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**HUM120**  
**HISTORY OF**  
**WESTERN ART**

**INSTRUCTOR**  
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The prevailing artistic style in Europe in the 1700s is *Baroque*. It grew from the *Mannerist* style and is characterized by flamboyant emotional expressiveness. The *Society of Jesus* founded by Ignatious Loyola—during what became known as the *Counter-Reformation*—initiated spiritual exercises advocating worshippers to use all senses to “...transport themselves emotionally...” as they imagined biblical events while looking at religious works of art.

Characteristics of Baroque art include:

- dramatic lighting and theatrical compositions and diverse media—such as bronze and marble—in the same work
- transformation of the rational classicism of the Renaissance, in which the work was idealized yet based on observation of the material world with visual—frequently asymmetrical—balance, harmonious colors and compositions frequently referencing Classical Greece and Rome.
- Many Baroque artists could be considered naturalists. Portraiture, genre paintings and still life were popular. Religious paintings were of “ordinary people” in ordinary settings. Intense emotion, naturalistic rendering and classicism often were seen in the same work.

2. St. Peter's Basilica. During the early 17th century the Catholic Church began a counter offensive—the *Counter-Reformation*—to the *Protestant Reformation*. With the ruling families the Church began a campaign of propaganda fueled by art. In 1606 Pope Paul V commissioned architect *Carlo Maderno* to add a longer nave and new façade to Michelangelo's Greek Cross plan *St. Peter's Basilica*, permitting congregational worship (see 22–2).

3,4. After *Maderno's* death the sculptor/architect *Gianlorenzo Bernini* unified into an integrated whole the many architectural styles of the *Basilica in St. Peter's Square*. *Bernini* added a colonnade to enclose the square in front of the church. He used giant Doric columns connecting with two straight but diverging porticoes. He created a design considering the *Egyptian Oblisk* and a fountain made by *Maderno*. He did this by adding another fountain in 1675 (see 22–2).

5. 1629 *Bernini* became official Vatican architect. Nevertheless he accepted outside commissions to his workshop. One such was the decoration of the funerary chapel of Cardinal Federigo Cornaro in the *Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria*. *Bernini* created a veritable stage set in *Cornaro Chapel*, covering the walls of the tall, shallow chapel with colored marble panels. At the back there was a huge oval niche for which he created his *St. Theresa in Ecstasy*. Above this niche is a window *Bernini* surrounded with a painted vision of clouds and angels. On side walls are portrait statues of Cornaro family members. (22–5 and 22–1).

6. *St. Theresa of Avila* was a Spanish mystic who believed herself the bride of Christ. *Bernini's* sculpture portrays a young, Cupid-like angel takes aim at her exposed breast with a gilt arrow. There are gilt bronze rays of supernatural light descending upon the scene. The arrangement is supposed to illustrate a vision *Theresa* had where an angel repeatedly pierced her body with an arrow transporting her to a state of ecstasy and oneness with god. The sculpture is a perfect example of the Baroque inclination to combine media into one whole (22–1).

7. One of *Bernini's* premier works for the Vatican was the enormous bronze *baldachin* (canopy) for the main altar of St. Peter's. The *Baldaccino* is approximately 100' high and typically Baroque in its grandiosity. The twisted columns represent those supposedly from *Solomon's Temple* in Jerusalem. The grapevines twisting around it are an ancient symbol of the wine of the Eucharist. Iconographically this combination represents the unification of Christianity with Judaism. Metaphorically *Solomon's Temple* would have supported the Church as the Old Testament was said to support the New. At the top of the *Baldachin* are an orb and cross representing the universe and the reign of Christ. Honey bees, suns, and laurel leaves are prominent in the work, and are representative of Pope Urban VIII's family (see 22–3).

8. Looking through the *Baldaccino* one can see the reliquary of Saint Peter. The *Chair of Saint Peter* consists of an ancient wooden chair encased in bronze, symbolizing the direct descent of Christian authority from the Apostle Peter to each reigning Pope. The chair is held aloft by four theologians amid gilded clouds and a throng of angels, putti and gilded rays of glory. *Bernini* purposely used light shining through a stained glass window and the flickering candles to play off the polished bronze. *Chair of Saint Peter* is an example of the *Baroque* trend of melding the natural with the created.

