

# Lecture 6

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10:03 PM

## France Baroque Classicism to Rococo 17th and early 18th Century France

- 2 periods that took place at this time:
- French Baroque - baroque classicism
  - o Poussin
  - o Claude
- Rococo
  - o Rococo interiors
  - o Watteau
  - o Boucher
  - o Fragonard
  
- Focus will be on formal characteristics
- Louis XIV known as the Sun King
  
- when talk about formal properties of artwork, form is never created w/out substance; styles still tell us about the societies that produced them
  
- France at this time was tumultuous; it was emerging as significant power in europe
- largest and wealthiest nation; strongest military; other european city states feared this; most powerful political organizations w/in european cultures
- france was also emerging as a cultural center; this was road to development of paris taking over Rome as center of art world
  
- France under louis xiv
- louis xiv was an absolutist ruler; his word was law; he believed he had the divine right to rule over france. chosen by god to rule

had the divine right to rule over France, chosen by god to rule France; this could be tied back to emperors of old Rome

- he also referred to himself as the sun king; this is reflected in the artworks he got produced
- all of France revolved around him, just as everything revolves around the sun; this showed how important he thought of himself
  - o This is what he referred to himself as the Sun King
- took responsibility of all aspects of government; e.g. administrative tasks, taxation laws, foreign policy
- He believed that power rested exclusively in his own hands
- today, we have a representational government
- Louis XIV also had a lot of control in what was going on in the arts
  
- Rigaud, Portrait of Louis XIV, 1701
- purpose of a portrait - to reinforce the person's power; for propaganda tool
- portraits are special; memorializes the person (i.e. makes the person last forever); **meant to represent the essence of a unique individual; not created to deceive the viewer, but to give an insight of who the person is in the portrait, and give insight into his character**
- represented himself as he was in this portrait bc he didn't think there was anything wrong w/ the way he looked
- There's an abundance of fabric to show wealth
- Louis XIV really liked his legs; invented the high heels to be able to show off his legs
- Cloak he's wearing is lined w/ ermine (a squirrel-ferret like creature); these were difficult to catch bc they would dive into mud puddles thus causing their fur to be stained permanently
  - o Thus, this was a very fancy cloak bc it was hard to get this kind of fur
- Cloak's otherside is made of satin; has fleur de lis insignia, which was the symbol of France
- portraits like this became model for official regal portraiture
- paintings like this were created to assert the authority of the ruler and to glorify the person

- Formal conventions of this painting: full body view; a lot of portraits up to this point only showed up to bust (i.e. just head and shoulders); this full body view gives access to whole person and lets us admire him fully
  - The way he's positioned in the canvas forces viewer to look up at him; having to look up at this portrait helps to elongate him and make him taller; all these things make him larger and more important
  - draping over column prevents it from overshadowing/dwarfing him; makes him the more important figure
  - column is a reference to classical antiquity; the fact that there's a column in this portrait draws a connection to civilizations of the past
  - pattern on his cloak matches the pattern on his throne — this represents that he's the seat of power, he's the state
  - timelessness of his power is represented by the classical relief of a greek goddess on the column (this further highlights his divine right to power)
- 
- art produced during reign of Louis xiv = baroque classicism
  - Louis XIV favored a lot of stuff from classical world; we see this in the architecture, artworks he commissioned, etc
  - repetitive order and ideal proportions - architecture; buildings have perfect ratios, columns; built for human proportions
  - Louis XIV used architecture as a type of propaganda; made himself visible in the city; produced structures that he wanted to have associated w/ his reign
  - Classicism became the official style of Louis XIV's reign
  - He believed that connecting his monarchy to the ancient world really glorified the memory we would have of his reign
  - He was able to control the architecture and how it looked like bc he would have paid and approved all of them
- 
- royal academy of painting and sculpture -- this is how Louis XIV controlled the arts
  - founded under louis xiv in 1648; used to strictly control art; had to follow strict and rigorous rules; artists had to adhere to guidelines

that were set up by artists appointed by Louis w/ his guidance and control

- artwork produced by academy became part of the royal collection
- this was different from medieval guild system (i.e. craft production)
- Artists, as a social construct, evolved from manual labor from someone who was tasked w/ building/creating objects, through to someone who was seen as an intellectual
- founded in 1648
- 1660 - charles de brun took over the academy; he reorganized the academy as a formal institution; he was referred to as the dictator of the arts in France
- Artists had rigorous training; arts were learned through academic study
- Training in the academy was modeled after this idea of Plato's academy (study philosophy, economics, etc)
  
