The art of the eighteenth century is both an elaboration and a simplification of the Baroque style, with greater delicacy giving an impression of elegance. The total effect of eighteenth-century art is more fluid than the restless Baroque, as well as more capricious and playful, rather than serious. The shift in audience from a declining aristocracy to the rising bourgeoisie accelerated (a trend which had earlier been witnessed to in the north by the popularity of landscape and genre scenes with the wealthy merchant class), and the final phase of the aristocratic Baroque style was reflected in the Rococo. The word this style derived from rocaille, French for "shell," a motif which appeared frequently in Rococo art and architecture.

The eighteenth century is often discussed as the age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment refers to the dispersal of the Cartesian and Newtonian rationalism among a broader public, and the general infusion of the times with a scientific spirit. With reason coming to be seen as the common property of the middle class, it was no longer considered merely a cold intellectuality. It implied common sense, exercise of good judgment, and the development of taste. The irresolvable oppositions of the baroque appeared to have softened into subtle satires (see Hubert Robert's The Hermit Frere Luce), gentle ironies and nostalgic melancholies.

(Adapted from William Fleming, Art and Ideas, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.)

Further Reading:


General Characteristics of 18th and 19th Century Art

Rococo Art (18th century 1700-1800)
-Courtly patrons,
-Playful subject matter, emphasis on leisure activities, love and erotic themes
-Graceful compositions, emphasis on organic forms, curves etc.
-Light pastel colors,
-Ornate, interest in decoration
-Interest in imaginary, idealized landscapes

Neoclassical Art (ca. 1770-1870s-some later examples)
-Reaction against perceived frivolity of Rococo Art
-Return to styles and subjects that recall the art of Greece and Rome
-Subdued emotion,
-Orderly, symmetrical compositions
-Emphasis on line rather than color

Romanticism (late eighteenth century-ca.1870s)
-Imagery beyond the ordinary-interest in the supernatural, the exotic, the untamed, and the sublime
-Subject matter designed to evoke an emotional response
-Color schemes often rich, vibrant, and vivid
-Compositions complex and exciting (reminiscent of dynamic Baroque compositions)
-General interest in the power of nature-wild landscapes, animals, etc.
-Landscapes focus on the sublime-mountain views, sunsets, images of ruins etc.
-Interest in the themes of death and decay
-Interest in exoticism-subjects and scenes from the Middle East and the Orient

Realism (ca. 1830s-1890s)
-Reaction against Romanticism and Neoclassicism
-Interest in everyday, ordinary, unheroic subjects
-Landscapes represent familiar common scenes and ordinary weather
-Ordinary people are chosen a subject matter

Impressionism (ca. 1860s-ca.1900s in Europe/ 1870s-1930s in America)
-Developed out of Realism
-Attempt to objectively represent visual transient impressions
-Often painted directly from nature-out-of-doors
-Often painted relatively quickly so that brush strokes are gestural
-Broken dabs and dots of color represent effects of flickering light
-Color schemes often bright or pastel
-Like Realists-subjects=ordinary landscape, scenes of everyday life
-New interest in optics and attempts to capture unusual and fleeting light effects
-Special interest in movement, transient weather effects, times of day, water, etc.
Pietro Rotari (Italian, 1707-1762)
*Young Woman with a Sprig of Jasmine*, ca. 1760
Oil on panel (61.82)
Kress Study Collection (K1590)

Pietro Rotari, born into a noble Veronese family, received his initial training under Antonio Balestra in Venice. At the age of twenty-seven he opened a painting school in his native Verona. In 1756 he entered into the service of Elizabeth Petrovna, Empress of Russia. He spent the six remaining years of his life working in and around St. Petersburg for the Russian aristocracy.

Rotari worked in a typical eighteenth-century rococo style, characterized by pastel colors and a sensuous, light-hearted mood. The *Young Woman with a Sprig of Jasmine* probably does not represent a particular person, but is instead an idealized representation of a beautiful woman of the period, an eighteenth-century “pin-up” girl. The composition is closely related to an earlier pastel drawing by the French artist François Boucher in the Puskin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.
Attributed to Johann Wenceslas Grauer  
(Bohemian [Czechoslovakian], active 1725-1750)  
\textit{St. Constantine}, c. 1720  
Polychrome on wood (65.18.1)  

This figure probably represents St. Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, who lived during the late third and early fourth centuries A.D. His mother, St. Helena, was a Christian, and it was partially under her influence that Constantine converted. The Museum also owns a figure of St. Helena, made by Grauer as a companion to this piece.

Constantine had come to power in 312, following the defeat of the Emperor Maxentius at the battle of the Mulvian Bridge on the Tiber river. This event is usually regarded as the turning point in the establishment of Christianity within the Roman Empire. According to one biography, Constantine had a dream on the night before the battle in which he saw a cross in the sky, and heard a voice saying, "By this sign you will conquer." From that day, the Roman eagle that had previously decorated the standard, or banner, of the legions was changed to a cross.