9. Bernini started his career as a sculptor and continued to sculpt even as he became a renowned architect. Bernini's sculpted *David* in 1626 for the nephew of Pope Paul V. Compare the poised-to-action stance of this sculpture (see 22–4) compared to those of Michelangelo (20–10) and Donatello (19–10). Here is evidence of the Baroque taste for the dramatic.

10. One characteristic of painting during the Baroque era was the use of *Trompe L'oeil* ('to fool the eye'). *Trompe L'oeil* was particularly used on ceilings which frequently combined architecture, painting and stucco sculpture. This *Ceiling Fresco of Main Gallery, Palazzo Farnese, Rome* (1597–1601). was commissioned of Annibale Carracci by the powerful Carracci family of Rome to celebrate the marriage of Duke Ranuccio Farnese of Parma. Its theme is a mythological tribute to earthly love. Carracci, with his brother Agostino, created the illusion of framed paintings, stone sculptures, and bronze work and it was clearly inspired by Michelangelo's Sistine vault in the *Sistine Chapel*, however Carracci's work is warmer in color and sentiment. The central image depicts the "Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne." Bacchus, god of wine, was in love with a mortal princess, Ariadne, who was abandoned on an island by her mortal love Theseus. Venus took pity on her and promised her an immortal love, Bacchus, who loved her throughout her life (22–9).

11. Perhaps the penultimate example of Baroque theatrical *Trompe L'oeil* is Giovanni Battista Gaulli's *Triumph in the Name of Jesus* in the vault of *Il Gesu*, the church of the Jesuits in Rome. This work shows Gaulli, a student and apprentice to Bernini, was obviously influenced by the master. Gaulli literally created a vision of heaven—seen as hope—above the last judgement with sculptured angels melded with architectural moldings and overlapping painted panels. In the center, invisible in the slide are the letters IHS, a Greek abbreviation for Jesus and symbol of the Jesuits (22–17).

12. Look at the exquisite use of lost-and-found contour to achieve emotion, depth, and a sense of drama in Michelangelo Merisi's *David and Goliath*. Merisi (1571–1610) is best known as *Caravaggio* (for his birthplace in northern Italy). The dramatic contrast of light and dark is a heightened form of *chiaroscuro* known as *Tenebrism*, and invented by Caravaggio's. His work is characterized by brutal realism and his paintings were often responded to with mixed emotions. Caravaggio used wildly dramatic lighting and he portrayed details—frequently gory—of every scene. influence from the counter-reformational tenets of Loyola is evident in Caravaggio's work. Another preacher, Filippi Neri (later canonized) also strove to make Catholic doctrine accessible 'common' worshippers by appealing to emotions, the more visceral the better.

13. Even while his work was admired, Caravaggio was equally criticized for being sacrilegious in his frighteningly realistic portrayals, as we may agree when viewing his *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. Judith was a Jewish widow of noble rank in Bethulia, a town besieged by the army of the Assyrian general Holofernes. She approached his tent as an emissary and captivated him with her beauty. He ordered a feast with much wine. After he passed out in his tent, Judith and her maid Abra saw their opportunity. Judith decapitated Holofernes with his sword and smuggled his head back to Bethulia. On seeing her trophy, the townsfolk routed the leaderless Assyrians. The story is an allegory picturing Judith as Judaism in triumph over its pagan enemy.

14. *Doubting of Saint Thomas* also reflects Caravaggio's overtly jarring realism.

15. Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew* (p723) depicts the moment when Jesus calls upon the tax collector, Levi, to become one of his apostles. Saint Matthew points to himself with surprise as if to say, 'Who? Me?' Note the hand of Jesus that appears to mimic Michelangelo's hand of God breathing life into Adam. Also note all figures are clothed in contemporary garb of the late 16th-early 17th centuries.

16. Artemesia Gentileschi was greatly influenced by Caravaggio and one of few women elected to the Florentine Academy of Design. This was an enormous coup as she could use this credit to gain entrée to clients. *La Pittura*, seen here, is an allegory on the art of painting. The subject of the painting was taken from a description of the art of painting in *Iconologia* by Cesare Ripa. *Iconologia* was an important sourcebook at the time, listing numerous objects and their symbolic relevance. Here, the gold chain symbolizes the continuous chain of relationships formed by each artist building upon the work of predecessors and carrying this achievement into the future. Gentileschi indicated this painting was a tribute to her father, her first teacher.

