

HEATHER CUESTA, MFA

**Introduction to the  
VISUAL ARTS**

# Paleolithic Art

c. 40,000-9,000 b.c

- nomadic people followed the herds
- cave paintings
- small, portable sculptures
- fertility sculptures



## Bison sculpture, Dordogne

c. 12,000 b.c:

carved reindeer horn, 4" long. Lovely carving of a woolly bison turning back upon itself in low relief sculpture. \*striking for its naturalism.

## Altamira Cave Paintings

Santander, Basque Region:

13,000-12,000 b.c.e.:

Images of extinct animals (bison, etc.) superimposed upon each other during long years of habitation in these caves. \*Representation of these animals is striking for its naturalism, based on the observation of nature.

## Venus of Willendorf, Austria

c. 24,000 - 20,000 b.c:

carved limestone, about 4" high. Characterized by exaggerated breasts, vulva. Does not have a face, but wears plaited hair or a headdress, never had feet and was not meant to stand. Purpose is unknown.



# Sumerian Art

c. 3300 b.c - 2300 Neolithic

c. 2300-1000 b.c. Sumerian Bronze Age

- cuneiform writing evolves, c. 3000 b.c.
- law codes developed
- permanent settlements evolve  
cities arranged into theocracies
- art created for worship, civic art, personal objects



## Uruk Vase, Warka, Iraq

Sumerian, c. 3500-3000 b.c, 30" high,  
alabaster carved in relief:

Narrative sequence arranged in registers.  
Depiction of procession to temple to bring  
gifts to the goddess Inanna.

## Stele of Naram-Sin

Akkad, c. 2254-2218 b.c., 6'6" stele:  
Stacked perspective, Hieratic Scale, Com-  
posite (Egyptian) perspective to depict  
Naram-Sin, Iconography: horned head-  
dress depicts king status

## Cylinder Seal

c. 3200 b.c.e., marble

Incised carving results in raised relief  
when rolled over clay. Scene depicts  
Inanna's rams nibbling at the en (king) or  
possibly god Dumuzi.



# Egyptian Art

before 3100 b.c Pre-Dynastic  
2700-2200 b.c. Old Kingdom  
1550-1070 b.c. New Kingdom

- art created for worship
- funerary art (also tomb paintings)
- royal "portraiture"



## Palette of Narmer,

c. 3100 b.c.e., found at the Temple of Nahkbet, Hierakonpolis:  
Schist, 25" high oversize palette for temple ceremonial, possibly a votive gift to Hathor

## Tomb of Ti,

5th Dynasty, c. 2450 b.c.:  
Painted limestone relief depicting Hippopotamus hunt. Characteristics include: mixed perspective in figures, mixed scale/hieratic scale, registers/ground lines.

## Prince Rahotep & Nofret

2575-2467 b.c., carved and painted limestone, Conventional colors differentiate male and female, conventional royal pose.



# Bronze Age Aegean

3300-2000 b.c. Cycladic

2000-1400 b.c. Minoan

1900-1100 b.c. Mycenaean

- atropaic art
- ceremonial art
- functional art
- funerary art



## Cycladic Figures

Cyclades, c. 3300-2000 b.c., limestone figures, tiny to life size, found in graves, significance and function unknown.

## Marine Style Rhyton,

Late Minoan LM1B, c. 1500-1450 b.c., Crete. Vessels for drinking or holding liquids, widely exported.

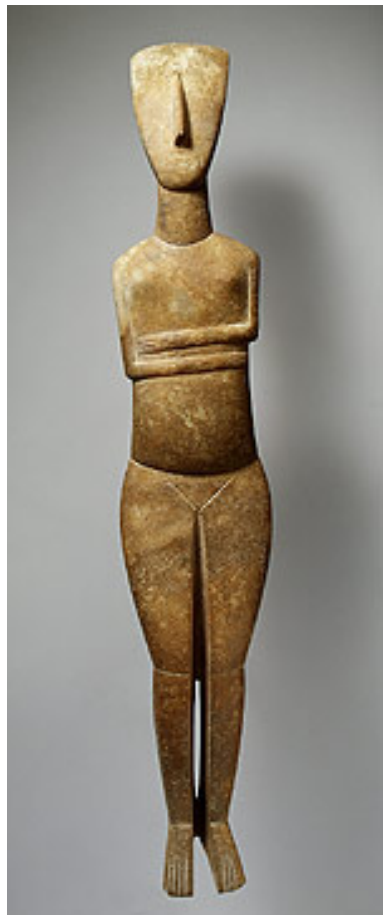
## Minoan Bull's Head Rhyton

c. 1500-1450 b.c., Knossos, steatite and limestone. Ceremonial vessel for pouring liquid

