

NeoClassical Art & Romanticism

week four

architecture

minor arts

sculpture

painting

What is Neoclassicism?

The Neoclassical style arose from first-hand observation and reproduction of antique works.

- A style favored by the French Academy
- Subjects are often classical legends or myths
- The technique is highly polished and unimpeachable
- Jacques-Louis David was THE important Neoclassical artist

Characteristics of Neoclassicism

-direct study of classical art inspires sculpture, painting and architecture

-Fascination with Greek and Roman society
-New archaeological discoveries fuel this interest such as the discovery of Pompeii

-Pompeii was excavated in the 1730s and 1740s

-Belief that Greek and Roman societies exemplified virtues

-Greek and Roman virtues: self-sacrifice, loyalty to family and country

-Contrast perceived Greek and republican Roman virtues with the luxurious life of the aristocracy before the French Revolution

-Greek and Roman heroes were linked to modern

Revolutionary heroes such as George Washington

-Classical styles arose in architecture to create a link with the glories of ancient civilizations

-buildings express the democratic ideals of ancient Greece and the Roman republic

-contrast the democratic republics of ancient civilizations with the morally corrupt and lavish lifestyles of the monarchy and French aristocracy

-in painting, royal and church patronage of the past gave way to commercial galleries and wealthy collectors

NeoClassical

architecture

neoclassical architecture

- Architecture imitates classical Greek and Roman models
- public buildings express the democratic ideals of ancient republics
- contrast the emerging democracies in the United States and France with the hereditary governments and monarchy the American and French revolutions replaced
- classical architecture style create a visible link with the glorious republics of Greece and Rome



Monticello, Thomas Jefferson, 1772



Pantheon, Hadrian, 125 c.e.

Compare the Greek portico extending from a drum and dome at the Pantheon with the domed portico style at Monticello.

Greek and Roman architecture styles were adapted to local needs, using local materials (brick and wood) in Monticello.

- Concrete and marble construction at Pantheon > brick and wood construction at Monticello

neoclassical architecture

Classical features adapted for Neoclassical Architecture

- symmetrical
- columns
- triangular pediment
- often domed

Architectural Symbol of Democratic Ideals

Many designs were submitted for the Capital. Thomas Jefferson favored the classical plans, and suggested that the Capitol should resemble the Roman Pantheon with a circular domed rotunda.

Local adaptations:

- Corinthian capitals at the Pantheon are adapted to corn cob capitals at the Capital in Washington.
- The bronze Roman Eagle that once decorated the Pantheon pediment becomes the symbolic American Bald Eagle.



Capital, Washington, D.C., built 1793-1829 and 1851-1863



Supreme Court, American Neoclassical architecture

neoclassical architecture

- La Madeleine looks like the Parthenon.
- Napoleon embraced Classical architectural styles to create a visible authority to the glorious ancient civilizations as he declared himself Emperor.
- The Madeleine was meant to be a “temple of glory” monument to himself in the manner of the Roman emperors who practiced deification. The Temple of Trajan in the Roman Forum is one example.
- Napoleon seems a bit confused because the Parthenon was the centerpiece of a democratic republic. However, the Roman temples and public buildings were built on Greek architectural models.

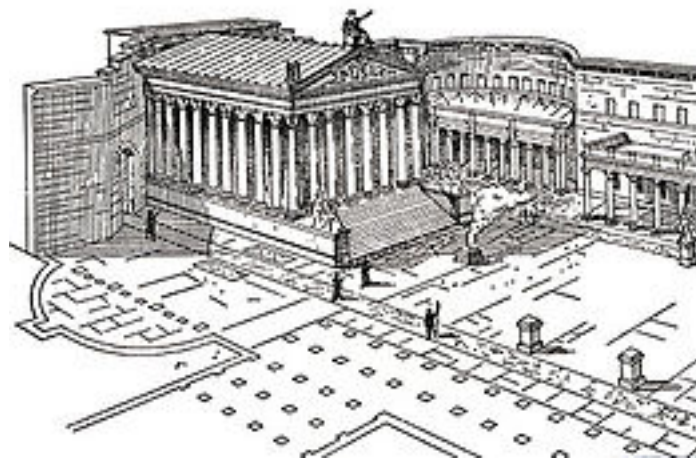


Jacques Louis David, Napoleon Crossing the Alps, 1800

Late style David returns to somewhat Baroque sensibility, coinciding with a shift in political loyalties



Church of the Madeleine, Pierre Vignon, Paris, 1851-1870



Forum of Augustus, with a temple to Mars, 1st c. c.e.



Parthenon, Athens, 5th c. b.c

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sculpture

Sculpture

The Neoclassical style arose from first-hand observation and reproduction of antique works.

Horatio Greenough, George Washington, 1832-1841, marble, 11'4" high

- George is half nude, looking very Greek
- commissioned by congress to honor the first president, to be placed under the dome in the Capital
- modeled on the Seated Zeus at Olympia by Phidias
- adaptation: sword is tilted forward as a sign of peace

Washington, half naked, was seen an undignified and the sculpture was deemed a failure. It was never placed in the capital, and one congressman suggested it be thrown into the Potomac.