17. *Gentileschi* may have painted her depiction of *Judith Slaying Holofernes* during or just after the trial of *Caracci* for raping her. He denied these charges but his record of sex crimes was not forgotten, as he had previously served time for raping his sister-in-law and conspiring to murder his wife, whom he 'acquired' through the act of rape.

It appears, after a long period of sexual harassment by *Caracci* and the other male artists in his studio, *Caracci* violated *Gentileschi's* virginity, a then-requisite for marriage between 'decent' people. A consensual sexual relationship continued because he promised to marry her. It is likely *Gentileschi* hoped he would marry her to restore her reputation. Her father became aware of the assault and charged *Caracci* with rape.

The trial was painful, and a public humiliation for *Gentileschi*. During the proceedings, she underwent vaginal examination and torture with thumbscrews, and she was accused of being unchaste and promiscuous when she met *Caracci* (who also attacked her professional reputation). A transcript of this seven-month court case survives, however despite court documentation, the verdict was not recorded. It is unclear if the charge was dismissed or *Caracci* received a brief sentence. Whatever the verdict, it is known he gained his freedom soon after the trial. We may wonder—(surmise?)—whether by this painting *Gentileschi* is brandishing symbolic justice for herself and other victims?

18. As with *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, we may wonder *Gentileschi's* intent in her choice of subject in *Susannah and the Elders*. However this painting was completed while still under her father's tutelage, at the age of 17. *Gentileschi* captures the cunning behaviours of the elders as well as the situational helplessness of *Susannah* (22–13).

19. By the 17th Century the absolute monarchy was well established in France. Kings throughout Europe came to realize art celebrating their accomplishments, wealth, and power added to the mystique of their claims to be descendants from God. *Louis XIV*, known as the Sun King (*Roi Soleil*) was the longest reigning Monarch in Europe (1643–1715, 72 years). In this painting *Hycinthe Rigaud* depicts this noble monarch who was very proud of his legs—and wearing his signature high heels (he invented them to compensate for his slight stature)—with the face of an older man; regal but perhaps also sage?

*Louis XIV* was a lavish patron of the arts, with his court the envy of all Europe. At this time in France the Royal Academy maintained strict control of the arts and membership was the only way for a serious artist to make a living. This authority lasted in France until the late 19th century. Academicians favored the classicism that permeated French Baroque. 1617 the Royal Academy of Architecture was founded, and members set guidelines for buildings modeled on the belief mathematics was the true basis for beauty. Works of *Vitruvius* (see p637) and *Palladio* (p672 and 765) were their models.

20. The palace at *Versailles* was built on the grounds of a hunting lodge built by *Louis XIV's* father, *Louis XIII*. Under his monarchy, *Louis XIV* commanded the country's best painters, sculptors, designers and architects to work for decades to create the palace. For political and sentimental reasons he left the old chateau standing. Construction started with the architect *Louis Le Vau* and continued after his death by *Jules Hardouin-Mansart* and painter *Charles Le Brun*.

*The Hall of Mirrors* (see 22–51) was originally an open arcaded terrace. *Hardouin-Mansart* enclosed this terrace creating an immense gallery. He lit the 240'-long hall with 17 huge arched windows opposite which he placed Venetian glass mirrors (prohibitively expensive in the 17th century) of the same size and shape. On the ceiling *Le Brun* paid homage to *Carracci's Farnese Ceiling* depicting scenes the reign of *Louis 14*, who was to be glorified as the sun god *Apollo*.

21. Nicolas Poussin was among the more influential of 17th century French painters; his art is synonymous with ideals of *Baroque* classicism. A native of France, Poussin spent the majority of his career in Italy, close to the ruins and remnants of the ancient Greco-Roman culture he so admired. His study of Neo-Stoic philosophy—rooted in ancient Greek thought and stressing pursuit of moral duty and emotional self-control—exerted considerable influence on the themes and style of his paintings. Devoted primarily to historical painting and to biblical and mythological imagery, Poussin often set his subjects in landscapes, as seen in *Landscape with Saint John on Patmos*, painted 1640, with Saint John on an imaginary re-creation of the Greek island of Patmos. Banished there by Roman Emperor Domitian (AD 81–96) for his Christian beliefs, the saint, seated in foreground, records his visions of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelation. An eagle, traditional symbol of Saint John, stands in profile behind him. The painting is one of a pair; the other, in the Berlin Museum, depicts Saint Matthew.