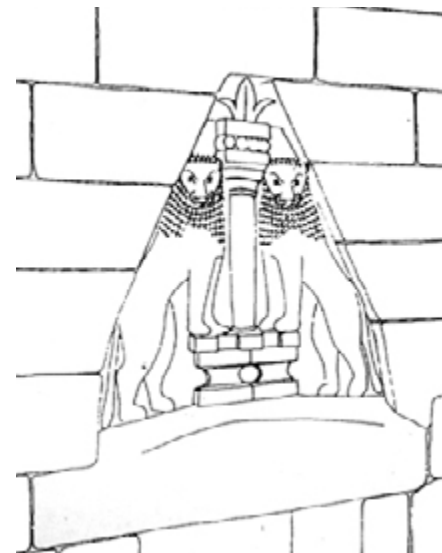
## Lion's Gate

Mycenae, 1350-1330 b.c.

Limestone lions once had bronze heads, perched within corbeled arch, cyclopean masonry. Beginning of bronze sculpture in the Aegean.



Lion Gate, From the citadel at Mycenae, 1350-1330 BC



# Classical Greece

Early Classical, 480-450 BCE

High Classical, 450-400 BCE

Late Classical, 400-323

- sculptures decorated temples
- grave stele
- highly developed pottery styles
- concern with naturalism, contrapposto



## Kritios Boy

Early Classical, c. 480 b.c.  
contrapposto

## Attic Red Figure Krater

c. 450 b.c., Niobid Painter, Apollo and Artemis slaying the children of Niobe. Reflects classical panel painting styles, known only through pottery.

## Acropolis, Athens

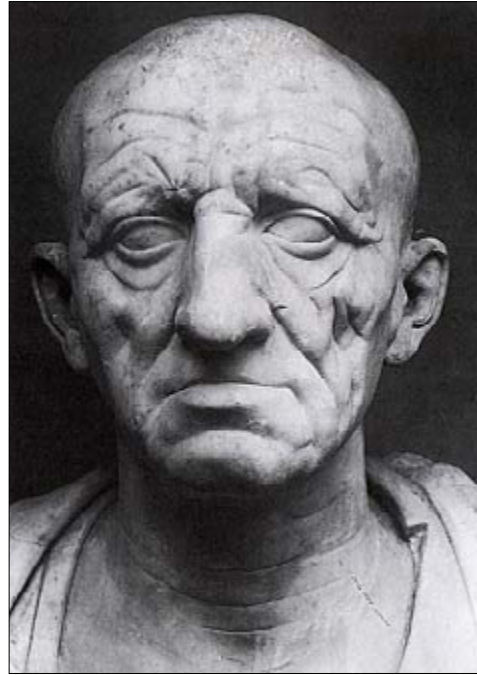
Propylaia, 437-432 b.c., Meneskles: gateway to the Acropolis.



# Roman Art

Roman Republic 509 - 27 b.c.  
Imperial Rome 27 b.c.-476 a.d.

- art for political purposes
- art for decoration (wall painting)
- naturalism vs. idealism in sculpture
- naturalism in painting styles



## Head of a Patrician, Otricoli

c. 75-50 b.c.

Verist style depiction of a Roman senator. Verist style reflects Republican values: wrinkles and scars indicate wisdom, age, experience, humanity (not divine).

## Augustus of Prima Porta

c. 20 b.c.,

Idealized, imperial style, god-like

## Villa of Publius Fannius

### Synistor,

Boscotrecase, c. 50-40 BC: Pompeian second style wall painting, fascination with linear perspective