Horatio Greenough, George Washington, 1832-1841, marble, 11'4" high



The Statue of Zeus at Olympia was made by the Greek sculptor Phidias, circa 432 BC on the site where it was erected in the Temple of Zeus, Olympia, Greece.

12 meters (43 feet) tall, the sculpture was so large that "if Zeus were to stand up he would hit the roof of the temple it was housed in". The sculpture seated on a magnificent throne of cedarwood, inlaid with ivory, gold, ebony and precious stones. In Zeus' right hand there was a small statue of a crowned Nike, goddess of victory, and in his left hand, a golden scepter on which an eagle perched.

- Chryselephantine
- destroyed in antiquity
- images are known from coins.



NeoClassical

minor arts

Minor Arts

John Flaxman

The Neoclassical style arose from first-hand observation and reproduction of antique works.

Style:

- Flaxman's Severe ascetic style is the antithesis of the florid rococo
- the lack of color echoes the 18th century understanding of color in classical works of art
- Ascetic purity
- unimpeachable, noble style
- style is modeled on Greek and Etruscan vase painting
- Compare the procession to the procession on the Parthenon East frieze and other processions such as the Ara Pacis.

Motif:

- Procession of mourning women move to the tomb of Agamemnon. Agamemnon was the king of Mycenae, whose wife Clytemnestra murdered him.

Flaxman's engraving style was immensely popular as illustrations in England and America.

Flaxman's engravings inspired Wedgwood China which was considered the perfection of the neoclassical ideal.



Nestor's Sacrifice (from the Odyssey of Homer), John Flaxman, etching and engraving on paper, 1805



Electra Leading a Procession to Agamemnon's Tomb, John Flaxman, etching and engraving on paper illustrations to The Tragedies of Aeschylus, 1795



John Flaxman, Wedgwood Vase, late 18th century, made by Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, Etruria/Staffordshire, England Jasperware.

The sides are divided by pilasters into six panels containing figures of the Muses Thalia, Urania, and Erato, alternating with pendant trophies with attributes of Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury (thunderbolt, spear and helmet, caduceus)

Minor Arts

John Flaxman - compare with classical Greek and Roman vase painting and relief sculpture



Grave stele of Hegeso, Attica (ca. 330-320 BCE)



Attic vase painting



Parthenon, East frieze, sacrificial procession

NeoClassical

painting

neoclassical painting

Angelica Kauffmann, Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures, 1785

Cornelia is the mother of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, who in the second century b.c. tried to reform the Roman republic. Cornelia's lady guest shows Cornelia her fancy jewelry (her treasure). Cornelia responds by showing her children as her treasure.

- Austere Roman background
- Cornelia is dressed in Roman garb
- Cornelia gestures to her children as her treasures
- Moralizing scene is the model of female virtue



Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures, Angelica Kauffman, circa 1785

Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825)

David studied in Rome, admiring the classical and Renaissance art

Preferred naturalism as a style

David's naturalism was perfected and idealized

Belief in the superiority of classical art

Used classical art as French Revolution propaganda

David was part of a group that dismantled the French royal Academy of Art

David was to become essentially an art dictator

- politically active in the French Revolution (1789-1799)
- was a member of the Jacobin Party
- voted to execute Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette.
- The period after the French Revolution is called the Reign of Terror. 30,000 enemies of the revolution were executed by the guillotine. David signed execution orders for 300 of these people.
- The social climate during the Reign of Terror was moralistic and austere.
- David's paintings are austere in style and morally didactic in tone.



Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii 1784

-Oath of the Horatii was meant to evoke feelings of heroism and civic virtue, to inspire the people to devotion to the fatherland

-Ironically this painting was painted for a Royal patron, not a revolutionary

-Story is set in pre-republican Rome, a tale told by Roman writer Livy

-This story was also being played as a popular theatrical production, playing to French audiences in the 1780s, The story of the Horatii was thus widely known to its audience at the time

Story: The Roman army vs. the Alban army
Two armies decide not to go to war, but to have three representatives from each side to fight. Three representatives from the Horatio family volunteer to fight three representatives from the Curatii family. The Horatii vow to win or die for Rome.

Scene:

Three arches separate three areas of the story

At left the three brothers raise their arms in the attitude of a pledge

In the center the father raises the swords to give to his sons

At left, the women who are the wives and sisters, are anguished and afraid

Composition:

Austere Roman background with three arches create a shallow pictorial space

The strong vertical lines create a very stable composition

The extremely stable composition lends to it's austerity

The flat background and strong directional light create a shallow theatrical background

The action is close to the Picture plane, close to the viewer

The figures are lined up reminiscent of classical and Roman relief sculpture

The rigid frame of the men contrasts with the languid women

Compare the women to be seated goddesses at the Parthenon

Compare the clothing to the drapery in classical sculptures

COMMENTARY and symbolism

Manly virtues are emphasized: patriotism, loyalty, courage

Feminine virtues are subordinate: Love sorrow despair emotion

Scene Reflects the second class station of women in 18th century France, and also the second class station of women in ancient Athens. Women were considered unfit for public office in both time periods.