Keeping with Neo-Stoic ideals which placed importance on reason and the laws of nature, Poussin rigorously ordered the natural scenery he painted. Clearly defined spatial depth is reinforced by a series of zig-zags and curves gradually leading the eye from foreground to middle-ground to background. Repeated shapes, i.e. triangles (formed by the ruins in the right foreground, Saint John's body, and the peak of the obelisk) emphasize the order and structure of the natural world and man's place in it. Ruins of antiquity surrounding the saint suggest the fall of the Greco-Roman pagan beliefs which were supplanted by the new faith of Christianity. In addition to several recognizable landmarks of ancient Rome in the distance—such as Hadrian's tomb—Poussin included an ancient Egyptian obelisk and an imaginary temple-like structure with Corinthian columns.

During the 17th century the power of Spain began to decline under the Hapsburg Empire, which controlled their agriculture, trade, and industry. Protestant England and the Dutch Republic were serious threats to the trade and colonial possessions of Spain. The flow of gold and silver had greatly diminished. Still, however, artists and writers flourished.

22. Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Valazquez was greatly influenced by Caravaggio. He painted taverns, markets, kitchens: *quotidienne* scenes showing ordinary people doing ordinary things. Valazquez was a virtuoso who liked to show off his ability to paint the essence, the substance, of his subject matter. Leather looked like leather, metal like metal...each, fabric and metal, as themselves. 1623 Valazquez became court painter to the Habsburgs (King Philip IV) and continued in that position until his death in 1660.

*Las Meninas (The Maids of Honor)* draws the spectator directly into the canvas. This is a composition of enormous representational impact. Princess Margarita stands proudly amongst her maids of honour, with a dwarf to the right. Margarita is the smallest, however she is clearly the central figure; one of her maids is kneeling before her, the other leaning towards her, so that the standing Margarita, with her broad hooped skirt, becomes the fulcrum of the movement. The dwarf, about the same size as Margarita, is represented almost to be ugly for Margarita to appear delicate, fragile and precious in comparison. Above the head of Margarita, we see the ruling king and queen reflected in the mirror.

The spatial structure and positioning of the figures is such that the group of *Las Meninas* around Margarita appears to be standing on 'our' side, opposite Philip and his wife. Not only is the 'performance' for their benefit, but the attention of the painter is also concentrated on them, for he appears to be working on their portrait. Though they can only be seen in the mirror reflection, the king and queen are the actual focus of the painting towards which everything else is directed. As spectators, we are excluded from the scene, for in our place stands the ruling couple. What seems at first glance to be an 'open' painting proves completely hermetic—a statement further intensified by the fact that the painting in front of Velázquez is hidden from our view.

23. Valazquez is there, too, standing on the left in the painting, dark and calm, before the enormous canvas (*Las Meninas* detail).

24. Juan de Pareja, 25. *Innocent x*, 26. *Old Woman Frying Eggs*. Valazquez's surfaces were not smooth, rather he painted in a thick *impasto* allowing the illusion of the rich fabrics and textures to become apparent at a distance.

27. During the 17th century the Spanish *Habsburgs* controlled Flanders in the Netherlands. While this was a period of political unrest, the *Habsburgs* were great patrons of the arts. Peter Paul *Rubens* became a court painter for the *Habsburgs* as well as others at this time and his name invokes the Flemish Baroque style. The *Habsburgs'* first major commission was the triptych for the main altar for the Church of St. Walpurga, *The Raising of the Cross*. Unlike most triptychs, where the images in the wings may be not fully unrelated to the central panel, *Rubens* relates the events of the two folding panels to the whole. Note the dramatic lighting and heroic poses of the figures, which are typical visual attributes of the *Baroque*.

28. An example of why heavy women are considered 'Rubenesque.' This allegorical painting includes *Rubens'* very young wife Helen de Froment. According to Calepinus, an Italian cleric writing in 1502, the *Three Graces* of classical antiquity represent freshness, gladness and delight. Calepinus described them as always-young, cheerful, and nude "to show that kindness should be open and frank," with their bodies intertwined in "a perpetual link of friendship."