- Artists who wanted to join the academy had to be approved by Louis XIV
- Systematic training in the academy was the same for everyone
- Artists started off by tracing or copying other pics
- artists were trained to draw different emotions through their tracing of other paintings
- Once they were able to trace/draw from other paintings, they were allow to draw from plaster casts, which were models made from other sculptures
  
- The goals of the academy were to educate artists not just in how to faithfully recreate the world, but also how to draw on classical antiquity; the connection to the classical world was really reinforced in the academy
- One of the ways this was enforced was through the development of "the prize of Rome"; winner of this competition was sent to Rome where the artist could study from ancient roman buildings and sculptures (in order for the artist to be well trained in classical antiquity)

- Artists in the academy were assigned to a class, which was the category of what their work would be; this determined what subject the artist would paint for the rest of their life
- 6 categories of paintings:
  - history painting
  - portraiture
  - landscape
  - genre painting
  - animal painting
  - still life
- These categories were NOT seen as equals (i.e. the higher you were up on the hierarchy, the better the artist you were)
- history painting was seen as the best; physically the largest kind of paintings; referenced classical scenes from ancient world or from the bible; narrative paintings from myths/biblical stories that had relevance to contemporary life
- portraiture were important bc had the ability to give insight into human emotions; portrait painters were very skilled; trained in being able to illustrate human emotion
- landscape incorporated classical ideas into it and this helped to elevate this type of painting (i.e. since it's a little lower down the hierarchy, it wasn't seen as important; landscape paintings that had references to classical antiquity, however, made it seem more important since connections to the classics was important during this time); this type of painting could also have biblical figures sitting in the landscape (having biblical figures also helped elevate landscape paintings bc it connected it w/ history paintings); there's human interaction w/ the land
- genre painting show moralizing scenes; everyday minute encounters that happen w/in the home that tell about social values; there's also representations of common figures
- animal painting showed mastery over nature
- still life at the bottom of hierarchy; these were smaller paintings; still life is a collection of objects, but still reflected moral and social values and religious values

## values and religious values

- royal academy really enforced the stylization of expression; artists were trained in how to express human emotions
- ranked artists in terms of their ability, and this ability determined what style of painting the artist would produce
- artists were taught how to engage w/ classical world
  
- Nicolas Poussin - he was seen as the perfect ideal of a french painter
- As a classicist, he was believed to bring contemporary france back into classical world
- he was inspired by italian renaissance arts by titian, raphael
  
- his style was described as the "magnificent style"
- He painted a lot of detailed landscapes that drew a lot from mythology, religion, and history; he combined landscape painting w/ grandiose subject matters
- the magnificent manner he was painting in was characterized by heroic battles and important scenes; he disregarded vulgar elements that may have been associated w/ battles or important scenes
- His works showed what ppl thought of as morally uplifting scenes and this was done in a classicizing way -- the use of clear lines (i.e. disegno); emphasis on drawing and on clear lines in his work
- His compositions were carefully drawn and changed before he actually painted his work
- His use of color was impressive (this is what he learned from having studied Venetian art), but color wasn't the most important part of his work
- His work demonstrated a lot of contemplation about the theme he was producing; he selected the best myths to represent the values he wanted to express
- His paintings were rationally composed; everything in the painting was pleasing to eye, but also made sense to the mind
- His brush work not visible

- not opulent; it's a lot more simple
- There's an emphasis on line over color; this was seen to be a rational way of painting that appealed to both the eye and to the mind
  
- “Abduction of Sabine Women”
- Illustrates the moment when the Romans seize the Sabine women from the neighbouring town
- Initial city of Rome was populated by men; if they wanted to continue their city, they needed to find women in order to reproduce; so, they went to the nearby town and abducted and married the women
- This was seen as a story of the greatness of Rome bc when the women's brothers and fathers tried to take them back from their Roman husbands, the women stood between their family and their husband and stopped them from fighting; this showed the women's loyalty to Rome bc it was such a great city
- There's sense of emotion and human feeling represented in the faces of the figures
- clear design in the work despite it looking chaotic
- There's classical architecture in the background -- columns, temples
- There's a series of diagonals that form an X which gives the space a sense of stability, just like pyramidal shape in renaissance art
- Here, Poussin is able to show a wide range of different emotions in the faces of the diff ppl -- concern and agony in the faces of the women; look of adoration in some of the men's faces as they look at their wives; ppl engaged in battle
- This painting was commissioned by a French cardinal
- Louis XIV thought that Poussin was one of the great painters, and wanted to collect as many of his paintings as he could
  