*This painting created a sensation in 1785 when it was exhibited, arousing a patriotic zeal



Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii 1784

- The subject is a legendary conflict between the cities of Rome and Alba
- Warriors were chosen to fight to resolve the conflict. The Roman Horatii (triplets) fought the Curatii (also triplets) from Alba
- A Curatii woman was married to a Horatii and a Horatii woman was betrothed to a Curatii.
- Despite the pleas of the women, Horatius (father and central figure) commands his sons to fight.
- The subject symbolizes loyalty at any cost.
- The Roman architecture is formidable and austere
- The figures are separated into three groups.
- The three figure groups each react differently. The women weep, the father commands and the sons obey.
- The three arches reflect the three sets of figures

neoclassical painting

Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii 1784

- Compare the theatrical quality of the scene to the pediment sculpture at the Parthenon
- Compare the languid women to the three goddesses on the East pediment of the Parthenon



Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii 1784



Three Goddesses. East pediment of the Parthenon. c. 438-432 B.C.

Painting

Jacques-Louis David

The Neoclassical style arose from first-hand observation and reproduction of antique works.

- Marat was a friend of David and a member of the Jacobin Party
- His writings helped to instigate the French Revolution
- Marat was stabbed to death in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday, a young Royalist (an opposing political party)
- David has elevated Marat to the status of political “martyr”



Jacques Louis David's "The Death of Marat" (1793)

Saint Francis in Meditation by Francisco de Zurbarán (1635-9)

Painting

Ingres

The Neoclassical style arose from first-hand observation and reproduction of antique works.



Apotheosis of Homer, Ingres, 1827

Romanticism

painting

Rococo painting

contrast the neoclassical austerity with the
florid roccoco



Hall of
Mirrors,
inside Palais
de Versailles
(1680)
Jules
Hardouin-
Mansart



Cupid a Captive (1754) Francois
Boucher

The Swing (1766)
Jean-Honore Fragonard

return to naturalism in painting

a return to naturalism was a r
rococo



Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat by Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, 1782

Paul Revere, John Singleton Copley, 1776

romanticism
painting

Goya

emphasis on contemporary events



Francisco Goya, May the Third, 1808 -1814

romanticism painting

Goya

emphasis on contemporary events



Study of an Old Man in Profile, c.
1630
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)

Goya, Saturn Devouring His Children, 1819-1823



Diego Velazquez, Las Meninas, 1656

romanticism painting

J.M.W. Turner

emphasis on contemporary events



Joseph Mallord William Turner, The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834, 1835

**romanticism
painting**

J.M.W. Turner

emphasis on contemporary events



JMW Turner, The Slave Ship,
1840

romanticism painting

emphasis on contemporary events

Liberty leading the people, Eugène Delacroix, 1830

This painting celebrated the day, during the 1830 Revolution, that the people rose and fought for their liberty. Delacroix used the painting as a political poster for the revolution. Delacroix was a member of the National Guard, and he placed himself into the picture as the man on the left wearing a top-hat (close-up shown below). Argan defined this canvas as the first political work of modern painting. There is a sense of full participation from the artist. With the outstretched figure of liberty, the vibrant, bold fighters contrasting to the lifeless dead casualties in the foreground, the heroic poses of the people fighting for liberty, the painting illustrates the struggle of the people for their liberty, and allows the viewer to empathize with that struggle. Delacroix is on the right wearing a top hat and seems very serious as he fights for the liberty of the people.

- The subject is a small insurrection in 1830, when the Bourbon king was deposed.
- The half nude woman is an allegorical figure of Liberty.
- She carries a gun and the tricolor (the flag of the French Revolution) as she leads the people in a spontaneous revolt
- Delacroix pictures himself (in the top hat) taking part



romanticism painting

emphasis on contemporary events

Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-1819

- The subject was a real life tragedy--a ship wreck. The top figure frantically waves a flag because he has spotted a rescue ship.
- Géricault interviewed the survivors
- The subject was a political scandal
- The captain was appointed by the government that replaced Napoleon. He was unqualified, but well-connected.
- As the ship sank, the captain abandoned his ship. He left hundreds of people and only one raft.
- The few survivors drifted on the raft for 13 days.
- The painting symbolizes government corruption



American Romanticism

Robert S. Duncanson

text



Robert S. Duncanson, Blue Hole - Little Miami River, 1851

American Romanticism

Thomas Cole

text



Thomas cole, The Oxbow, 1836

American Romanticism

The Hudson River School

Asher Durand

Kindred Spirits is an homage to Thomas Cole, who had died suddenly in early 1848. Durand marshaled his skills as draftsman, genre painter, portraitist, and landscape painter to create a remarkable image. He memorialized Cole, who had been his own mentor, forever standing in a deep Catskill gorge, sketch portfolio in one hand and his recorder in the other, in company with their mutual friend Bryant. The botanical precision of the mountain forest and foreground trees marks the new direction toward realism in Durand's work. The gorge and the torrent embody geological process as well as sublime grandeur. The two figures might as easily be discussing their mutual fascination with the science of geology as meditating on the Romantic sonnet by John Keats for which the painting is named.



Asher Durand, Kindred spirits, 1849