29. King Charles' father, King James VI appointed architect Inigo Jones to design a residence for his queen in Greenwich and a banqueting house for the Royal palace of Whitehall in London. Jones is noted for introducing Renaissance classicism to England, using *Palladio* as a referent. The typically Palladian *Whitehall Banqueting House* was used for court entertainments and ceremonies. It consisted of one large hall with a balcony on the upper level and ante-chambers at each end, one of which contains the entrance. Ionic pilasters suggest a colonnade. Jones divided the flat surface of the ceiling into nine compartments for which *Rubens* painted canvases glorifying the reign of the King and a tribute to the Stuart dynasty.

30. Anthony Van Dyck was a friend and collaborator of *Rubens*. In *King Charles I at the Hunt* Van Dyck portrays the physically short king as a tall figure, taller than his page, and even taller than his horse. Van Dyck gives the king pleasant features and a jaunty hat. Even the tree branches seem to bow toward him. Van Dyck was a renowned portrait painter who became court painter to Charles I later in his life.

Charles became embroiled in a religious and political conflict with the Puritans that resulted in a series of civil wars beginning in 1642. 1649 the king lost his throne—and his head. Oliver Cromwell, lord protector and leader of the Puritans, assumed power, after which he stifled artistic creativity. 1660 the Stuart dynasty was restored under Charles II. Again artists were patronized, especially foreign portrait painters. By the 18th century the Hanoverian kings George I, II, III gave the name Georgian to art and architecture popular in England and the North American Colonies.

By 1648 Spain recognized the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic. A rising middle class afforded the populace support of artists. The most popular painter of the time was *Rembrandt Van Rijn*, a brilliant painter who closely studied Renaissance masters and established a busy studio in Amsterdam.

31. *Rembrandt* painted many self portraits throughout his life. Compare the youthful hopefulness and promise of the young *Rembrandt* in this self-portrait of 1627...

32. ...with the world-weariness and resolve, 31 years later (1658), of the older *Rembrandt* (22–40).

33. A civic guard company commissioned *Rembrandt* to paint a group portrait for its meeting hall. *The Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq* became known as *The Night Watch* due to a layer of dirt that dulled its colors to such an extent viewers thought they were looking at a night scene. A recent cleaning changed this perception by brightening the colors and accentuating the golden light of the canvas. The image of the girl carrying a chicken with claws ('klaws' in Dutch) may be a pun on the name of the gun that gave the 'KLOVENIERS TO THE COMPANY.'

34. Judith Leyster was one of few women who were painting during the Dutch Baroque period. Like many other Dutch painters—including her teacher Franz Hals (see slide 35 and 22–34)—Leyster painted genre scenes such as *Carousing Couple* of 1630.

35, 36. Franz Hals' *Gypsy Girl*, c.1626–1630 and *The Laughing Cavalier*, 1624.

37. Perhaps the greatest Dutch painter of every day life was Jan Vermeer. He produced few works for wealthy patrons, which was a problem as he had a large family. Vermeer was Catholic and Many of his paintings contain Christian symbolism embedded in their quotidienne demeanor. In this painting note the pouring of the milk from the vessel. Purity? Are we to infer the bread is simply 'bread,' or the body of Christ?

38. Items in Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance* may be metaphor of the last judgement, as indeed the painting-within-the-painting behind her represents. Note the jewelry and coins on the table, possibly symbolizing the fleeting nature of beauty. The pearls are thought to symbolize purity and safety from illness.

39. What is happening in *A Woman Asleep*? Does Vermeer want us to imagine this woman exhausted from a party? What does the open door mean? The empty chair? Fruit and jug on the table? The disarray of the table covering?

40. As with *A Woman Asleep*, Vermeer seems to paint a story in *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter*. What is the subject of the letter? Can we determine the type of 'news' it carries, based upon the woman's countenance? Is the blue of her blouse significant, such that it is in the title of the work? The lighting and setting add to our interpretation.

41. The Dutch Baroque period produced a number of significant landscapes. The Dutch loved—and celebrated in their paintings—the peaceful, orderly beauty of their countryside. Note still the dramatic lighting and immense billowy clouds in Jacob Van Ruisdel's *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds* and *View of Haarlem from the Dunes at Overveen* (22–46).

50. Another female painter who concentrated only on still lifes was Rachel Ruysch. Still life was very popular and a specialty of the Dutch republic. Ruysch painted for 70 years painting mostly cut-flower arrangements known for their sensitive composition and beautiful color harmonies. She was the daughter of a botanist who appreciated the science of plants as well as anatomy. While she was married with ten children she never stopped painting. In fact, during her lifetime she was as famous as Rembrandt.