- “Landscape w/ St John on Patmos”
- Incorporates a lot of classical elements
  - In the foreground, you have classical ruins

- There's temples in the background
- An Egyptian obelisk
- There's the mausoleum of Hadrian in the background
- There's an imaginary recreation of the Greek island of Patmos
- St. John the Evangelist is in the foreground; this gives us access to his recordings of his visions as he sits and transcribes them
  - He was banished to the island of Patmos for his adherence to his Christian beliefs
  - His visions were recorded in the book of Revelations in the Bible
- Again, there's the praise of classical society w/ its emphasis on the connection to Christianity
- The eagle represents St. John the Evangelist (supposed to make it more obvious who the person is in the painting)
- This painting reflects Neostoic ideals (philosophical belief that Poussin adhered to)
  - The importance of reason over passion
  - Reason over the laws of nature
- Rigorous rendering of the natural environment in terms of Poussin's form
- He creates a clear sense of spatial depth
  - clear organization of space by dividing the scene into a foreground, middle, and background
  - Background is the city of Rome
- There's repeated shapes of squares and columns and triangles
- **"repoussoire"** - French for "pushing back"; snake-like line to guide viewer's eye throughout the artwork
- Poussin perfected this technique of repoussoire
- This painting is not a natural rendering of landscape; this is an idealized landscape (i.e. he wasn't painting the landscape exactly as he saw it)
- Idealization is an important concept artists were learning from the classical world; trying to show scenes that could have been perfect, but slightly improved, just a little bit better than naturalism
- There's a sense of balance

- Parallel of trees that line each side of the work
- Positioning of trees in the center of the canvas
- everything in the painting is there bc it makes sense
- everything has a weight to it; everything has stable mass; everything is clear and present
  
- Claude Lorraine
- Also worked in Rome; also had influence in works in Paris
- he was a solitary person; not educated; didn't interact w/ ppl much
- didn't have the same classical education as other artists at the time
- He worked mainly in Italy working for patrons; most of his paintings were bought by French and exhibited in France
- A lot of his inspiration was from the Roman countryside
  - This was the subject of a lot of his works
- largely painted landscapes and seascapes; small figures
- also drew from mythological subject matter
- He was fascinated w/ effects of light in the natural environment
- his works were mostly produced during dusk/sunset
- produced a lot of pastoral scenes (i.e. scenes that took place in an idealized country-side); these were derived from stories from the ancient world that were popular in Rome at the time
- Also a classicist, just like Poussin
  - he was engaged in ancient time that was believed to have better values than contemporary world
  
- "a pastoral landscape"
- Represents a poetic rather than topographical representation of the land
- It's luminous; use of light and sunset
- He gives work a sense of nostalgia through the ancient ruins and castle in the background
- He's elevating status of landscape painting to create something a little more important/grand - why he included mythological figures and elements from the classical world
- He creates a vastness of landscape - he achieves this by creating figures in foreground that are small

- placement of objects in foregrounds; repoussoire
- By 1660, when the royal academy was taken over by Charles Le Brun, artists were able to have a little more freedom
- There was a counter-movement going on outside the academy
- artists were trying to model their work on Poussin or Ruben —  
poussinistes (focus on design); rubenistes (focus on color)
- Poussin vs Ruben:
  - Focus on design vs. color
  - Focus on rational, organized space vs. focus on human emotion and passion
  - focus on appealing to mind vs. focus is trying to appeal to the senses
  - Focus on masculine space vs feminine space
- Everything in Poussin's work is crisp, you really see the lines
- Ruben's work - you can see the brush strokes; figures look like they're bleeding into one another; the quality of the painting is emphasized a lot more
- Poussin looks more linear; there's a clear definition of space; linear buildings to define quadrants of the work
- Ruben - figures are painterly and not organized in the space, as if almost like floating in space; even the buildings seem to be floating out of their space
- Poussin - more rational bc the space is easier to understand; there's registers; the figures are clearly defined from one another
- idea of romantic love (Ruben) vs forced marriage (Poussin)
- Poussin - more of a naturalistic scene, as if it could be happening in front of you
- Ruben - there's more attention called on to the act of painting, or interpreting/representing the work through visible brush work
  - The artist uses a light feathery brush stroke, and this allows us to see the quality of the painting much more
- Ruben - light feathery brush work appeals to our senses rather than our minds; there's a tactile element to the painting, and we can imagine how the brush moved around the canvas

