art. More generally, the term digital artist describes one who creates art using digital technologies. The term digital art is also applied to contemporary art that uses the methods of mass production or digital media.

Digital Production Techniques in Visual Media

Techniques of digital art are used extensively by the mainstream media in advertisements and by filmmakers to produce special effects. Both digital and traditional artists use many sources of electronic information and programs to create their work. Given the parallels between visual art and music, it seems likely that acceptance of the value of digital art parallel the progression to acceptance of electronic music over the last four decades.

Digital art can be purely computer-generated or taken from other sources, such as scanned photographs or images drawn using graphics software. The term may technically be applied to art done using other media or processes and merely scanned into a digital format, but digital art usually describes art that has been significantly modified by a computer program. Digitized text, raw audio, and video recordings are usually not considered digital art alone, but can be part of larger digital art projects. Digital painting is created in a similar fashion to non-digital painting uses software to create and distribute the work.

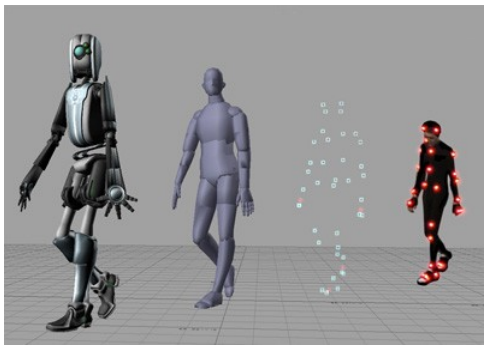


Irrational Geometrics, Pascal Dombis (2008): Irrational Geometrics is a digital art installation

Computer-Generated Visual Media

Digital visual art consists of two-dimensional (2D) information displayed on a monitor as well as information mathematically translated into three-dimensional (3D) images and viewed through perspective projection on a monitor. The simplest form is 2D computer graphics, which reflect drawings made using a pencil and paper. In this case, however, the image is on the computer screen and the instrument used to draw might be a stylus or mouse. The creation might appear to be drawn with a pencil, pen, or paintbrush.

Another kind of digital video art is 3D computer graphics, where the screen becomes a window into a virtual environment of arranged objects that are “photographed” by the computer. Many software programs enable collaboration, lending such artwork to sharing and augmentation so users can collaborate on an artistic creation. Computer-generated animations are created with a computer from digital models. The term is usually applied to works created entirely with a computer. Movies make heavy use of computer-generated graphics, which are called computer- generated imagery (CGI) in the film industry.



Computer-generated animation: This example of computer-generated animation, produced using the “motion capture” technique, is another form of digital art

Digital installation art constitutes a broad field of activity and incorporates many forms. Some resemble video installations, particularly large-scale works involving projections and live video capture. By using projection techniques that enhance an audience’s impression of sensory development, many digital installations attempt to create immersive environments.



Jeff Wall, A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai), 1993: The well-known photographer Jeff Wall often uses digital photography to create his works, thereby classifying them as a form of digital art that exemplifies the exceptionally wide-reaching nature of the term itself

The Globalization of Art

We have seen that developments in art over the centuries have often followed developments in technology. Today the art world is no longer contained by geographical boundaries – it is truly global. Any contemporary art fair will have work from around the world. Recently art from Asia, Africa, India, and the Middle East among many others have become the major players in a world that saw first Italy, then France, then in the 20th century, America, become the center of the art world. Today artists like Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, Palestinian artist Emily Jacir, and Indian artist Shilpa Gupta (see https://youtu.be/WYQ-ysDGZUo) are all making the most avant garde and significant art to be seen and experienced. Curators and critics are also being recruited from far-flung places – the recently deceased Okwui Enwezor must be mentioned – and the Venice Biennale and other important art shows are no longer the purview of the establishment figures of the past. The canon begins to change.

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