# Byzantine Art

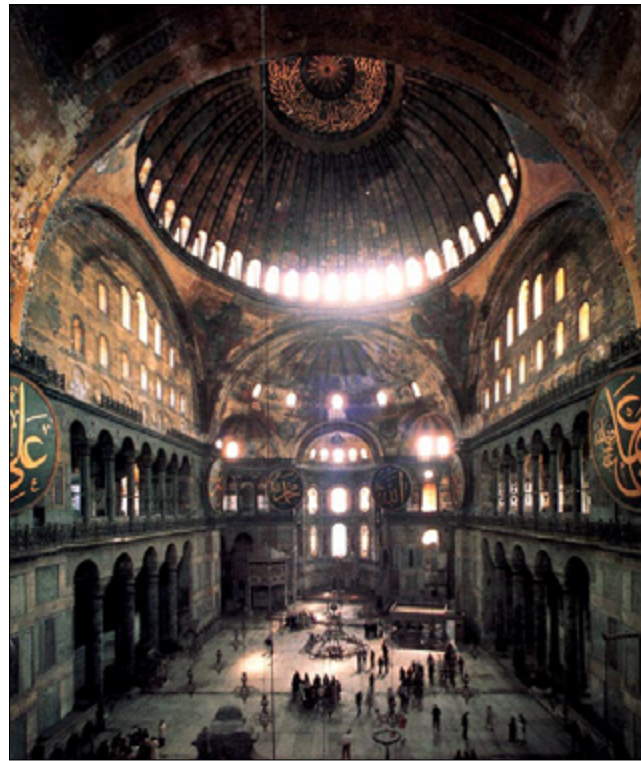
Early Byzantine 526-565 a.d.

Iconoclasm 726-843

Middle Byzantine 843-1261 a.d.

Late Byzantine 1261-1543 a.d.

- religious art
- imperial art
- manuscripts, medical texts
- portable objects for worship (diptychs and triptychs)
  
- art styles become progressively more abstract throughout the Early Byzantine



## Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, 532 a.d.

Extremely wide and tall nave supports a dome on pendentives, made to appear weightless by clerestory windows at base of dome.

## Justinian and Theodora

Mosaic. Pair of Imperial portraits face each other in the chancel. Style is a preference for linear, abstract to suggest the otherworldly, ethereal or spiritual realm.





# Medieval

Migratory Period 5th -8th centuries a.d.  
Hiberno-Saxon 700-800 a.d

- horror vacui
- symmetry
- interlacing / atropaic
- abstraction persists



**Sutton Hoo Ship Burial,**  
c. 600 a.d., enamel and gold purse cover,  
Anglo-Saxon  
Interlaced design is atropaic. Themes of  
warrior king

**Book of Kells**  
750 a.d., Ireland  
Initials are full of interlace with creatures  
hidden within, Hidden figures only discover-  
ed through contemplation.

**Bayeux Tapestry**  
found in Bayeux, France, stitched c. 1073-  
1083 a.d., probably in England (Kent)  
230 feet long, depicts the Battle of Hast-  
ings.



# Gothic

1150 - 1250 a.d.

- architecture and architectural sculpture
- extensive use of stained glass, Rose Windows
- vast sculptural programmes



## St. Denis

1140-1144 a.d.

Established the Gothic style. Church as a fancy reliquary

## Chartres

North Transept Facade: 1204-1220, High Gothic. Vast sculptural programme depicts the life of Mary

Jamb figures, Portail Royale, west façade of Chartres, Early Gothic, 1140's-1160's  
Attenuated figures are typical of the Gothic style



# Renaissance

Proto-Renaissance 1348-1400

Early Renaissance 1400s

High Renaissance 1495-1520

- concern with naturalism in figures
- concern with accurate linear perspective
- depiction of the effects of light
- art for both secular and religious purposes



## Giotto, Lamentation

Arena Chapel, Padua, 1304-1306

Giotto's style is fundamental to development of Renaissance styles

## David, Donatello

1444, Bronze. First life-size male nude since antiquity-art for secular purpose. Compare Contrapposto with Kritios Boy

## Holy Trinity, Masaccio

1427, Fresco

Concern with accurate mathematical precision in depicting linear perspective is fundamental to Renaissance painting styles



# High Renaissance

High Renaissance 1495-1520

- Not a broad style
- High Renaissance is characterized by the work of 6 masters. Lesser artists were unable to imitate styles to develop a broad period style.
- Leonardo, Bramante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Giorgione, Titian.



## Sistine Chapel

Michelangelo, 1508-1512

Center: 9 scenes from Genesis

Between Pendentives: Sibyls and Prophets

Lunettes: ancestors of Christ

Last Judgement, completed later on opposite wall, 1526-1541: themes reflect turmoil in church caused by the Protestant Reformation, characterized by pessimism and darkness



# Neoclassical Art

18th century

- Styles dictated by the French Academy
- Artists must be admitted to the Salons (art shows sponsored by the Academy) to have any success or recognition
- Subjects are often classical legends
- Style is polished and unimpeachable, no visible brushstrokes

## Death of Socrates

Jacques-Louis David, 1787

Style and subject matter favored by the Academy

## Death of Marat

Jacques-Louis David, 1793

Marat's writings instigated the French Revolution. Marat was stabbed to death by a Royalist, elevated to status of political martyr in David's painting.