- Poussin and Ruben were artists of the 17th century
  - o However, the fascination w/ their work and the factions that were developed (i.e. Poussinistes vs Rubenistes) would have a lot of influence in the art world in the 18th century as well
  
- Le Seuer (P) vs Watteau (R)
- Le Seuer continues the use of clarity and line (which is prominent in Poussin's work)
- Works by Rubenistes were more closely associated w/ works in the Rococo
  
- Roger de Piles
  - o Developed a system for evaluating the styles of Poussin and Ruben
  - o favored Ruben style bc it called attention to formal characteristics; harder to get lost in the painting
    - He thought Ruben's paintings were a lot more interesting, even though Poussin's was a lot clearer
- composition
- design
- expression
- Color
  
- De Piles didn't challenge the use of disegno (i.e. the clear use of line), but he believed that the emphasis of the artwork should be placed on the quality of the painting
  - o In artworks that didn't clearly show the evidence of human expression he believed was doing a disservice to the arts
    - This is the reason why he favored Rubenistes >>> Poussinistes
- He believed that in highlighting painterly qualities, there was more visual appeal to the eye
- Poussin's works was more intellectual; Ruben's work appealed more to the senses
- Another reason why de Piles favored Ruben's/Rubenistes' work bc

it called for attention to formal characteristics

- It's harder to lose yourself in the painting bc you're forced to reckon w/ the formal characs associated w/ the painting
- De Piles was also interested in the depiction of conversation illustrated in Ruben's work
  - There's a connection between the figures
  
- Jean-Antoine Watteau
- most influential Rubeniste
- Most of Watteau's paintings displayed conversations that were going on w/in public spaces
- We see paintings of interior and exterior scenes
  - Shops w/in cities, scenes w/in landscapes
- There's evidence of painter's hand via brush work
- There's facial expression of figures
- Looking at his paintings, they don't fit the categories of the hierarchy (historical, portraiture, etc)
  - Thus, a new type of category was developed = fetes galantes - social gatherings of pageantry/galentry
    - These were elegant parties where ppl were dressed in elegant clothes; usually happened outdoors; they usually happened w/ presence of males and females
  
- "A Pilgrimage to Cythera"
- Representation of a social party taking place w/in the landscape
  - The ppl are preparing to go on a voyage to the mythical land of Cythera, where the greek goddess Aphrodite was born
    - Thus, there's a connotation of romantic love associated w/ this party
- all of the ppl in the paintings, wealth is shown through their clothes; figures have demur gestures (this also shows their wealth)
- figures seem to be immersed in conversation
- classical sculpture of Aphrodite on the right -- gives sense of subject matter (i.e. romantic love)
- Formal characteristics of this painting:
  - light and airy brush work in rendering of trees, sky

- technique of repoussaire
- We understand what's going on in 17th century Paris according to the artworks being produced
  - This painting is a representation of a refined social gathering and conversation (i.e. Fetes galante)
  - This was important to French society at the time
- Cythera - fantasy land of love and happiness
- All the figures are in pairs
  
- After the death of Louis XIV in 1715, all of the french aristocracy that were exiled from Paris were able to return and re-engage in civic life
- Upon their return, they build townhouses
  - Les Hotels, Paris
- These were lavishly decorated homes
- building on opulence associated w/ the reign of Louis XIV, but heightening it and bringing it to a new level
- Exteriors were subtle, but the interiors were lavish (had chandeliers, guildings and mirrors that reflected light, etc)
- The interiors demonstrated Rococo
  - Rococo was just developing at the time
- decorative rocks that lined grottos; combined w/ term "baroque" (irregularly shaped pearl) = Rococo
  - This term was used as an insult; associated w/ something awful
- These grand interiors were a reaction against the rigid formality of the reign of Louis XIV
  - All of the rules that were imposed on ppl during this period were being shattered by the lavishness and excess seen in the spaces
  - This reaction is also reflected in the paintings in Rococo
  