Constantine is often depicted wearing a crown and holding a scepter or standard, and sometimes a model church. The attributes, the emblems that identify a particular saint, have been lost from this figure, although the figure appears to gaze contemplatively at whatever was once held in his left hand. Based on the regal attire, we may hypothesize that the figure is indeed Constantine and that he once held such a scepter or standard.

The statue is an example of the Baroque style which persisted in many areas well into the eighteenth century and the period of the Enlightenment. ("Enlightenment" is a blanket term used to describe the eighteenth-century's spirit of rational scientific inquiry and optimistic worldview which was grounded in a firm belief in progress.) In contrast to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, the Baroque, and later Rococo, styles were characterized by a swirling, dynamic composition, which made use of opulent and rich surfaces. This figure's relatively grandiose conception is apparent when it is compared with the late Gothic Ascending Christ. However, both could be called "theatrical"—the Ascending Christ because it played a role in liturgical drama and St. Constantine because of its ornate trimmings and somewhat stagy and artificial pose. This more artificial or "forced" quality of later Baroque works was, in fact, related to the rise of science during the Enlightenment. Eighteenth-century artists were caught, in a sense, between the new appeal to rationalism and Baroque art's highly charged emotional methods. Such conflicting outlooks sometimes resulted in works that appear strained or forced.

MAA 2/09
18th CENTURY

Attributed to Johann Wenceslas Grauer
(Bohemian, active 1720–1750)
*St. Helena*, ca. 1720
Polychrome on wood
65.18.2

St. Helena was Constantine’s mother and an early convert to Christianity. At the age of eighty, she undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to find the True Cross, during which she led a series of excavations of Mount Calvary. According to accounts of her pilgrimage, these excavations yielded the True Cross upon which Christ was crucified, the two crosses of the thieves crucified with Christ, the placard Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, and two of the nails used to affix Christ to the Cross.
(See Picenardi Altarpiece.)
Hubert Robert (French, 1733-1808)
The Hermit Frere Luce, c. 1765
Oil on canvas (69.1013)

Published: *Handbook*, no. 133

Previously called The Temptation of a Saint, research has shown that this painting actually illustrates an episode from the *Contes et Nouvelles en vers*, a collection of popular erotic and anti-clerical verse by the 17th century French writer, La Fontaine.

In one of the stories, La Fontaine describes the hypocritical Brother Luce, a hermit whom nearby villagers believe to be a saint. Far from being a saint in reality, Luce wishes to satisfy his lust for the pretty daughter of a poor widow, while maintaining his holy reputation. One night, therefore, he stations himself outside the widow's cottage. Using a paper horn, he magnifies his voice, causing the frightened pair inside to believe that God himself is addressing them. The voice tells the mother to bestow her daughter upon his faithful servant Frere Luce, because it is His will that their union produce a great and wealthy Pope to save Christendom. Eventually, the mother is persuaded, and brings her daughter to the hermit's cell the following morning. When they arrive, however, the "saintly" Frere Luce rejects her proposal, saying he fears that their "divine mission" is really the work of the devil. He insists that no women are allowed in his cell.

In Robert's painting this interchange is communicated via the placement of the figures. The old woman offers the girl, the shy daughter holds back, and the hermit, who appears shocked by their intrusion into his space, throws up his arm as if to ward off a dangerous presence. Finally, the hermit appears to acquiesce to his fate. In the verse, however, the young lady eventually gives birth to a daughter not a son, and the hoax is revealed.

The irony of this scene—as the painting's previous name attests—is that it so closely resembles a "real" temptation. Only the viewer acquainted with La Fontaine's story, as many educated people of the time would have been, can fully appreciate the irony of this mock temptation. Such light, anti-clerical satire reflected the enlightened scorn of established religion shared by many of Robert's contemporaries.

Robert, whose main strength as an artist was landscape, had no qualms about directly "borrowing" his figures from a 1732 composition of the same subject by Pierre Subleyras.

MAA 12/95
Attributed to Antonio Joli (Italian, 1700-1777)
Architectural Capriccio, eighteenth century
Oil on canvas (72.59)

This architectural fantasy or capriccio represents an imaginary ruin populated by figures dressed in costumes that recall those of ancient Rome. The painting has been associated with Antonio Joli, a Modenese artist who painted in Italy, England and Spain. Joli was a follower of the well known painter Giovanni Paolo Pannini (to whom the Architectural Capriccio was formally attributed).

Like Panini, Joli was famous for his vedute, landscape views of picturesque scenes. Sometimes the views represented actual places, and sometimes they pictured fanciful locations. In this painting the figures wear ancient Roman clothes, but the buildings represented do not correspond with any known architectural ruins from the Roman period. The grandiose open courtyard makes little practical sense architecturally, and would have had no clear function in ancient times.

Aside from working as a painter, Joli also designed theatrical sets. He was influenced by the famous stage designs of Ferdinando and Francesco Galli Bibiena who introduced diagonal perspective views (veduta ad angolo) into theatrical backdrops. Such views add dynamic, dramatic qualities to set designs. The Architectural Capriccio presents viewers with two diagonal views of the scene using a two-point perspective system.
Gavin Hamilton was born in Lanark Scotland in 1723. He studied in Rome and participated in archaeological digs in Italy. He was a friend of the Italian sculptor, Antonio Canova, and was an early advocate of Neo-Classical style, anticipating many of the ideas of the French artist, Jacques-Louis David. Hamilton is best known for his large scale paintings of ancient historical and mythological scenes.