# Impressionism

1860s - 1880s

- Artists began to have success outside of the Salons
- The Academy no longer had a monopoly on dictating art styles
- artists acknowledged the flatness of the canvas, allowed visible brushstrokes
- concern with color and the effects of light, not in illusionism



## The Fifer, Manet

1866

Anti-academic style was almost laughable. Every attempt made to acknowledge the flatness of the canvas.

## Haystacks, Monet

Concern with light and color: Monet painted Haystacks 30 times, at different times of the day.

## The Boating Party, Renoir

1881

Snapshot quality, deliberately unposed (compare with posed Academic styles) Renoir never completely abandoned classical styles; his figures are modeled in



# Post-Impressionism

after 1886

- not a specific style, art produced after the last Impressionist show
- Various movements within Post-Impressionism were: The Symbolists, the Expressionists, and Pointillism



# Still Life with Apples

Cezanne, 1879

The apple is elevated to status of art. Perspective on table is conflated so viewer can see what is on the table better

# Starry Night

Van Gogh, 1889

Painted from memory during the day, the night sky is alive with movement



# Early Twentieth Century Art

1900-1945



## Les Demoiselles d'Avignon

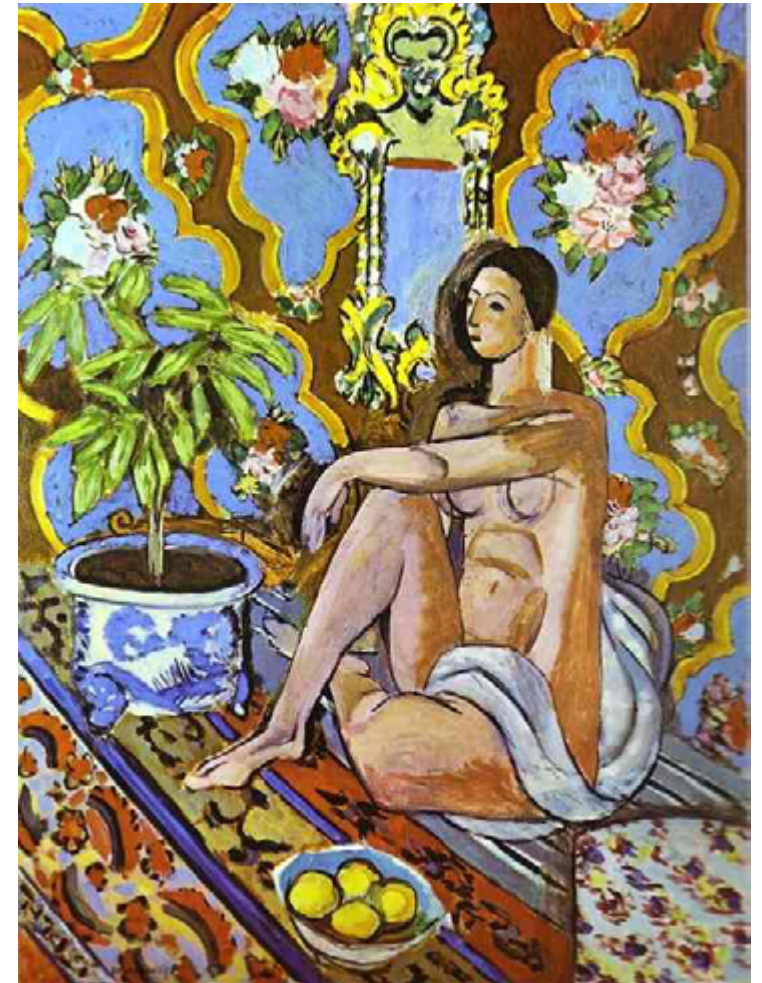
Pablo Picasso, 1907

Picasso deconstructs the Classical Nude

## Decorative Figure against an Ornamental Background

Matisse, 1925

This nude has no symbolism or meaning.  
She is simply beautiful to look at.





# Art after 1945

1945

- non-objective art
- pop art
- minimalism



## No. 61, Rothko, 1963

Non-objective art. Color field paintings evoke meditative states.

## Three Flags

Jasper Johns, 1958

Pop art, taking its subject matter from popular culture

## Red, Blue, Green

Ellsworth Kelly, 1963

Minimalism forces viewer to contemplate formal relationships