- Pineau. Varengeville Room
- white walls w/ gilded stucco
- painted and sculpted elements incorporated into the design of the

room

- Boffrand. Salon De La Princesse
- There's painted and sculpted elements incorporated into the design of the room
- decoration is typical of Rococo style of architecture
  - use of repetitive curving forms
  - hard to tell where walls end and ceilings begin
    - This gives it a feeling of being in an overpowering space
  - Connection made to the sense of romance
    - Scenes of cupid in the paintings
  - gilded decorations and use of mirrors to grow the space and reflect light
  - use of expensive materials; gold leaf, mirrors were expensive, cut glass in chandelier
- These salons were spaces for meetings; for ppl who were entitled and well-bred, educated; these were spaces where ppl sit, have tea, and talk to each other; strong emphasis on the art of conversation
- Conversation was evident in the decoration of space
- Refined conversation was central to aristocratic social life during this time in France
  - The French prided themselves on their ability to converse
  - This was associated w/ manners and education
- Paintings and architecture reflected their lifestyle
- Being in this room allowed ppl to engage in interesting conversation
  
- conversation was evident in decoration of space
- this was reflected in painting of Watteau
- manners and education - why french prided themselves to be good conversationalists
- proper etiquette was a way the aristocracy distinguished themselves from the middle class
- aristocrats lived off their own wealth; leisure time was something they had associated w/ not having to work

they had, associated w/ not having to work

- Aristocracy, nobility, everyone else
  - o There was a development of middle class = bourgeoisie
  
- Watteau - "Gersaint's Signboard"
- Watteau created a lot of artworks that represented the art of conversation even if they were outside
- rubenist style - feathery brushstrokes, art of conversation is the subject matter
- Woman seems to have the attention of the ppl she's talking to, as if she has something valuable to contribute to the conversation
- Women were seen as having refined manners and being very polished
- Men were seen as having stronger intellect and having education
- Sense of social equality between men and women that was developing at the time; disappeared quickly thereafter
  
- Rococo
- art of conversation
- Strong emphasis on erotic and romantic love
- courtly love
- racy
- works are extravagant
- Formal characteristics of the painting are highlighted, especially in Boucher's work
- formal techniques and subject matter gives us a clear sense of what was going on in the social life in paris; reflected directly from the values of the royal authority
  
- Boucher
- Prominent Rococo painter
  - o He became the artist most associated w/ the Rococo style, especially after death of Watteau
  - o Hired to copy a lot of Watteau's paintings
- emphasis on romantic/erotic love

- "Triumph of Venus"
- Goddess is in the center of the work
  - o She's reclining in the water on a sheet of satin
- All the figures surround her in an erotic sort of way
- There's curvaceous lines
- Tactile quality to the representation of the human flesh w/in the work
  - o Fleshy looking bodies
    - We see this in a lot of Boucher's paintings
  
- "Girl Reclining: Louise O'Murphy"
- There's a book open in front of her which she's not paying attention to
- She lies w/out reference to her nudity as if she's just waiting for something to happen
- vs Titian's Venus of Urbino"
  - o Titian - frontal nudity, see more of woman's naked body
  - o Boucher - more erotically charged; casual sexuality of the figure; not aware of her nudity
  - o T - there's more of an interaction; it's like she's being displayed for male gaze
  - o B - on a formal level, fleshiness of body seems more real
  - o B - opulence of fabric, textural details -- these lend itself to the sexuality of the painting and heightens the erotic charge of the painting
  - o T - more idealization
  - o B - raw nakedness makes it seem more erotically charged
  - o B - there's a book but she's not reading it, as if love is irrational; everything is messy
  
- Fragonard - "The Meeting"
- He was also known for Rococo paintings
- He was the most accomplished student of Boucher
- He was an academic painter

- He was an academic painter
- In his works, there's mostly scenes of lovers
- romantic scene
- influenced by Rubenist style and color
  - o light, airy brush strokes
- paintings captured sense of fantasy
- In this painting, there's a woman and a man meeting in a covert way
- The woman is more concerned w/ not being seen
- The man watches out on guard
- They're reaching towards each other that creates a sense of tension that's also represented in the way the trees and sky are painted
- There's references to classical antiquity (i.e. the statues)
  
- “The Swing”
- A baron commissioned this work
- His mistress is being pushed by a clergyman
- Not wearing stockings
- Baron is looking up her skirt even w/ a member of the clergy nearby
- Reference to classical antiquity -- cupid on the left side; it's like he's saying to keep a secret
  
- The formal characteristics and the subject matter of the paintings during this time give us a sense of what was going on in the social realm in Paris; this was reflected in the values of the royalty
- French Baroque art - there's a connection between the Absolute rule of Louis XIV and what was being produced in arts