While in Rome, Hamilton frequently portrayed members of the visiting British aristocracy. This painting may represent one of these visitors. The unidentified sitter wears a heavy, white cloak that covers her white bodice. She wears no jewelry, and her clothing is simple and restrained. Her austere appearance reflects the growing popularity of the classical style, both in fashion and the fine arts.
18TH CENTURY

Paul Revere II (American, 1735-1818)
*Two Pepper Casters*, ca. 1760-1765
Silver (75.72)
Gift of Dr. William D. Curtis in memory of his parents, Marion Hitchcock Curtis and Dean Winterton Conway Curtis

Best known as a hero of the American Revolutionary War, Paul Revere II was also a master silversmith of colonial America. Born in Boston, Revere was the son of Apollos Rivoire, a Protestant Huguenot who fled religious persecution in France, arriving in Boston in around 1716. Rivoire legally changed his name to “Paul Revere,” which was easier for his fellow colonials to pronounce. The elder Revere was a leading Boston silversmith, and his son Paul became his father’s apprentice.

The younger Revere became a master silversmith in 1757. Stamped into the bottom of each caster is the monogram “PR” inside a rectangle. This mark appears on small objects made by Revere between 1760 and 1770. The initials “R M S” were engraved on the casters at a later date.

During the eighteenth century, casters were used at the table for “casting” spices onto food. They were usually made in matching sets of three: a large one for sugar, and two smaller ones for pepper or mustard. The holes in the domes of the Missouri casters indicate that they were used for pepper.
After Antoine Watteau, copy attributed to François-Joseph de la Pierre (French, eighteenth century)  
*The Departure of the Commedia dell’ Arte from Paris in 1697, ca. 1740-1750*  
Oil on canvas (75.196)  
Gift of Mrs. Irene S. Taylor

Little is known about the life and work of François-Joseph de LaPierre, except that he was received into the artists’ Academy of St. Luke in 1741. Like many artists, he copied the works of other masters, and this painting is a copy of a lost painting by the great rococo artist Antoine Watteau (1684-1721).

In the lost painting, executed between 1703 and 1709, Watteau represented the reaction of the Italian *Commedia dell’ Arte* actors to the posting of King Louis XIV’s decree banishing the troupe from Paris. In the Missouri copy, we recognize several of the recurring characters of the troupe by their costumes: *Mezzetin* gestures with his right arm and wears a floppy hat; the leading lady or *amoureuse*, opens her arms in dismay; the maidservant *Columbine* weeps into a handkerchief; *Harlequin* wears a mask and bows to the ladies; and *Polichinelle*, with his overhanging belly, looks to the left.

Louis XIV expelled the Italian comedians because he had heard that they were going to perform the play, *La Fausse Prude, (The False Prude)*, which mocked the morals of his wife, Madame de Maintenon.
George Romney (British, 1734-1802)  
*Portrait of Lady Hamilton*, ca. 1785-1795  
Oil on canvas (79.103)  
Gift of Mr. J. Russell Forgan

George Romney was a fashionable portrait painter in late eighteenth-century London. In 1782 he became acquainted with Emma Hart (who became Lady Hamilton in 1791), and painted her portrait over 100 times. Romney was especially interested in painting Emma in various “attitudes” or poses that expressed a wide range of psychological states.

Emma Hart was born Amy Lyon in 1765. The daughter of a blacksmith, she traveled to London as a teenager, where she adopted the name of “Emma Hart” and became a mistress to several high society gentlemen. Emma had an extraordinary presence that entranced Romney, who felt her classical features and voluptuous chestnut hair made her an ideal beauty.

The Museum’s *Portrait of Lady Hamilton* is closely related to a celebrated painting by Romney in the National Portrait Gallery in London.
Born in Devon in 1723, Joshua Reynolds was the quintessential English Enlightenment artist. In 1768 he became the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, an organization devoted to the promotion of painting, sculpture and architecture in Britain. In 1769 he was knighted by King George III, and from 1769-1790 he delivered regular “Discourses” on art theory at the Academy.

The Portrait of Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante represents the celebrated beauty Emma Hart, who married Sir William Hamilton and later became the mistress of Admiral Lord Nelson. Reynolds believed that picturing his subjects in classical dress brought the genre of portrait painting closer to history painting. He wrote, “The portrait painter who wishes to dignify a female subject will not paint her in the modern dress, the familiarity which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity . . . He therefore dresses his figures in something with the air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness.” Here Lady Hamilton is dressed as a bacchante, a mythical female follower of the Roman god Bacchus.

This painting is closely related to a similar painting in a private collection (copied in an 18th century mezzotint by John Raphael Smith). This painting may be a replica from Reynolds’ studio or a later copy by an imitator.